

AN EXPLORATION OF YOUNG WOMEN AND MEN'S PERCEPTIONS OF GENDER ROLES AND THEIR IMPACT ON RELATIONSHIPS

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Abstract

Gender roles and the nature of heterosex have been clearly outlined in the literature as having a significant impact on both individuals and societies. Some debate has existed in the field of psychology as to the nature and origin of gender and gender roles. Furthermore, it is believed that the current South African context offers a rich source of material for debate and discussion around which social factors are impacting on gender role development and how.

In order to gain a deeper understanding of the perceived origins of such gender roles the study explores qualitative accounts of the various social elements of both South African and international origin which individuals perceive as impacting on gender role ideology. Individual interviews were conducted with 8 participants (4 males and 4 females) between the ages of 20 and 30, who were either living with their partner at the time of the study or had co-habited before.

While all social constructs identified in the study can be understood as impacting internalised notions of gender roles some factors appear to play a more significant role than others in creating knowledge around egalitarian roles rather than perpetuating less contemporary views or gender inequality. In particular culture, religion and the family were found to be sights of perpetuation of more traditional roles, while globalisation, education, media, work and urbanisation appeared to be significant constructs in creating more egalitarian gender role ideologies. Recommendations for future research include a closer examination of these relationships within broader realms of class, religion and age.

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[Key Words: Gender roles, heterosex, social construction, South African Context, gender role ideology, equality, intimate partner relationships]

Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own independent effort and has not been presented for any other degree at an alternative academic institution. It is submitted in partial fulfillment for the degree of Master of Arts in Community Counselling Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

Maire-Clare Kilroe

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Rationale

In light of the critical need to tackle issues such as HIV/AIDS, and increasing violence towards women, research on heterosexuality has increased both locally and internationally. “In South Africa studies highlight the violent nature of heterosexual relationships and the emeshment of heterosexuality with gender inequality” (Shefer, 2004).

The South African context is also unique in that the recent liberation from apartheid has provided a context in which the rights of women are beginning to be both recognised and encouraged. Gender within this context also needs to be explored from a position which recognises the impact of the variety of cultures, religions, classes and races on the way in which gender is enacted through relationships (Shefer, 2002, 2004).

Understanding these social and psychological phenomena from a perspective of meaning making is important if this research is to make a contribution to understanding the complexities of gender within a relationship context. In addition there is a need to broaden perspectives on issues such as human rights, gender-based violence and sexualities (McIlwaine and Datta, 2003). It is therefore important to understand this complexity from both a male and female perspective.

In addition, the literature generally reflects the negative aspects of heterosex, such as those mentioned above. Shefer (2002) argues that if we do not look at alternative images or discourses then we cannot challenge the current oppressive context of heterosexual relationships. She suggests that part of this process also involves

creating new identities and ways of relating as men and women. Highlighting marginalised voices within heterosexual discourse, such as those of men who resist power and control and women who resist passivity or experience their interactions with men as positive, will also make a significant contribution to developing new ways of thinking about heterosexual interaction. Thus this study aims to make a contribution to broadening this discourse by examining the perceptions of different ways of relating or acting within heterosexual relationships.

An important aspect of this attempt is the inclusion of both female and male participants in the study. Broadly speaking, discourses on gender inequality have looked at the issue from a female perspective (Morell, 2001, Segal, 1992). Using men within the study aims to recognise or highlight the contribution which they can make in terms of increasing knowledge around why inequalities exist and the ways in which they are perpetuated.

In addition it is hoped to make a contribution to overcoming the generally erroneous representation of men as ‘pathological other’ or ‘custodians of patriarchy’ (McIlwaine and Datta, 2003). As Shefer (2002) points out, there is very little literature that looks at alternative ways of being a man or nuances of maleness in heterosexual relationships. In fact the literature fails to highlight men’s resistance to traditional patriarchal roles or their vulnerability to women. There are suggestions that men are in crisis over the rising demand for female labour, new femininities and increasing educational attainment of women (McIlwaine and Datta, 2003). This study therefore aims to gain greater insight into why and how these factors create crisis for men and the ways in which men and women can work together to overcome gender based inequality.

Studying gender roles from a social constructionist perspective is also important as it challenges the idea of gender as a micro-phenomenon which only occurs

individually, biologically or psychologically (Martin, 2004). Gender norms are constructed as facts that exist because they are taken for granted, implying that neither men nor women have a choice but to conform to this naturalised code of conduct (Shefer, 2004). By exploring gender as a socially based phenomenon, it is hoped that this study will highlight the manner in which different social constructs develop gender and the fact that as a social creation it has the potential for change.

Ultimately the aim of this study is to contribute to the broader knowledge on heterosexual relationships, which is important in light of the considerable manner in which they affect significant and deleterious social issues. It is also hoped that it will be able to highlight unique aspects of male-female interaction while taking into account the complexity of gender as a social construct within the South African context.

1.2. Outline of the Report

Chapter two of the report focuses on a review of the literature. In light of the fact that the central theoretical framework of the study focuses on social constructionism, the initial section of this chapter looks at social constructionism as a theory more broadly as well the link between social constructionism and gender roles more specifically.

The chapter then moves on to looking at the link between specific social constructs and gender roles. The section on education and gender roles suggests that education impacts on gender role formation in one of two ways, either through the modeling of unequal power relationships between males and females in school structure and teacher-learner interaction, or through the content of the curriculum itself.

The literature on gender roles and work looks at the way in which women are treated unequally in the work place, both in terms of the level of position that they

hold as well as the type of work women are traditionally engaged in. In addition there is a strong focus on policy and legislation which impacts on the role of both men and women in the workplace and the implications for family involvement.

Gender roles and culture is also an area of focus in this chapter and speaks to the significant role of culture in transferring gender role ideology to individuals. The chapter also explores traditional African and South African cultural beliefs and the potential friction between these beliefs and more Westernised gender role ideologies.

The chapter concludes with a specific focus on gender roles in the South African context and the impact of the country's socio-political history, as well as a specific section which talks to gender, heterosex and relationships as broader concepts.

Chapter three looks at the research methods employed in the study and includes information on the research aims and questions, the methodological approach, participant selection, the data collection process as well as reflexive and ethical considerations.

Chapter four presents the results of the research as well as the interpretation of those results. The chapter is essentially broken down into three main areas of focus. The first one looks specifically at participant's perceptions of gender roles including how they understand the concept, their views on changing gender roles and the different impact which they have on men and women. The possible advantages and disadvantages of changing gender roles are also presented here.

The second section of chapter four looks specifically at the social constructs which impact on the development and maintenance of gender roles. This includes a specific section on each of the following: Culture, religion, family, education, work,

media, urban versus rural populations as well as globalization and exposure to multiculturalism.

The final section of this chapter talks to the negotiation of gender roles in intimate partner relationships. More specifically potential areas of conflict are identified and some explanation given for the processes necessary to deal with these

Chapter five includes unpacking some of the findings which emerged in chapter four. The main areas included here are the link between macro and micro factors, the role of power in equality development and the social constructs that facilitate gender role changes.

Chapter six is the final chapter of the study and gives some feedback on the limitations of the study as well as areas for possible research in the future. A brief overall conclusion is provided.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Social Constructionism

The central issue in social psychology is the nature of the relationship between the person and the social world. However, how person and social world are conceptualised and the relationship between them are contested issues. Social psychology has debated the extent to which individuals may be seen as fully centered, cohesive and distinct entities, with a stable inner core which is open to analysis and observation or the extent to which they may be disjointed and decentred, consisting of competing and conflicting identities which are socially constructed and formed through language and discourse (Gergen, 1992; Harre & Gillett, 1994; Layder, 1990; Potter & Wetherell, 1987 as cited in Wetherell, 1996).

Thus from the social constructionist perspective, the focus is not on the individual but rather on the forms of life and the activities which make up sociality. Rather than exploring internal psychological processes social constructionism is interested in the practices and narratives which characterise life and how identities emerge from these activities (Wetherell, 1996). In other words this form of enquiry is chiefly concerned with, “explicating the processes by which people come to describe, explain, or otherwise account for the world (including themselves) in which they live” (Gergen, 1985).

Social constructionism differs from psychodynamic perspectives in that research in this area focuses on patterns in discourse and on the collective voices which become the internal dialogues making up the individual psyche. In other words the concept of the mind does not simply capture the idea that it occurs and is located in

individuals alone, but that it emerges from the collective socio-cultural and linguistic realm (Wetherell, 1996).

While the assumptions manifested by a social constructionist perspective are varied, Gergen (1985) provides some useful insights into the most frequent or central of these assumptions. Firstly, he states that what we take to be experience of the world does not in itself dictate the terms by which the world is understood. A useful example provided by Gergen to illustrate his point is found in the field of linguistics when he asks, “How can words map reality when the major constraints over word usage are furnished by linguistic context?”(p.267). In the realm of both psychology and philosophy classic problems are often a result of linguistic entanglement, which once clarified allow the problems to be eradicated.

Essentially, this assumption acts as a critique of the traditional positivist-empiricist forms of knowledge by questioning the view that traditional scientific enquiry is able to reflect reality in any direct or decontextualised manner. Linked to this first assumption is the idea that “The terms in which the world is understood are social artefacts, products of historically situated interchanges among people” (Gergen, 1985).

What Gergen is essentially referring to is the social constructionist premise which suggests that understanding is not innate or driven by nature but rather occurs in relationship through active and co-operative processes. Most central to this study is the revelation of this assumption that enquiry needs to keep in mind the role of history and culture in understanding the various forms of world construction. In effect this highlights the need for consideration of the social origins of assumptions which we take for granted regarding a variety of subjects of enquiry; “They direct our attention to the social, moral, political, and economic institutions that sustain and are supported by current assumptions about human activity” (Gergen, 1985).

As Gergen (1985) points out, the implications of understanding psychological knowledge through a social constructionist lens are significant. The foundations of current psychological knowledge are questioned and interrogated as the understanding of social processes comes to mean an understanding of the nature of knowledge itself.

However, it is at this point that social constructionism becomes critiqued. It has been argued that social constructionism cannot provide an entirely inclusive account of reality or human experience. Searle (1995) refers to facts which he believes exist regardless of institutional origin (e.g. physical or biological) as brute facts, thus he argues; “it could not be the case as some have maintained, that all facts are institutional...because the structure of institutional facts reveals that they are logically dependant on brute facts” (p.56).

In light of this, authors such as Hacking (1999, as cited in Friedman, 2006) argue that most social constructionist accounts are ‘local’ in scope or account for the social constructedness of a limited range of human experience. Friedman (2006) goes on to suggest that in some instances- particularly in the case of gender related discourse and research- that a thorough understanding of social constructionism in which all reality is based on institutional origin is unnecessary and that, “It is enough simply to show that some phenomena, such as gender and sexual desire, are socially constructed in important ways” (p.190).

In addition, social constructionist theory suggests that the degree to which a form of understanding prevails is not necessarily dependant on the empirical validity of that understanding but on a fluctuation in the state of social processes. As such, the interpretation of a variety of social or psychological phenomenon depends on a vast array of social processes and the rules for ‘what counts as what’ are continuously evolving depending on the preferences of those who use them (Gergen, 1985).

Gergen (1985) also suggests that the aforementioned forms of negotiated understanding cannot be seen as separate from many other activities which people engage in socially. He sees descriptions and understandings of the world as constituting a form of social action or as being intertwined with the full range of human activities. Gergen's suggestion is significant in so far as it recognises that the idea of discourse around which social constructionist theory is built, is but one part of the various outcomes of social interaction.

An idea which Friedman (2006) appears to support when she argues that the core ideas of social constructionist theory –i.e. that things are constructed particularly by and in accord with discourse, and that dominant discourse always predominates - through the following more moderate theses;

(3) things are socially constructed in accord with discourse but the discourse of dominant groups does not always predominate; (2) the discourse of dominant groups does not always predominate and, in any case, discourse is merely one social practice among many by which social construction takes place; and (1) dominant groups do not always predominate, discourse is merely one constructionist practice among many, and some aspects of reality or human experience are not social constructs at all (p.185).

It is clear then that there are arguments both for and against social constructionist theory. Indeed, even within the proponents of the theory there seems to be a split between a strict application of the theory and those who believe that a more moderate view is sufficient. In spite of the continuous evolution of the theory Haslanger and Saul (2007) are able to highlight the value the theory still holds by suggesting that understanding the world through a social constructionist lens enables us to shift our understanding of a category and thus recognise the real basis

for the unity of its members. This has very important normative implications, as the ability to recognise the difference between a natural and a social category has significance both for what is possible and for what we are responsible

2.2 Social Construction of Gender Roles

Both scholars and popular culture frequently reduce gender to biology, morphology and psychology and in so doing they deny its sociality and susceptibility to social construction. On the other hand those who do view gender in terms of social constructions encourage the idea that gender is a product of active human agents who can change gender and transcend the concept of gender roles (Martin, 2004).

The principal self-identification of an individual as a man or a woman, with the whole host of attitudes, ideas and desires that accompany that identification, depends largely on what label is attached to that individual in childhood. The ways in which we are socialised into gender begin from a very early age. For example studies of mother-infant interaction reveal distinct differences in the ways in which boys and girls are treated, even in situations where the parents believe their reactions to both are the same. In addition male and female adults usually handle infants differently and by age two children have a partial understanding of what gender is (Giddens, 1989).

Gender roles then, can be understood as those sets of norms that communicate what is generally considered appropriate for each sex (Burn, 1996). Deutsch and Gerard (1955, as cited in Burn, 1996) were the first social psychologists to define the terms normative and informational pressure, these terms can be extremely useful in understanding further the reasons behind why we may be motivated to conform to these gender expectations.

Normative pressure refers to the idea that we often conform to societal or group expectations in an effort to avoid social rejection. As Burn (1996) points out,

“Several studies found that gender-inconsistent behaviour is particularly likely to interfere with the popularity of boys (Brendt & Heller, 1986., Huston, 1983., Martin, 1990) and that parents react negatively to cross-sex play behaviours (Fagot, 1978., Langlois & Downs, 1980). These different sets of norms for male and female behaviour are operative beyond childhood and even as adults we tend to conform to these different expectations in order to avoid social rejection” (p.3).

Burn (1996) goes on to highlight the role which generally negative societal responses to homosexuality play in normative pressure. She suggests that we are socialised from a very early age to marry somebody of the opposite sex, produce offspring and assume particular role relationships. Individuals who choose not to marry and/or have children, as well as those who have a romantic or sexual homosexual relationship are viewed as violating gender roles and experience serious social pressure to conform.

In fact, deviance from socially defined gender roles is often viewed as an indication that an individual is homosexual. In light of the fact that homosexuality frequently results in social rejection, many individuals tend to avoid behaviour which may result in them being labelled as such, and this factor is seen by some as having played a significant role in discouraging gender-role change (Burn, 1996).

Informational pressure on the other hand refers to the fact that we rely heavily on social information as an adaptive tool to increase our knowledge of both ourselves and our functioning in the world. Essentially this concept suggests that at times conformity may come about not only as result of the fear of rejection but rather that

many individuals are not aware of what they think, feel believe or do, without the guidance of others. The idea that genders are and should be different is so pervasive in society that we tend to assume these ideas are correct (Burn, 1996).

It is important to note that process of socialisation during which these two forms of pressure contribute to the adoption of traditional gender-roles is not something which occurs exclusively during childhood but that it is a continuous process which impacts on individuals throughout their lifespan (Burr, 1998., Burn, 1996, Gerson 1993 as cited in Pitt and Borland, 2008).

Pretorius (1998) agrees with the notion of gender as a social concept and suggests that patriarchy or the system of male domination is based on these socially constructed notions of gender, gender roles and gender relations. She sees patriarchy as being produced through private and public institutions such as the family, religious and traditional beliefs, practices and norms. She believes that it is also reproduced through ideological apparatus such as education and media. In light of this, the manner in which gender roles are constructed by these various institutions will be explored in more detail.

2.3. Gender Roles and Education

Wood (1994) emphasises the power which schools hold as agents of socialisation.

As institutions

they are responsible for teaching children about the culture of the society in which they live. This includes aspects such as history, traditions, practices, beliefs, and values. In addition schools teach us who holds status in society; who influenced the directions of history, science literature and social organisation; as well as what opportunities and responsibilities are available for different members of society. As a result schools are heavily implicated as a socialising agent that communicates

what opportunities are available to us both personally as well as in civic and educational arenas.

It would appear the manner in which gender differentiation and equality is communicated through education occurs primarily in two arenas. Firstly, the example set by schools in terms of the roles of males and females in schools unreservedly communicates a model of what is considered “normal” life and as well as the status of various people within that life. In these environments positions of power, such as that of principal or chancellor are most commonly held by men, whereas those positions which traditionally hold less status and power such as cafeteria workers or secretaries, are most commonly held by women. This suggests that from our earliest experience of educational institutions through to tertiary level places of learning we are constantly exposed to the idea that men hold positions of status and that women belong in more subordinate roles. In circumstances where this discrepancy does not occur, for example in an all girl’s school where women hold positions of power, it has been observed that individuals develop higher levels of esteem (Wood, 1994).

It also appears that teachers perpetuate gender inequality through the manner in which they interact with children. Several studies appear to support the idea that teachers pay more attention to their male students and spend more time interacting with them (Sadker & Sadker, 1994, as cited in Renzetti & Curran, 1999). A study by Spender (1982) in which she videotaped her lessons, as well as those of other teacher’s, revealed that even when a conscious effort was made to spend equal time with male and female pupils, on average teachers devoted only 38% of their time to their female pupils. In addition both the teachers and male pupils involved in the study reported feeling that too much attention had been given to the girls.

Stratification along gender lines is routinely reinforced in various ways, through participation in separate and different sporting activities, as well as through task assignment (e.g. boys being asked to move furniture and girls to clean up) and insistence on differences in school uniform. These differences can also manifest in ways which have very long term consequences for the individuals involved (Burr, 1998).

For example, there appears to be fairly routine stratification of subject choice along gender lines (Lindsey, 1990, Renzetti and Curran, 1999). Those subjects frequently preferred by males such as science, maths and technology often provide routes to jobs with both higher pay and status (Williams, 2007). However, there has been some concern that the lower proficiency exhibited by males in languages can be attributed to a more general difficulty in communication and social skills. In this regard stereotypical masculine behaviour may be interfering with educational and social development (Burr, 1998).

The second process through which differences in gender roles are communicated in the course of education is through the curricular content itself. In a study by Weitzman et al. (1972 as cited in Giddens, 1989) the analysis of children's story books revealed that male characters were generally depicted as engaging in adventurous and outdoor activities which demand strength and independence, whereas female characters were depicted as passive and confined to indoor activities. Girls cooked and cleaned for males or awaited their return. From a social learning theory perspective these stories often have a clear moral message which implicitly invites children to identify with such characters and model their behaviour on them. In this way, reading material of this nature is believed to guide children along conventional sex-typed routes during their development (Burr, 1998).

This finding has also been replicated in the study of other forms of reading material found in schools including text books. These often contain typical images of women and men, women are often less visible and the content is oriented towards male interests. In addition households are most commonly depicted as consisting of white heterosexual married parents and their children. As Burr (1998) points out, “If children’s books are to more accurately reflect contemporary society, many more of them would have to feature single and divorced people, lone parents, families from different ethnic groups and gay couples” (p. 56).

She goes on to suggest that while some schools have started to invest in material that is more aware of issues of gender and ethnicity, it is likely that many schools do not have the resources to do so- a point which is particularly relevant in the South African context. This finding is of particular consequence when one considers the fact that it has been clearly demonstrated that in those situations where textbooks depicted boys and girls and women and men in less traditional roles and situations, and where gender equity is very apparent, less sex typed attitudes develop (Schau and Scott, 1984 as cited in Lindsey, 1990).

From a liberal feminist perspective, our socialisation practices (both in the school and in the home) still involve unthinkingly transmitting sexist attitudes and expectations from one generation to the next. Such attitudes are instrumental in, for example, the differential careers advice that teachers give pupils and the subject choices that girls and boys make (Burr, 1998).

In fact these sexist attitudes appear to be so deeply ingrained in Western worldviews that at times they have been transmitted through the education system across cultures. In a study conducted by Abidogan (2007) on the impact of westernised education on traditional Nigerian gender roles, it was found that a lack of social sciences in the curriculum and a very strong presence of traditional Judeo-

Christian teachings as part of the curriculum had a significant impact on gender roles. Ultimately it seems to suggest the political power (although limited) which had been afforded women through more traditional practices, has been eradicated through exposure to higher levels of Westernised education. And although it seemed to increase the ability for girls to aspire to more individualised views, education became viewed as a tool to increase their chances of finding a good husband as opposed to being a catalyst for greater personal and economic independence.

Ultimately, while it is true that school is not entirely responsible for gender inequality, it plays its part alongside other male-dominated institutions in perpetuating patriarchy. Consequently, while the school cannot be solely responsible for the eradication of gender inequality it must still bear some responsibility and do what it can to make changes. This would involve shifting education from its male baseline in a variety of ways (Burr, 1998).

2.4. Gender Roles and Work

For the last few decades, feminists have examined the various ways in which gender roles are communicated and embedded in organisational practices. Gender is constructed by organisational processes such as social interactions between workers, segregation of occupations, discrepancies in salary, and the ways in which work is divided by paid and unpaid labour. In addition, inequity between men and women in organisations has been found to influence the structures and norms that informally create barriers to the advancement of women and significantly impact on the gender identity of females in the workforce. Also, the utilisation of family leave policies has been known to compound the problem of salary inequity. Ultimately this tends to lead to fewer women seeking advancement (Lester, 2008).

One of the major areas of study in relation to the issue of gender and work, centers around occupational sex segregation. This refers to the degree to which men and women are concentrated in occupations in which workers of one sex predominate. In other words women are not equally distributed throughout occupational structures (Christy, 1990). In industrialised countries women and men commonly perform different tasks and work in different sectors, although some job titles in white collar work are occupied by both men and women (Messing, 1998; Anker, 2001 as cited in Messing, 2006). Men, tend to be concentrated in the skilled trades and operative jobs while women are mostly in teaching, clerical, and other service occupations (Renzetti and Curran, 1999).

While in developing countries, women and men typically work at different tasks in agriculture (London et al., 2002; Kisting, 2005 as cited in Messing, 2006), mining, manufacturing and services (Acevedo, 2002; Garrido, 2002 as cited in Messing, 2006). Women however are more likely to work in the informal economy sector and often do specific types of informal work, such as street vending, sex work and domestic work (Acvedo, 2002; Bumiller, 1990; Shidvas, 2005 as cited in Messing, 2006).

In addition to a discrepancy between occupations there also tends to be a discrepancy within occupations or what can be termed a vertical division of labour. As a result, in many countries women occupy lower ranks than men (Acevedo, 2002; Theobald, 2002; Anker et al., 2003 as cited in Messing, 2006). Generally, women tend to remain extremely underrepresented in high status occupations and largely over-represented in the jobs which have both the lowest wages and the lowest status. Sex discrimination accounts for much of this trend (Christy 1990).

It is significant to note that this trend does not occur strictly in occupations which historically have been viewed as dominated by men. As Christy (1990) points out,

“With the exception of nursing, feminine occupations also tend to find males in the highest positions. So even in jobs which are designated female, most women are subordinate to males who hold the most powerful, high status and high paying positions” (p. 188). Christy (1990) refers to this phenomenon as hierarchical segregation and suggests that it can be viewed as a strategy which further prevents women from exercising equal pay and power with males.

The Commission on Gender Equality (1999) further illustrates this point by showing that although women constitute the major segment of the South African population they make up only a third of the labour force, and occupy very few senior and top management positions. The source of this gender inequality within the workplace is once again believed to be cultivated in the context of job segregation and perceived roles associated with gender groups (Jain, 2002; Commission on Gender Equality, 1999 as cited in Mathur-Helm, 2005).

Catalyst (2004, as cited in Mathur-Helm, 2005) reports that only 75 percent of South African businesses employ women in senior management positions, which seems positive in light of the fact that the global average sits at only 59 percent. However, while these figures indicate that South African women are allowed access to senior management positions it seems that they remain excluded from reaching the top positions of Board Director and CEO. South Africa has a total of eleven (3.0 percent) female chairs of boards and only seven (1.9 percent) female CEO's. Not only does this strongly confirm the existence of the glass ceiling in South Africa but further serves to illustrate that patriarchy still prevails in many organisations, preventing women from taking professional roles as decision makers (Mathur-Helm, 2005).

In addition, (Renzetti and Curran, 1999) point out that even in traditionally female occupations, there appears to be less segregation than in the top male occupations.

In other words there appears to be more men entering traditionally female-dominated jobs such as teaching and nursing during the past ten years, a phenomenon which has slightly lowered sex segregation in these fields.

Interestingly enough women had actually lost ground during the early 1900's in some higher status jobs and were being more concentrated in sex-typed occupations both for white-collar and blue-collar jobs. A fact which can clearly be seen through the statistics provided by (Theodore, 1971 as cited in Christy, 1990) which suggest that women constituted 10% of all upper-level professionals in 1970, but 12% in 1990. However, as Jacobs and Lim (1995, as cited in Renzetti and Curran, 1999) report while occupational sex segregation was stable during most of the twentieth century, it has appeared to have declined steadily since 1970.

Despite such improvements Charlton and van Niekerk (1994 as cited in Naidoo and Kongolo, 2004) refer to a study conducted by the International Labour Organization which explored the extent to which gender equality is changing, the findings suggest that at the present rate it will take until the 25th century before men and women reach an equal status in the workplace, despite women being more qualified than their male colleagues in developing countries.

One serious implication of occupational sex segregation is that it limits employment opportunities. While it is true that such segregation limits the employment opportunities of both sexes, it tends to have the most significant impact on female workers due to the fact that what is typically labelled "women's work" has some very negative features associated with it. In general "women's" jobs tend to have less autonomy than "men's" jobs and are thought to require less skills or intelligence. Most significant however is the fact that women's jobs typically offer few rewards in the forms of compensation, mobility, union protection, benefits or prestige (Renzetti and Curran, 1999).

Historically, white women in South Africa were excluded from most types of formal employment with the exception of clerical and secretarial work. This exclusion was not necessarily legislated, but rather these women were denied access to employment by conservative ideas about women's place in the society. As a result white women's employment patterns frequently mirrored their role in the family. (Adams, 1993 as cited in Naidoo and Kongolo, 2004). Black women too were affected by patriarchal ideas and were further disadvantaged by the compounding effect of racist ideals. Thus they most frequently occupied positions as cleaners and tea-ladies in office buildings and in rural areas where unemployment was high, most black women relied on the pay-cheques of their migrant-labourer husbands who worked in the mines. (Msimang, 2001).

In addition, women usually suffer discrimination and sexual harassment more frequently than men, particularly if they enter non-traditional occupations (Cockburn, 1983; Paoli and Merille, 2001 as cited in Messing, 2006). Furthermore unpaid work, such as work based in homes does not include any protective legislation, social security, and is assigned low social status. The fact that no income is generated from such work can seriously affect women's ability to improve their lives (Messing, 2006).

In general practices within organisations can serve to further perpetuate the inequalities which seem to coexist with traditional gender role division by reinforcing representations of what is masculine and feminine and widening further the divisions of gender within the organisation. Examples of such practices include use of language, style of dress and expression of emotions. As Lester (2008) suggests, "organisational narratives disguise and perpetuate the gendered nature of social practices. Narratives about gender and gendered traits support distinctions between masculinity and femininity and create a sense of objective reality" (p. 279).

In the current context gender stereotyping has resulted in the majority of black women being employed in areas such as education and health. In addition within these occupations they perform relatively lower level work, with very few in decision-making positions. Consequently, the occupational structure of the public service positions has become skewed on the basis of gender. In addition a significant gap in wages between men and women has developed. “Even where women are well qualified and experienced, the predominance of males at management level has resulted in a culture in which male behaviour patterns are perceived to be the norm, and in which women often find it difficult to be accepted as equals by their male colleagues” (White Paper on Affirmative Action, 1998 as cited in Naidoo and Kongolo, 2004).

With the demise of the apartheid government, South Africa has seen the introduction of formalised equality and affirmative action legislation. Despite this it appears that organisational environments are still not beneficial to women in so far as the legacy of discrimination based on race and gender appears to exist and act as a barrier to the realisation of legislation set out in the Employment Equity Act (Naidoo and Kongolo, 2004).

Several studies (Erasmus, 1998; Naidoo, 1997a; Govender and Bayat, 1993 as cited in Naidoo and Kongolo, 2004) appear to hold social and individual barriers responsible for inequalities in women’s employment and advancement into senior positions, particularly in private sector jobs. These barriers include a lack of education, stereotyped gender roles and a failure by organisations to view women as equals.

The implications of occupational sex segregation and disparities in income are also interlinked with the difficulty of fulfilling both domestic and work related activities,

more specifically gender roles in the workplace and their link to childcare. As Segal (1992) points out,

“The lower wages attached to jobs which are most readily available to women, and seen as ‘women’s jobs’, reinforce the differing parental employment patterns. The ever increasing part-time, casual, and sometimes home-based employment of women has reinforced, rather than reduced, economic inequalities between the sexes” (p. 38).

Due to the fact that historically, paternal employment has never been seen as a problem, little research exists on the link between men’s patterns of employment and their participation in the home. However, the most obvious obstacles to men and women sharing labour in the home , including all the work related to child care, are the economic demands of men’s paid work (Segal, 1992).

As Lester (2008) points out, “Heroic workers are defined as always available workers who have the ability to prioritize work over other responsibilities. Women who traditionally hold more household responsibilities are disadvantaged by evaluations that are based on time spent on the job or on the willingness to be flexible with extra work hours”(p.278).

However, such socially based ideals impact not only on women but also appear to place restrictions on men. In their role as breadwinners, fathers often feel extremely duty bound to their jobs. Men who are fathers, particularly those in manual and less skilled jobs, are also more likely to work irregular hours or to work shifts. Mothers, on the other hand, are less likely to have irregular hours in their paid jobs (Segal, 1992).

The substantial difference in income between men and women mentioned previously suggests that few families can afford for fathers, who typically earn more

than mothers, to stay at home on unpaid parental leave. In addition, studies show that men fear that their employers will view them as less dedicated to their careers and companies if they take more than just a few days off following the birth of a child. For example a study by (Chira, 1993, Lewin, 1997 as cited in Renzetti and Curran, 1999) suggested that the majority of employers think that their male employees should take no parental leave whatsoever.

Wambugu (2004) believes that businesses will eventually recognize the value of creating environments more conducive to allowing fathers to increase their parental role. This is due to the fact that “as the stresses caused by the conflicts and challenges working fathers face in finding and maintaining a balance between work demands and rearing well adjusted and secure children impact on fathers’ performance in the workplace, businesses will begin to count the cost of lost productivity and lost talent”(p.1).

Thus there appears to be a growing trend towards implementing measures to make businesses more accepting of fathers’ parental responsibilities. The governments of certain countries are also propelling this initiative. The US, the UK, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, France, Germany, Belgium and Australia are some of the countries that have taken such steps. The support of government and legislation seems to play a crucial role. However, in South African fathers are permitted by law to take three days of family responsibility leave. This is in stark contrast to countries such as Iceland where parents can take nine months of paid leave for childcare – three for the mother, three for the father and the rest divided up by couples as they see fit (Wambugu, 2004).

It seems that the issue of child care not only places restrictions on males’ opportunities to parent but that a lack of provision of alternatives has a significant impact on women’s role in economic activity. Studies in the United States suggest

that five of every six non-employed women would enter the labour force if they could find adequate child care. The decision to remain at home or to accept low paying jobs is due to the fact that the working hours are often better suited to childcare responsibilities. Thus women's engaging in these alternate forms of labour is most often a response to a structurally imposed constraint on women's occupational opportunities- i.e. governmental failure to implement child care policies which enable equal opportunities for women in the workplace and men in parental responsibility (Renzetti and Curran, 1999).

As part of its move towards greater equality the Employment Equity Act requires South African companies to present equity plans to the Department of labour in which they clearly state how it is that they create transformation. However, many equity plans have failed to emphasise a move towards recognition of greater work/family life splits. Thus companies have been required to give maternity leave of at least four months and to implement policies on harassment and the promotion of African women (Msimang, 2001, as cited in Naidoo and Kongolo, 2004). Clearly however, these policy changes have failed to recognise the importance of affording equal opportunities for male participation in family life.

A study conducted by Copcock, Haydon and Richter (1995) suggests that there is immense pressure on women to succeed in both the public and private spheres of their lives. Failure to achieve all objectives in these areas can result in women feeling a tremendous sense of guilt and inadequacy. They suggest that without shared responsibility for domestic chores and viable alternatives for childcare, the problems faced by women in employment will not be solved.

Messing (2006) suggests that the traditional sex contract has been altered through the forces used to bring women into the workforce, to formalise their rights in this context and to bring women's issues, as well as men's behaviour, into awareness.

The greater the significance given to these issues by political forces, the more likely there is to be an increase in the confidence, ambition and creativity of women.

While she acknowledges that the struggle between men and women for equality is far from over, the understanding appears to have been developed that for this balance to occur it is necessary for the public world of paid work and the private world of home-life to no longer be seen as unconnected. Social policies should be formulated to recognise and up-hold the role of men and women in both worlds if we are to move towards the greater goal of equality

2.5. Gender Roles and Religion

As Castelli and Rosamond (2001) point out, the concepts of gender and of religion are both consistently changing and that any attempt to fix their meaning is tied to complex political, institutional and material interests. They go on to suggest that the complexity of the topic is related to the fact that separate studies of each area have raised the question of voice and who should be in a position to speak about religion or about gender. Where these two areas intersect the question of voice and who constructs discourse becomes even more complicated an idea which can be seen clearly in the following statement, “ ‘Religion’ as a category often cuts across the other categories by which identities are framed (gender, race, class etc.) and it often complicates these other categories rather than simply reinscribing them” (p.5).

Aidala (1985) also reflects on the idea that religion can be interlinked to with other social factors. More specifically she suggests that the confusion created when individuals encounter rapid social change such as those seen in the case of gender roles often leads to a need for some people to return to the very clear guidelines for gender based interaction which are set out in most of the major religions.

Interestingly her study reveals that there was no major difference in terms of gender

role ideology between secular and non-secular members of society but that religion did provide far more detailed and specific guidelines for the nature of interaction.

Over and above these complexities religion and gender are generally referred to in an effort to illustrate how religion can play a role in creating clear boundaries between men and women and the tasks which are perceived to be socially acceptable for each. For example Morin and Guelke (2007) point out that there is a very clear relationship between women, religion and space in that the space which women occupy is significant within the realm of religion. This includes different elements such as the space in which women and men are allowed to worship is often separate in religions such as Islam and Judaism. As well a strict limit on the occupation of social positions such as the limited opportunities afforded to nuns in Christian convents.

Ultimately religion appears to be another important factor in creating the social knowledge and discourse which constructs the individual's view of gender and the role and place of gender in society, and that like all other constructs religion and its relationship to gender roles is very much dependant on the input of the society in which it occurs and visa versa.

2.6. Gender Roles and Culture

Weedon (1987, as cited in Wood, 1994) defines culture as “structures and practices that uphold a particular social order by legitimizing certain values, expectations, meanings and patterns of behaviour.”(p.26). In light of this it would seem that in terms of socialization there is a strong link between cultural contexts and the development of gender roles. As Davidson (1979) suggests, “There are strong and instructive similarities between learning to be masculine and feminine and learning to become a member of any other social category...” (p.4)

The manner in which we develop identity, including gender identity, does not originate from a completely personal or particular standpoint, but rather the perspectives of others and the cultural values they embody (Wood, 1993). Thus as Merriam and Ntseane (2008) point out, our reality as human beings is created inter-subjectively, and our identity “formed in webs of affiliation” (p.185).

A crucial element in the process of gender role formation through culture is communication. “Through communication with others we learn who we are and what that means in the culture into which we are born” (Merriam and Ntseane, 2008, p. 49). Society uses the tool of communication to create and perpetuate perspectives on what is normal and right.

Typically, there are several levels of society in which cultural gender norms are communicated. These include family, neighbourhoods and communities (Davidson, 1979). It is important to note that it is the family which appears to play the most significant role in communicating and sustaining cultural norms; with child rearing practices, kin relations, sexual relations, courtship, cooking and household routines changing more slowly than other types of behavior (Davidson, 1979).

Thus it is through culture as a social construct that we are taught attitudes, motivations and behaviours “appropriate” to a particular gender and through which we are constantly reminded of the “appropriate” boundaries to these elements (Davidson, 1979). Burn (1996), recognizes the importance that this aspect of gender role development holds and suggests that the cultural information which we receive is a way of helping us to understand our social world and to achieve the fulfillment of our social needs.

The significance of this process can be seen in a study by Whiting and Edwards (1988, as cited in Burn,1996) which noted that there is a cross-cultural tendency for children to seek out same-sex companions. They believe that this can be understood

by recognizing the fact that every culture appears to encourage distinction by gender and that as a result children realize the significance of gender in their culture from a very early age and model accordingly (Burn, 1996).

In fact roles are not only assigned to us by society, but the value of those roles is also determined by the particular cultural beliefs relevant to a particular society (Wood, 1994). As we internalise cultural communications regarding gender, we learn not only that there are different roles for men and women, but also that unequal values are assigned to them. For those who are encouraged to conform to a role that will not be esteemed this process can often be very frustrating (Wood, 1994).

Overall then, culture and larger society can be seen as a larger context which created the value system that informs other aspects of gender role formation such as family psychodynamics and learning and cognitive development in interpersonal settings (Wood, 1994).

However, it is very important to recognize that a significant factor in gender role development, and indeed in gender identity as a whole, is the degree to which an individual internalizes the roles and values set out by a particular culture (Davidson, 1979., Wood, 1994). The degree to which an individual identifies with a specific cultural group has an impact on their beliefs around ideal versions of a role as well as having an impact on the extent to which they participate in cultural environments that are supportive of a particular role (Davidson, 1979).

Increasingly, however, the process of globalization is impacting significantly on the degree to which individuals are exposed to a wide variety of cultural practices and norms. Culture does not exist as a static entity but rather appears to adapt and change with the needs and values of a society (Morrell, 2002).

As a result, factors such as technology, ecology and politics can have significant impact on what men and women do in a culture. Despite this, gender based task division remains intact and severely limits the extent to which men and women interact (Bernard, 1987, as cited in Burn, 1996). In addition to labour or task division, Burn (1996), recognizes that there appears to be an almost global trend towards women occupying less valued roles in society. However, she does recognize that different cultures do differ in their beliefs regarding gender role ideologies.

Gender role ideologies refer to the beliefs regarding proper role relationships between men and women. Burn (1996), goes further in distinguishing between traditional and egalitarian gender role ideologies. Traditional ideologies are said to promote the idea that men are more important than women and have the right to dominate them, while egalitarian societies hold the view that men and women are equally important and that men should not dominate women (Williams and Best, 1990 as cited in Burn, 1996).

Burn (1996) suggests that gender role ideologies tend to shift from being traditional to being more egalitarian when there is economic development, that predominantly Christian countries tend to be more egalitarian than predominantly Muslim countries, and that higher numbers of women at university and in the work force are associated with more egalitarian gender-role ideologies. It is also important to recognize that not only do these ideologies vary between cultures, but within cultures it is also possible to find significant variations depending on education, generation and acculturation.

The manner in which exposure to different cultures impacts on gender ideology development can be clearly seen in studies on the impact of Westernisation in Africa. Abidogun (2007) recognises that while perspectives on gender are constantly

changing within any society, neo-colonialism in Africa presents a unique conflict between knowledge transmitted through official post-colonial institutions such as churches and schools, and knowledge transmitted ethno-linguistically.

Similarly, applying a more traditional gender role ideology to the South African context is somewhat problematic, in so far as there is frequently a failure to recognize that the existing 'traditional' ideologies are a result of a combination of historical beliefs and practices, as well as more contemporary social change (Marks, 2002 as cited in O'Sullivan, Morrell, Monroe-Wise and Kubeka, 2006). In fact, this trend appears to have developed out of exposure to mission Christianity and Victorian ideals and has seen gender roles becoming increasingly restrictive over time (Gaitskell 1981, Hunter, 2005, Marks, 2002 as cited in O'Sullivan et al., 2006).

More recently, social changes in the post-apartheid era related to legislation, economics, policy and the HIV/Aids pandemic has resulted in a conservative backlash regarding gender role ideology and has significant implications for how these are enacted (Hunter, 2004, Leclerc-Madlala, 2001, Scorgie, 2002 as cited in O'Sullivan et al., 2006).

Sideris (2004) takes this point further by suggesting that post-apartheid South Africa has seen an increase in the tensions characterizing gender relations. While there is recognition of the fact that political transformation has failed to eradicate the structures which retain male domination in the state, economy and in private relations, the rights of women in terms of citizenship entitlements, improved legislation and human rights movements regarding the empowerment of women has called into question the legitimacy of male privilege .

While these changes are not necessarily cultural, the tensions brought about by such changes have often been examined or discussed through a cultural lens in so far as culture is now being called upon as a means by which to justify male dominance.

Aronowitz (1995, as cited in Dideris, 2004) suggests that tradition or culture is closely tied to the practices of everyday life and in this sense plays a significant role in highlighting gender hierarchy and boundaries. The threat which such changes pose to male identity and privilege has created confusion for many men who have consequently played out current gender struggles through the expression of a conflict between tradition and rights (Sideris, 2006).

In addition the novelty of changes in women's role in South African society mean that many men are left without role models or the social support necessary to develop new ways of being. Appealing to the more traditional roles proposed by many cultures, provides a framework for behavior. In this sense the return to more conservative gender role ideologies may lie in the appeal that they hold as a means of defending against anxiety as much as it acts as a defense of privilege (Sideris, 2004).

Another factor which is important to keep in mind in terms of how we study the interplay between gender and culture, is the recognition of the fact that culture is closely linked too issues of class, race and ethnicity...particularly in the South African context. As Morrell (2002) points out, "Race, class, geographical location and many other factors are constitutive of gender identities and affect the gender regimes which exist in the institutions and milieux of the country" (p.98).

Wood (1994) utilizes standpoint theory as a manner of grasping the interaction between culture, race and class by recognizing that while we all understand that they are linked, each of us is a certain race or class and that this standpoint directs what we know, feel and do. Different social groups like men and women develop particular skills and thought processes based on their standpoint within society.

These standpoints are so incredibly diverse and comprised of so many factors that some feel that cultural diversity is so great as to make impossible a common

worldwide gender-equality movement (Burn, 1996). In fact, many scholars have critiqued gender as a universal concept and propose that it is a concept particular to white western women's politics. It is clear that gender cannot be considered outside of issues of culture, race and class and there is an increasing insistence that there be a recognition of the different realities experienced by different women (Oyewumi, 2002).

Despite these concerns, there is an increasing acceptance of human rights as a matter of international concern, and movement towards recognizing the authority of international law. And it is this movement which may help pave the way toward greater gender equality worldwide (Burn, 1996).

2.7. Gender and Gender Roles in the South African Context

The issue of gender as well as issues of class and race are difficult to understand in any context but even more so in the South African context where there is a history of apartheid, segregation and political repression. In conjunction with these factors the emergent democracy in South Africa has rendered these concepts both fixed and changeable (Unterhalter, Epstein, Morrell & Moletsane, 2004).

With the emergence of democracy in South Africa complex politics have developed around redistribution, transformation of relations of production and the affirmation of subordinated identities. There is a movement towards an enhanced understanding of the complex processes by which identities are constituted and the ability of individuals to occupy multiple subject positions. This understanding has shed light on the fact that simple formulations based on causal connections between race, class and gender inequalities are severely limited (Unterhalter et al., 2004).

Shefer (2002) confirms the complexity of studying gender or heterosexuality within the South African context. One major question which arises is the feasibility of

applying global understandings of gender to the South African context. “One needs to be constantly vigilant in resisting the ‘natural’ scientific urge to globalise, universalise and establish as fact” (Shefer, 2002, p.428). In fact she goes on to suggest that while threads of commonality can be seen in global patriarchal discourses, the fabrics of these discourses surely differ.

In the South African context a culture of patriarchy has tended to dominate across lines of race and class and it is only since liberation in 1994 that the fight against gender inequality has been recognised and legitimised. However, within South African feminist theorising and practice white-middle class women have tended to dominate in knowledge production. Therefore the concept of feminism in South Africa is still fairly new and often viewed in a derogatory fashion as being a mainly Western or white domain (Shefer, 2002).

In light of this it has been strongly argued by several South African feminists (Hendricks & Lewis, 1994, Holland-Muter, 1995, Kemp et al., 1995, De la Rey, 1997 as cited in Shefer, 2002) that it is important not to ignore the difference between women in terms of race, gender, culture, sexual orientation and other forms of social identity when looking at issues of gender, as women experience their relationships and sexual intimacy with men differently.

Thus for the purposes of this study it becomes clear that studying gender and gender roles within the South African context is an incredibly complex process. Not only is it important not to impose Western understandings of gender, but also to continuously bear in mind how gender interacts with other social constructs such as race, class and culture. In addition, all of this needs to be viewed in the context of a predominantly patriarchal history and the current move towards a greater equality between genders.

2.7. Gender Roles, Heterosex and Relationships

Gender roles exist in all spheres of society starting with the division of labour in the family. These socially determined roles for men and women are culturally or socially created and are perceived as being expected and normal. From these gender roles, certain characteristics that are a reflection of what it means to be male or to be masculine are expected of men, while other characteristics are ascribed to women and their femininity. “For example, men are supposed to be natural leaders, decision makers and providers in society, beginning within the family, while women are the caregivers, supporters and followers of men” (Pretorius, 1998, p.1). In addition women are usually allocated the role of domestic chores as if it were normal for them to do this. This type of work is often hidden and not paid for. For the majority of women in South Africa, domestic chores occur over and above work which they do outside of the home (Pretorius, 1998).

Morrell (2001) looks at masculinity specifically within the South African context and how this has changed in light of the relative move towards the liberation of women. He poses some very important questions, “Are men in crisis and should they be assisted to recover their masculinity? Are men able to be part of a quest for gender justice? Are men actually just as entitled as ever before and committed to holding on to their privilege at the expense of women?” (p.4). In attempting to answer these questions Morrell (2001) acknowledges that masculinity is very diverse within the South African context but suggests that men’s reactions can be grouped into one of three main behaviors i.e. by either responding defensively, by being accommodating or adopting non-violent but traditional masculinity or by reacting in a progressive manner.

In a similar manner, women appear to be finding some difficulty in negotiating their new positions in terms of a desire to be treated as equals and yet to have men still

fulfill the predominantly dominant and protective roles which occur in their romanticized notions of relationships (Segal, 1992).

Gender and gender roles define the way women and men behave in society and in relation to each other as well as the manner in which they perceive themselves and their attitudes. The relations between genders structure the roles of men and women and “shape the ideas, knowledge, values, culture, attitudes, structure of society and, in essence, social life itself, and are reinforced in books, history, stories, songs and the media” (Pretorius, 1998, p.1).

Approaching gender from a gendered perspective means that men and women are not studied separately, but rather the relationship between them, the way in which society is structured along gender lines, and the general impact of these relations on society is explored. The gendered perspective explores the subordination of women to men and how this relationship impacts on all aspects of life and society.

Essentially, it looks at fundamentally transforming unequal power relations and thus changing society (Pretorius, 1998).

Linked very closely to approaching gender from a gendered perspective is the study of heterosex or heterosexual sexuality. In the South African context, fairly extensive research in this area has become necessary in order to understand how this relates to pertinent social issues such as HIV/AIDS or violence against women (Sheffer, 2004, Unterhalter et al., 2004).

Thus as Shefer (2004) points out, the current picture of heterosex in South Africa and indeed the world is generally quite negative. She suggests that heterosex is interwoven with gender power inequality in which both men and women engage in reproducing the traditional roles of masculinity and femininity.

In light of this general sense of negativity around heterosexuality it is important to find new ways of relating as men and women. In order to achieve this we need to transcend criticizing and emphasizing the inequities and move on to exploring ways to resist the existing approach to relationships (Shefer, 2004).

Thus Ratele (forthcoming) looks at the notion of both sexes finding new ways of interacting with the view to a democratic understanding of men and women as holding equal places in society. In other words the nature of male and female interaction within relationship requires input and learning from and about both sexes. His sentiments can be seen clearly in the following extract:

“What will reduce the rate and brutality of rape, according to activists and scholars against violence against women and children, is the transformation of the gender order; it is also men learning how to be free alongside women, just as women have fought and learnt, and are fighting and learning, to be free from living under male tyrannies. It is all of us learning what our freedom means, given where we have been. These lessons, not going back to the past, are what will make our society and cultures better adapted to our present and future” (p. 15).

Conclusion

Clearly then the literature clarifies that the social construction of gender roles is based on a multitude of social constructs, including culture, work and education and that while there are many socio-political factors which make the South African context an area of particular interest, a more universal understanding of gender equality involves greater insight into the internal and external experiences of both men and women.

Chapter 3: Research Methods

3.1. Research Aims

- To investigate the ways in which social constructs are perceived by both young women and men as impacting on the construction of gender roles
- To gain a better understanding, through the perceptions of young men and women, of the ways in which these gender roles are negotiated in intimate partner relationships.

3.2. Research Questions

- Do young men and women perceive socially constructed gender roles as impacting on relationships?
- What specific social constructs do young men and women perceive as having an impact on gender roles?
- In what ways do they feel socially constructed gender roles are generally negotiated in relationships?

3.3. Methodological Approach

Due to the fact that qualitative methods tend to allow participants to provide a more open and adaptive means of providing information to the researcher, a qualitative method has been employed in this study in order to allow for a more in-depth understanding of the participant's views or experiences. In addition to this, the context of these participants is a central aspect in informing the various ways in which they perceive social constructs to impact on gender role development and the impact on relationship dynamics. As Ritchie and Lewis (2003) point out, "Those practicing qualitative research have tended to place emphasis and value on the human, interpretivist aspects of knowing about the social world..." (p.7). Understanding the social and psychological phenomena which are so central to this study from a perspective of meaning making and understanding, is important if this research is to make any contribution whatsoever to understanding the complexities of gender within a relationship context.

However, while the richness of the data which is achieved using this method is of great importance to this study it is also important to bear in mind that qualitative methods of analysis can be problematic in terms of their reliability and validity. As Miles and Huberman (1994) point out what is often considered as factual becomes ramified by the explanations of participants, a problem which is further compounded by the various interpretations of the reader. They also refer to the issue of 'impression management' in which the participants only present certain aspects of themselves to the researcher.

In order to try and counter act this issue as much as possible, the utilisation of a form of projection is hoped to have been advantageous. In other words, by asking participants to reflect on the issue of gender roles and relationships more generally, it is hoped that a more realistic picture has been painted than would have been

achieved if participants were assigned the more threatening task of reflecting on their own interaction with their partner.

Furthermore Miles and Huberman (1994) go on to highlight to impact of context on how data is provided and interpreted. It is most likely that the participants have been exposed to the social movement towards greater egalitarianism and that this may have impacted on their answers. Thus, the significance of context has been highlighted throughout the literature review and taken into consideration during the interpretation of the data.

Thematic content analysis has been used to analyse data collected through semi-structured interviews. Thematic content analysis allows for key themes to be identified in the narrative of the participants. This plays an important role in identifying the ways in which they perceive social constructs as impacting on gender roles, and the various ways in which these roles are negotiated in the relationship context. It is hoped that this form of analysis will allow for the data to be useful in determining issues of significance which contribute to the broader knowledge of gender roles in the South African context.

As pointed out by Neuman (1994), thematic content analysis enables the data to be broken down into more comprehensible concepts. Initially the data was classified according to themes. These themes were then coded and used to answer the various research questions posed earlier, with a view to focusing on those aspects of the data which are most relevant and meaningful to the study (Patton,1980).

The coding in this case is latent, in other words the coding has been based on underlying or implicit meaning, rather than visible surface content such as the amount of times a word appears. This requires a greater knowledge of language and social meaning. However, as Neuman (1994) points out, “ the validity of latent

coding can exceed that of manifest coding because people communicate meaning in implicit ways that depend on context, not just in specific words” (p.265).

Within the framework of qualitative approaches it is of central interest, to develop the aspects of interpretation i.e. the categories, as near as possible to the material or in other words to formulate them in terms of the material. For that to occur qualitative content analysis has developed procedures of inductive category development, which are oriented to the reductive processes formulated within the psychology of text processing. (Ballstaedt, Mandl, Schnotz & Tergan 1981; van Dijk 1980, as cited in Mayring, 2000).

Thus, for the purposes of this study the content analysis aims to be based on the ideas of Mayring (2000). The main idea of the procedure is to formulate a criterion of definition, derived from theoretical background and research question, which determines the aspects of the data or findings taken into account. “Following this criterion the material is worked through and categories are tentative and step by step deduced” (Mayring, 2000, p.4). These categories are revised, within a feedback loop and eventually reduced to main categories and checked in respect to their reliability (Mayring, 2000).

As mentioned previously, for this study taking context into consideration is of extreme importance if the integrity of the information is to be maintained. Thus the context which is carefully considered includes elements such as class, culture, education and gender as they relate to living in South African society.

3.4. Participant Selection

Due to the specific nature of the participant group required, a non-probability, purposive sampling method was used. Neuman (1994) suggests that for purposive sampling to be deemed appropriate the sample should involve subjects who will be

particularly informative, and who have been identified for the purpose of in-depth investigation.

The purposive nature of the sampling procedure relates directly to the fact that the selection criteria for this particular sample are fairly specific in nature. The selection criteria are as follows, participants were required to be:

- Between the ages of 20 and 30
- Currently in, or have experience of, a heterosexual relationship
- Currently, or have experience of, co-habiting with their partner

Participants consist of 8 individuals, 4 males and 4 females. The use of these particular selection criteria can be rationalised in the following ways.

The age group of 20-30 is specified due to the fact that individuals within this age group are generally making decisions around education, careers, marriage etc. and negotiating these factors and their impact on relationships may be influenced quite significantly by gender roles.

Heterosexual relationships are specified as a result of the fact that gender roles are constructed in relation to the other. In light of the fact that this study aims to understand the tension and negotiation which takes place in terms of the deconstruction of traditional forms of gender roles, and the movement towards greater levels of equality, it is necessary to include opposite gender relations in order to gain greater understanding of this dynamic.

All participants were middle class and currently dwelling in an urban area.

In addition the particular demographics of this group include the following:

- Participant No.1: Male, age 24, business science student, black.
- Participant No.2: Female, age 27, a researcher and educator, white.
- Participant No.3: Female, age 30, accountant, white.
- Participant No.4: Female, age 30, software developer, asian.
- Participant No.5: Male, age 28, civil engineer, white.
- Participant No.6: Female, age 21, lease administrator, black.
- Participant No.7: Male, age 21, humanities student, white.
- Participant No.8: Male, age 27, civil engineer, white.

Co-habitation has been included in the sample requirements because as the literature shows, gender roles often play out in practical issues such as divisions of labour. Partners who live with one another are also likely to have to negotiate major life decisions regarding issues such as career paths or financial issues. All these elements are therefore likely to provide a larger frame of reference for participants to draw on than individuals who do not co-habit with their partners. Once again it is hoped that this has allowed for the provision of richer data.

In terms of recruiting participants, a network correspondent was utilised in order to gain access to a network of individuals who meet this criteria. A network correspondent refers to an individual who is known to the researcher and who approaches individuals on behalf of the researcher and requests their participation in the study. A network correspondent is used to find participants who, for ethical reasons, are not known by the researcher within a personal capacity. It is important to note that the network correspondent has not been informed directly of who has

accepted or refused the invitation to participate as these individuals were able to contact the researcher directly through a telephonic means of responding to the request.

3.5. Data Collection

Data was collected through the use of individual semi-structured interviews. As Ritchie and Lewis (2003) point out, this form of interview is most useful if a key objective of the study is to understand how participant's conceptions emerge through their narrative. Understanding participants views on contextual factors which impact on the development of gender roles, as well as personal reflections on the way in which these gender roles impact on relationship dynamics, can be most adequately explored through the narrative of the individual.

In order to facilitate a greater degree of expression regarding narrative, the questions used in the interview were open-ended. This was used to encourage the participants to give a more in-depth and informative answer and to allow for deeper exploration of particular points of interest as is the general procedure for a semi-structured interview (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003).

The interview schedule which can be found in appendix B, was formulated based on the research aims and questions. Initially the questions are based on gaining an understanding of the participant's views on gender roles, their origins and their perceived connection to an individual's identity. Other questions on the changing nature of gender roles are utilised to establish how such changes might impact on both genders as well as their perception of such impact on relationships. The other questions looked specifically at certain social constructs which were identified as significant in the literature in an effort to link these findings to the aim of establishing perceptions of the manner in which they might link to the construction

of gender roles. Also there are questions which focus specifically on the second aim of establishing possible ways in which changing gender roles might be negotiated in relationships.

3.6. Reflexive Considerations

The researcher was also aware that pertinent issues with regards to reflexivity required attention in so far as this particular piece of research is concerned. Firstly, in terms of the way in which participants and the researcher related to each other it is important to acknowledge the fact that the researcher is female and that as such, female and male participants related to me in a specific way in terms of how they talked about gender. In addition differences in race or culture may have had an impact on the types of answers which were given.

The researcher also needed to be very aware of personal opinions and understanding of the matters being explored in the study and aimed at all times not to allow these opinions to be reflected to research participants, as this may have directly impacted on the answers or information provided.

As Hook (2004), points out the ability of a researcher to reflect on their own emotional investment and any power dynamics which may influence the research, should be regarded as having a positive rather than a negative impact on the work. Bearing this in mind and armed with the knowledge of any personal impact upon the study the researcher aimed to do the utmost to understand participants from their point of view, rather than imposing a personal interpretation upon them.

3.7. Ethical Considerations

For this study, as with any other study of a qualitative nature, the process of the research requires that the participants reflect on and express personal views and

opinions. Thus although no negative consequences were anticipated the researcher took precautions to avoid emotional stress to the participants as much as possible by using the psychological skills and knowledge gained thus far.

The sampling method was also voluntary in nature, in addition potential participants were informed that there was no direct benefit to participating in the study and that they may choose to drop out of the study at any time, or refuse to answer any question posed to them, with no negative consequences. All of this aimed to contribute to preventing individuals feeling obliged to participate in a study which may involve content that is personally emotionally sensitive or to provide them with the option of not discussing a particular aspect which they felt causes any degree of emotional distress.

It was also necessary to obtain consent to record the interviews on an audio-tape recorder, and to use the information acquired in the interview for academic purposes. This aspect also included making participants aware that direct quotes may be used in the research report. As a result participants were made aware of the limits to confidentiality in terms of the use of direct quotes as well as the use of a network executive. However, confidentiality was maintained as much as possible by removing any identifying data from the final report and allowing participants the opportunity to agree or refuse to participate without having to inform the network executive directly. The tapes of the interviews were kept in a secure location by the researcher and will be destroyed upon completion of the report. In addition all interviews were conducted in a location which allowed for privacy during the interview.

Chapter 4: Results and Interpretation

4.1. Introduction

The results of this study can essentially be divided into three main sections. The first section looks at the participants perceptions of gender roles, in particular how they understand gender roles, how they believe those gender roles are changing, the impact which changes are having on both men and women and whether they believe these changes to be advantageous or disadvantageous.

The other two sections relate directly to the aims outlined previously in the report. Thus the second section speaks to the question of understanding the ways in which social constructs are perceived by both young women and men as impacting on the construction of gender roles.

With regards to this particular section there are further divisions between social constructs which were outlined specifically during the interviewing process and those social constructs which were highlighted by the research subjects as areas of significance without any prompting during the research process.

The last section aims to gain a better understanding, through the perceptions of young men and women, of the ways in which these gender roles impact on intimate partner relationships and how this impact is negotiated.

4.2. Participants perceptions of gender roles

4.2.1. Participants understanding of the concept of gender roles

All of the participants reported that they understood gender roles as being directly linked to tasks, actions or behaviour.

“I would say I understand gender roles to be the sort of behaviors that are expected based on your sex. If you’re a female you’re expected to do certain things, if you’re a male you’re expected to do certain things or you do things based on your sex... I think that gender roles can mean the girls do the cooking and the guys do the braaing or they can do the things that are expected... to behave in a feminine way or in a masculine way. I think its tasks, I think it’s how you fit into society, how you’re expected to fit into society based on your sex and not on anything else”.
(Participant no.3- female)

In addition there seems to be recognition by some of the participants that these roles are socially constructed or occur within a social context as opposed to occurring innately in the individual.

“Well..... um.....gender roles I would assume have something to do with how people relate to their gender and how other people view their gender, so what you do because you are a certain gender... I think it’s also what other people perceive you’re allowed to do and what they perceive that you’re not. So it’s not just that I’m a girl and I can’t do these things, someone else is saying you’re a girl and therefore you can’t do these things” (Participant no. 2- female).

Another participant noted the impact of society on the development of gender roles in addition to recognizing that gender roles are not a static concept but appear to be something which is socially malleable

“I suppose in the old school sense it’s what women are supposed to be doing what men are supposed to be doing. I don’t really see the point of the term anymore. As a role itself it’s not gender specific. Lots of people do various jobs or whatever. Slotting into society that...or used to be a male or female or visa versa”
(Participant no.5-male).

It is clear from the above extracts that for these individuals the understanding which they have of gender roles is directly related to the performance of observable behaviours or ways of being in the world. This relates directly to the social constructionist perspective which acts as framework of understanding for this study

and which focuses on the area of collective discourse and recognizes that individual's psyche emerges from the collective realm (Wetherell, 1996).

4.2.2. Participants beliefs around changing gender roles

This section refers specifically to whether or not participants perceive gender roles as a changing construct. Thus far the literature (Bruffee, 1986, Friedman, 2006, Pretorius, 1998) has suggested that rather than being a constant concept, gender roles are continually changing and evolving in relation to the socio-political context. The findings of the study appear to reflect this aspect of the literature.

“Well I think these days compared to the past if I compare myself now to my parents there's a lot of changes. There's a lot more flexibility and willingness to do certain things, a lot of things that I feel my parents wouldn't be able to, my father in particular, wouldn't be able to” (Participant No. 1-male)

Interestingly, all the extracts in this section appear to suggest that participants perceive the changes seen in gender roles as being extremely recent developments. In other words they believe that a very significant shift seems to have taken place on an intra rather than an inter-generational level.

“I think that now is probably one of the first times that gender roles are changing quite significantly. I think that with more information, more financial freedom and more options I think that roles *are* changing. I think there's less expectation to behave according to a gender role than has ever been before, or that I know of, than there has been before. I think there's a lot more freedom in that and you know...maybe at the same time maybe more anxiety related to it as well. If you...if your behavior is carved out for you it can be frustrating or it can be easier than making your own sort of roles...so I think that there are those dynamics as well” (Participant no.3-female).

The fact that attitudes towards gender roles and the way in which they play out in people's lives appears to be changing extremely rapidly is, is strongly supported by

studies such as the one conducted by Galinsky, Aumann and Bond (2008), which suggests that the percentage of all employees of all ages in their study who agree that it's better for all involved if "the man earns the money and the woman takes care of the home and children" has dropped significantly and substantially over the past three decades—from 64% in 1977 to 41% in 2008, a decline of 23 percentage points.

While this suggests a fairly short change over three decades, it is important to remember that the study is based on American subjects and that the rapidity of change in South Africa is not as comprehensively recorded. In addition the political validation of equal rights for women seems to have occurred far more recently than in the West.

In fact, the results from a study conducted by Kruger (2000) which evaluated the efficacy of exposure to a 'men as partners' programme suggests that the degree of change may not be as extensive in South African society. Measurements of the control group who were not exposed to the programme revealed that only 25% were of the belief that women should have the same rights as men, and 38% felt that it was normal for men to beat their wives.

Results from a Sonke Gender Justice survey conducted in 2006 (as cited in Ambe, Kart, Khumalo, McNab, Peacock and Redpath, 2007), show slightly less extreme attitudes with 41.4% of men feeling that the government is doing too much to end violence against women and 38.4% suggesting that the government is not doing enough in this regard. In terms of their personal involvement 50.1% felt they should be doing more to end violence against women. Thus the importance of measuring attitudes towards gender roles over time is a clear priority in assessing the movement towards equality in South Africa.

Another significant element in this study is that participants appear to suggest that their attitude and behavior regarding gender roles is significantly different to that of their parents and that older generations do not value equality to the same extent.

“It is definitely changing. They’re only changing in the new generation not in the old generation and I think changing in a more equal level that basically each individual has to do both roles” (Participant No.4-female).

Interestingly, Galinsky, Aumann and Bond (2008), appear to suggest that while older generations are in fact more likely to value traditional gender roles, the degree of change in such perceptions is greatest amongst older generations. In other words, while more older individuals value traditional roles than younger people they are also the sector of society whose attitudes towards gender equality is changing most significantly.

In addition to an acknowledgement of the rapid pace of change, some participants appear to be suggesting that these changes are not occurring as separate parallel processes for each sex but rather that the boundaries between the two in terms of levels of power and task division are becoming less distinct.

“...It’s not a fixed job that men are supposed to do this and females are supposed to do that. You do both, both genders do both” (Participant No.4-female).

“Yes, what I’m saying is today your gender does not limit you to what you can become. It’s become part of your characteristic but it’s not your determining factor like it used to be, like you’re a woman you wear a skirt and you’re in the kitchen. Now its become part of who you are but not really the end of you” (Participant No.5-Male).

These results suggest the possibility of a movement towards some form of androgyny. In other words a condition under which the characteristics of the sexes are not rigidly assigned. A study by Guastello and Guastello (2003)

made some interesting findings related to an increase in androgyny in college students in relation to their parents.

The work of Carl Jung and Sandra Bem suggested that Emotional Intelligence could result as a consequence of androgynous development. Guastello and Guastello (2003) found that while there was a significant difference in Emotional Intelligence between men and women of the older generation, this difference did not persist in the younger generation.

Ultimately the study concluded that the internal disposition of young men is changing along with the behavior that goes with it. Whereas the internal dispositions of young women did not appear to have changed during the study. However, more masculine-stereotypic behavior choices were reported for the female students suggesting that although interests and personality characteristics are historically related, the nuance in the younger generation of women is probably more freedom to express interests that were there all along.

This suggests that there is clear movement towards more ambiguous gender role definition, which has important implications for equality as it suggests that gender ideologies are not simply based on a movement towards the more socially beneficial position of masculinity.

4.2.3. The Perceived Impact of changing gender roles on men

Negative Impacts

The findings related to the impact of changing gender roles on men can essentially be divided into negative and positive. The results suggest that in terms of a negative impact the areas of concern appear to centre around the issue of power as well as the impact which such changes have on identity.

Power was referred to by both male and female participants in terms of its impact on men. As the extracts below illustrate a woman gaining power in a relationship does not appear to create a sense of equal power relations. Rather, for both the male and female participants any perceived sense of women having power is equated with a direct loss of power for men, a sentiment strongly promoted in the works of Morell, (2001) and O'Sullivan et al. (2006).

“It’s just a significant shift and yes with men it’s really related more to power that’s why most relationships fail, because now you’re paying the rent you’re viewed as having more power in the relationship. That’s an ego down grade for the male counterpart” (Participant No. 6-female).

“...guys have been a bit hesitant to give up the stereotypical roles because in essence they are giving up the power position. Maybe it’s insecurity to go for a full power sharing concept...” (Participant No. 8-male).

“I’ve seen it in a few guys I went to school with, they’re really struggling with the concept that you’re not going to call the shots because you’re a guy you’re going to have to come up with a solid reason of why you want to do it that way and realize that the other person might not see it the same way. They’ll acknowledge your reasons, but they feel differently. I think it’s hard for a lot of guys out there” (Participant No. 8-male).

The other major area in which gender roles are impacting on men is related to their identity. There appears to be a binary element to how men identify themselves as well as how they are identified by others. On the one hand there appear to still be many expectations of men to meet socially constructed ideas on what is appropriate or desirable behaviour for men.

“I think because there is still the societal expectation that men are going to earn money and provide and be the security basis, that’s like physical security if someone breaks into the house, it’s monetary or economic security it’s like all that stuff. Suddenly they are put into this position where they are not providing where they are not the sole provider. So I think that it has the potential of causing an identity crisis” (Participant No.2-female).

“Well you know what I said about you know that men feel that they have to live up to this stereotype and if they don’t then they are compromising their integrity as a person...I think if they prefer doing things that aren’t seen as

fulfilling that stereotype then yes you aren't a good stereotypical man but you're also not a good person, which is bad" (Participant No. 7-male)

On the other hand there is a general expectation that they should be more 'progressive' in their thinking. Essentially men seem to be receiving a mixed message and are caught in a dilemma around the degree to which they should lend themselves to women's needs in relation to both dependence and independence.

Wetherell (1996), suggests that identity as it relates to masculinity can be fractured, multiple and contradictory. She suggests that this occurs because the various institutions in which an individual is embedded can often pull them in different directions. The following statement represents her view and clearly echoes the issues of identity discussed by participants;

"Any particular man's personality or character may represent a compromise between many different and contradictory influences. These tensions may become evident as he represents himself, either for others in the context of social interaction, or else for himself in the form of private voices, internalized dialogues or patterns of subjectivity" (p.322).

This is in agreement with the idea mentioned previously in the literature which suggests that both men and women may be confused by the social expectation from some quarters of men to be more liberal in their gender ideology, while at the same time meeting more traditional expectations of protectiveness and dominance sought after in romanticised notions of relationships (Segal, 1992).

"For myself I see guys actually struggling in relationships because they see themselves as being more on the masculine side and I think, take myself for example, my boyfriend sometimes really struggles because he thinks I'm too independent he doesn't know what to do" (Participant No. 4-female).

(Connell 1995) Takes a closer look at masculinity and suggests that it is essentially made up of three components. The first one sees masculinity as a social location, the second involves social practices which enable men to have a place in that location and the third involves the effects of those practices on bodily experience, personality and culture.

What the participants appear to be suggesting here is that there is some confusion over the shift which has taken place in these components. Masculinity as a social location is no longer a clear destination. As a result the practices required to ensure a place in that location are no longer as obvious as they once were.

It follows then that changes in these first two components have ultimately resulted in shifts in the third. This may account for the increasing uncertainty amongst men regarding real or anticipated changes in their bodily experience, personality and culture.

Positive Impacts

On the other hand, participants were also able to recognize that a movement away from traditional gender roles has also been beneficial for men. Interestingly there appears to be an acknowledgement that such changes have not only allowed for liberation in so far as they allow women to access new ways of being, but that for some men many more opportunities are available for them to pursue lifestyle choices that were previously limited to the female realm.

“Ja... I mean the same thing that women fight to be treated equally and all the list of things that we’re fighting for does not mean that all the housework and other stuff is something that has to belong to a woman or that men won’t enjoy. I think if they do they’re afraid that they would be named gay or something just because they enjoy house work” (Participant No.4-female).

“Once again it’s a case of guys now becoming parents and no longer this provider that they are meant to be. That’s just the way it is, it’s just a case of leveling the tables and once again given independence so you can choose

what you want to do. If you want to be the person providing you can be that person and if you want to be the person...even if both parties want to fulfill a career they can choose that. No one should prescribe anything” (Participant No. 5-male).

In addition, the choice to start families increasingly later in life appears to hold some benefits for men as well. While this specific choice has traditionally been analysed from the perspective of women focusing on their careers, men have also been able to enjoy a longer period without a great deal of financial or parental responsibility

“It does give men a bit more freedom to take it bit easier in their first couple of years of their working life. There’s no mounting debts... diaper bills... there’s no mortgage, you have more financial freedom if you don’t drop into the family role” (Participant No. 8-male).

Renzetti and Curan (1999) refer to this recognition of the limiting nature of gender roles in their reflection on the men’s liberation movement. While an adequate account of the diverse and controversial approaches in this movement would require a complex reflection, the significant issue is that members of the movement perceive the traditional gender role system has having a negative impact on men. Not only do Renzetti and Curan (1999) recognize that traditional masculinity harms men’s physical and psychological wellbeing but they reflect the implications of this impact in the following statement, “Thus to men’s rights advocates...the continued imposition of a rigidly narrow male sex role results primarily in costs to men and ultimately to the family, schools and other institutions” (p. 24).

In light of this it becomes clear that a movement towards more contemporary gender roles does not only increase the liberties of women but also provides a context in which men are able to explore new ways of being.

4.2.4 The Perceived Impact of changing gender roles on women

The women in the study identified the positive impact of changing gender roles as being related to several significant social and personal elements. As a result there appear to be two interlinked components which have been part of the improved experience of women. These include independence and opportunity.

Opportunity as it relates to practical access to the workplace, legal rights, task division etc. but also the opportunity to experiment with identity and ways of being.

“Alternatively I think that for people my age I think there’s a more accepting view of gender roles. So gender roles are slightly more fuzzy and you don’t as the woman, you don’t have to come home and cook supper because you share cooking or you share cleaning and stuff like that. It’s more negotiable and it’s kind of free in a younger person’s life” (Participant No. 2-female).

“I think that it’s advantageous to a large extent and I think that women are feeling more advantaged by this than men are because there are more opportunities that are opened up to them. They have the ability in terms of not just for themselves but in terms of social recognition so they are able to do things that they would not have been able to do before” (Participant No. 2- female).

It stands to reason that women who have access to more opportunities are no longer reliant on men to act as advocates for them but rather that these opportunities have allowed them to experience more independence in multiple spheres of life.

“For women that are more independent, the bunch of friends that I know that when you’re independent you have your own career, you have your own family; you do your own thing not really concerned. You enjoy your freedom... From my side I enjoy being independent doing my own thing” (Participant No. 4-female).

Despite the many positive outcomes of changing gender roles for women, participants reported there were also several negative ways in which these changes have impacted on women.

One of these is the concern that rather than sharing equal responsibility for unpaid work in the domestic sphere some women are in fact taking on the responsibility of

paid work as well as most, if not all, the domestic related labour. This idea is strongly supported by Burr (1998) who recognizes that while a great many more women are entering the world of paid work, research suggests that there has been little change in the amount of work men do in the home.

“I think at the same time women actually take on more stress, women can’t let go. Eventually you feel that you’re playing two roles. When you go out you feel like you’re a male and when you’re at home you feel like you’re the woman you have to do everything you’re supposed to do” (Participant No. 4-female).

Another very significant impact reported by participants relates to the impact which changing gender roles has had on women’s ability to establish a relationship. The main difficulty appears to be that an increase in power and independence has the potential to result in a woman having trouble finding a partner.

“Some women actually even feel threatened by the fact that they have the money; most actually end up by themselves and not in any relationship because of that power” (Participant No. 6-female).

“Like you’re so independent you probably won’t find any man. That was stated, you probably won’t find a guy because guys don’t know what to do with you. So I’m fine I’ll just do my work and live my life” (Participant No. 4-female).

The explanations for such a phenomenon are undoubtedly complex. Nonetheless as Copcock, Haydon and Richter (1995) point out, ‘Ultimately, women are instructed that conformity to weakness, passivity and self-sacrifice will encourage male love/approval but that independence, strength and self-confidence will be punished by castigation, desertion and physical abuse. In this context stereotyped images of women in ‘acceptable’ roles are presented as ‘natural’(p.110). Thus a possible explanation is most likely linked to the social value placed on behaving in a manner which more closely reflects traditional ideas of what is acceptable behaviour for women and which is less threatening to the power position held by men. .

4.2.5. The perceived advantages of traditional gender roles

While for the most part participants appear to have fairly negative perceptions of traditional gender roles there was some reference to the fact that these gender roles are well known and consequently more clearly defined.

“Well I think the system as a whole...if you can call it a system...it worked pretty smoothly, you had somebody providing the income and you had somebody taking care of the house but...you know that’s disempowering to women and I suppose you could see it as being disempowering to men as well” (Participant No. 7-male) .

“I think that it’s advantageous in that people know what their roles should be. There’s quite clearly defined roles, this is what I as a woman I should be doing, this is what I as a man should be doing. They are very clearly defined and you know what you’re expected to be doing” (Participant No.2-female)

As a result there appears to be less anxiety around how these roles are negotiated. As pioneers of a different approach to gender issues it quite clear that many young people are no longer able to rely on the examples laid down by older generations.

“The advantages would be that it’s a fairly well walked path, there are less questions to it. You can somewhat relate back to what did mom and dad do what did gran do. As soon as you break away from that you’re kind of cutting more of your own path...” (Participant No. 8-male)

4.2.6. The perceived disadvantages of traditional gender roles

While the earlier extracts related to the impact of traditional roles on men clearly illustrates that they can have a deleterious effect, traditional gender roles were seen

by participants as being disadvantageous for women in particular. The results suggest that many of the issues are linked to the lack of independence and respect which traditional views afford women.

“To me traditional beliefs like where the lines between male and female were originally drawn, they violate a lot of the woman’s rights as such. Women were not viewed as partners in a relationship, in a marriage or a business. They were not in business. They were literally viewed as kids with no brains, with no capacity to make money or contribute to the economy of the country in any way. To me really that was the big disadvantage because I really believe for anything to happen, especially in a relationship situation, both parties should be feel important and should be able to contribute equally even though it might not be in the same level but I believe both should have that freedom to voice out how they feel in order for a relationship to be successful. So to me really, traditional approach to gender is very disadvantageous...” (Participant No.6-female)

“RESEARCHER: So you’re saying a disadvantage of traditional gender roles for women was that those tasks weren’t shared and now they are. They didn’t have the power that they now have in a relationship. Do you think there was an advantage for them in traditional gender roles?”

PARTICIPANT: No. You’re talking women right? No. If anything all the advantages were for the men.

RESEARCHER: Do you think there were disadvantages for the men?”

PARTICIPANT: If there were, they were very little. I can’t think of any disadvantages for the male” (Participant No.1-male).

Not only does this previous extract suggest that ideas on the negative impact of traditional roles on men are by no means universal but with regards to the impact which traditional roles had on women’s independence the results appear to suggest that the issue may be more complex and does not simply speak to the practical advantages of equality. Participants also noted that such roles have the potential to severely restrict self expression and there is a lack of congruence between the internal needs of the individual and the behaviour required for social acceptance.

“I think that the disadvantage is that you tar everyone with the same brush or maybe 50 or 60% are happy with that and it suites them perfectly, but for the 40% there’ll be a lot of unhappiness and questioning of, what’s wrong with me? why don’t I fit in? It causes completely unnecessary stress, whereas if you took that expectation away, maybe 60% will just do that anyway because it feels natural to them but the 40% it would eliminate that ‘I am wrong’, ‘why don’t I fit in with everyone else?’. I think there’s a lot of stress in that, and it just seems completely unnecessary” (Participant No.3-female).

“As soon as you break away from that you’re kind of cutting more of your own path and the advantage to that is you get to make a lot of your own based decisions. I think you can be more expressive. I hope that’s true, I’m not sure but I think at the end of it you get a better sense of self” (participant No.8-male).

Feingold (1994, as cited in Eagly and Wood, 2003) suggests that stereotypic expectations based on gender can also have an impact on behaviour by becoming internalised as part of an individual’s self concept. In addition this behaviour develops from self-regulatory practices. Such practices are usually regulated in accordance with the perception of the various rewards and costs that each behaviour offers during social interaction (Eagly and Wood, 2003).

This explanation may directly account for the internal struggle between actualisation and social acceptance, where an individual’s perception of the rewards of social approval outweigh the cost of pursuing any behaviour that does not prescribe to the traditional social value system (Burn, 1996). It is also possible to assume that as social perceptions of acceptable gender-based behaviour change, so too does the risk involved in taking part in less traditional pursuits.

4.3. Social constructs which are perceived to impact on the development and maintenance of gender roles

‘Social construction understands reality, knowledge, thought, facts, texts, selves, and so on as community-generated and community-maintained linguistic entities-or, more broadly speaking, symbolic entities-that define or "constitute" the communities that generate them’ (Bruffee, 1986 p.773).

In other words the social constructs outlined below would not exist independently of the communities that have created and maintained their existence. Society’s acknowledgement and validation of these constructs is what enables their existence.

However as Bruffee (1986) suggests, these constructs in turn play a significant role in determining how our society functions. As a result those constructs which participants identified as having an impact on and interplay with gender role formation have been outlined below.

4.3.1. Culture and Religion

This section looks specifically at the constructs which were directly investigated during the interview process. Participants were specifically asked to share their thoughts on these constructs as both culture and religion play an important role in terms of their impact on the individual's development (Kalichman et al., 2008, Richmond-Abbott, 1983, Wood, 1994). It is hoped that including these constructs will provide more insight into the nature of their impact on participant's belief systems in as far as they relate to gender roles.

Inglehart and Norris (2003), capture this sentiment well in the following statement, "Perceptions of the appropriate division of roles in the home and family, paid employment and the political sphere are shaped by the predominant culture – the social norms, beliefs and values existing in any society which in turn rests on levels of societal modernization and religious tradition" (p.8).

4.3.1.1. Culture

Participants clearly recognised culture as playing a very significant role in gender roles, both as a continuing influence and as a strong factor in the formation of attitudes and beliefs about gender roles.

"You're going to be brought up according to your culture and how flexible your culture is basically determines how you're going to interpret changes into what your partner needs and what you should be doing to be one" (Participant No.1-male).

“I think so and I think... look I mentioned culture earlier and I don’t have much interaction with many different cultures but I think that makes a big difference as well depending on your culture and what the roles in your culture are will relate to how you view the other person and how you view yourself in terms of gender roles” (Participant No.2-female).

“I think that like I said earlier it’s usually taught. If you socialize or you are brought up in a learning and a culture that is very gender role intensive and you...it teaches you that then I think there will be a lot more to it than a culture that doesn’t have that effect. I think it’s a very big part of it because it’s a taught thing” (Participant No. 3-female).

“I think religion and cultural groups do set out a path for the gender groups, whether it’s intended whether it’s just happened at the time it’s just the way it is. I suppose it sort of sets it in stone more the gender issues because it’s no longer a case of well you know mom and dad did this, this is our culture it’s been done forever. So I think it’s a contributing factor but it’s a factor in the same way that we were saying that your gender roles are formed by your environment and culture is your environment so it’s a major contributing factor to your idea of gender roles” (Participant No.7-male)

In addition to the understanding which participants have about the role of culture in the development of beliefs and attitudes regarding gender roles, the following participants also noted the potential difficulty in electing to move away from cultural norms.

“It tends to be such a big part of you that it really defines the person you are to a large extent, what you will do and what you will not do your morals, values your ethics. It does pose a big obstacle to adjusting to modern society. To some people it feels like they are losing their individuality, you’ll be losing a part of you if you’re going to adopt this new cultural equality concept. You’re losing part of your culture. That is also a big situation, a big compromise because you’re going to be dropping something you’ve known all your life for a new concept. It makes the situation more of a gamble that people find themselves in and it’s not even an easy one because going forward whatever decision you make is what you’ll teach your generation. So the impact is quite huge as well” (Participant No.6-female).

“I don’t know how to describe it but like the Afrikaans culture, the Chinese culture, the Indian culture are very strong cultures. If you grow up in the family the thing sticks with you and for you to break out of it you almost feel like you’re betraying something. I think maybe that’s why it takes longer for things to change because slowly the grandparents might not accept it but the parents might accept that their kids are going different ways or they’re going to live their lives. With time each generation will accept a little bit more and then eventually you will smooth out easier...”(Participant No. 4-female)

“Your culture instills your beliefs, you grow up and your values and your beliefs you grow up living them. It’s really hard for people to accept change especially when it comes to their culture. That having been something that they are familiar with their whole lives their culture really becomes a huge barrier” (Participant No.6- female).

“It presents conflict, culture still has major impact both in personal relationships and in business. It’s still an obstacle that we still need to get over. People are still very loyal to their cultures and they’re very proud of them I think that’s what makes the whole gender subject very sensitive even though we have come such a long way in trying to overcome the whole barrier. There is so much that affects it be it political situations in the country, the culture that people believe” (Participant No. 6-female).

In addition to the recognition by participants of the impact of culture in a fairly general sense, participants also referred to specific cultures. As the extract below illustrates there is an understanding that while culture is generally perceived as a factor in the development of an individual’s gender role norms, the outcomes of this process are not universal. Rather each culture is recognized as having a different set of norms which consequently impact in different ways.

“Cultures are very different, you find that other people are going to be more tolerant on certain things and others are very..... this is how we do things and this is how it’s going to stay type thinking. So it’s a huge difference there. Difference in culture that’s what plays the huge role”(Participant No.1-male).

In a more definite sense participants appear to reflect on the very traditional approach to gender roles amongst African men specifically. One participant in particular reflected a great deal on the issue.

“In African culture specifically, African native culture specifically, playing the biggest role but really in modern society as well it still poses that obstacle. What you were taught when growing up or what you were taught your particular religion believes in or what they preach to you tend to conflict with some of the issues related to gender equality “(Participant No. 6-female).

“African men I’ve had an opportunity of talking to or getting a view from, were really very positive or were very happy with how things were. Some wanted it to be that way because they still think women are incompetent, they base it on whatever their past was like. I really have not come across one who feels the way we women feel to say that we were oppressed and we could have contributed a lot more had we been given the opportunity” (Participant No. 6-female).

While there is a great deal of literature which focuses on the patriarchal or misogynistic elements of African masculinity it is important to caution against labeling African men so broadly. Rather it needs to be understood that within African society there a multitude of cultures and individuals with a variety of nuances and gender related belief systems (Morrell, 2001, Shefer, 2002). That said, Zulu culture was reflected on by participants as being particularly traditional in its approach to gender relations.

“You still get men today who will tell you I’m Zulu and you cannot do that or at work where it’s a Zulu culture that a woman cannot look a man in the eye. It’s a sign of disrespect while in today’s society if you do not look somebody in the eye it’s a sign of inferiority you’re shying away from them or you’re feeling belittled by them”(Participant No.6-female).

“Well I feel as though because of the changes some people depending on your cultural standpoint it’s going to be hard for other people to come to terms with it. Looking at a typical man from say Zululand if his whole life he knew that I’m more superior than my woman the changes now they’re not going to go down well with them. That’s what I feel” (Participant No.1-male).

However, as Ratele (forthcoming) puts it, “In considering black men as males our tools should therefore be aimed at revealing both the power over others as well as the powerlessness from racial, social, cultural and economic positions; at both the odds black males face but also the behaviours that are usually glossed over as part of having grown up under harsh conditions or being a real Zulu or Tsonga man”(pg.107).

The participant also refers to the impact which changes around gender role norms and task division have had on African men. The loss of a position of authority and power appears to have been problematic for some men who are finding it difficult to adapt to the idea of equality between the sexes.

“Especially African men. I feel that other cultures, even though there was still a distinct barrier to say male can do that female can do that, when you came to family life there was still that bit of a collaboration type of environment where maybe mommy and daddy will do something together of course not as often as we do it today. In African culture it’s a totally different environment, daddy does that

and mommy did that and that's how we grew up and now having to be in this world where mommy says the last word because mommy earns the most money. It's quite a change" (Participant No. 6-female).

"Yes, in African culture. Post 1994 that's when everything fell into women empowerment and you know that's when we started seeing black males coming into power as well while still adjusting to that, being the big man now, then women came and now women are on top of them. I think it was very quick speedy change and but somehow the distinct line between male and female will never disappear, it will always be there somehow..." (Participant No.6-female).

The issue of African men specifically as being viewed as particularly patriarchal is a complex issue, especially within the South African context. Morrell (2001) as well as O'Sullivan (2006) recognize the significant impact which the subordination of black men during apartheid has had on African masculinity and suggest that being treated as an inferior form of masculinity may account for the widespread need amongst African men to establish a power position in relation to women as a means of dealing with racial emasculation.

However as has been mentioned previously, it is important to bear in mind the fluidity of masculinity and the impact of social change. As a consequence (Morrell, 2003 and Sideris, 2004, as cited in O'Sullivan et. al, 2004) suggest that there are new configurations of masculinity amongst young African men that refer to the potential for a more tolerant and respectful approach to women.

4.3.1.2. Religion

In terms of religion there was a similar acknowledgement of the idea that religion plays an important role in shaping the individuals belief system with regards to gender role

"I think that also again in religion, and I know I'm bringing up a whole lot of stuff now. You have this view of how you're supposed to act in terms of your gender according to your cultural base, according to your religion. So in some very intense Christian religions or Muslim religions, Jewish religions or whatever you have this assumption that the woman should be subservient and I think that culturally this idea of women being subservient is continued (Participant No.2- female).

Religion was also spoken about with direct reference to two particular religions, namely Christianity and Islam. Interestingly there were differing opinions with regards to the way in which Christianity may impact on gender role formation. One participant was of the view that Christianity has the tendency to perpetuate traditional gender role and the consequent inequality:

“I’ve had this debate... my sister is quite fundamentally Christian, I know there’s quite a large spectrum of Christian, but she quite fundamentally Christian and we’ve had this debate before about whether it does not decrease equality. I think it does...and if at the end of an argument you can’t come to a resolution you have to... I don’t what the word is...acquiesce ...or whatever it is to your husband. There isn’t equality there... I know it’s not in black and white, I mean the actual workings of relationship might be very different but if those are the rules then it pulls down the level of equality” (Participant No.3- female).

However, another participant viewed Christianity as playing an important role in creating a greater sense of equality between the sexes.

Christian speaking I don’t think...I think the main impact – there’s a lot more tolerance towards gender differences, gender equality and... I think Christianity speaking if anything has more advantages in that regard because you find that we’re preaching about unifying being one and helping each other so if anything more advantages, not much disadvantages, can’t even think of one... You find that even now these days in churches there’s female pastors. They’re really into this whole thing of gender equality (Participant No.1-male).

Alternatively Islam was perceived by many participants as a prime example of the manner in which religion can play a significant role in perpetuating gender inequality. Women in this religion were seen to be particularly subjugated and men as being in a far greater position of power.

“I think it’s quite a big thing because depending on the religion... for instance a lot of the Muslim... I think not even necessarily fundamentalists ...do teach the wife taking a submissive role and then it obviously goes to an extreme and that. Like the burka...which I think is an extreme case. I think that there is that taught ...on top of your natural socialization as another layer added to that” (Participant No.3- female).

“Most of my friends are Muslim and for them the man has to be the back bone of everything and I think that is what holds you back from accepting what’s changing. Lots of them are changing because they’re accepting their friends to be equal

female friends and stuff but will they do the same for their wives? You don't know. Religion has very strong traditional values and that holds them back accepting what's happening here" (Participant No.4-female).

"To a degree I think religion plays a big part in a lot of gender roles... for instance the whole.... I don't know the religion very well but Muslim spaces ...I don't think the burka thing allows freedom. There are certain people who abide by the rules in that religion and see it as a way to do things" (Participant No.5- male)

"...your general perception of a Muslim relationship is that the male is, by religion, by religious doctrine the superior member in the relationship. If you're a Muslim guy you come across a sort of non religious driven girl and you hit it off I think setting a basis for a relationship and I think if she's fairly strong willed and has advancement ideas for herself there's going to be conflict" (Participant No.8-male).

While the role of religion in gender role development is undoubtedly a very complex and varied one, there is clearly a link between the historical development of traditional gender roles and certain religious dogma (Richmond-Abbott, 1984). Read (2003) conducted a study on women participating in both the Christian and Muslim faith which supports this notion by suggesting that women who belong to and participate in conservative denominations typically have more traditional attitudes towards gender roles than those with weaker religious ties.

4.3.2. Family, Education, Work, Media, Urban vs. Rural Populations, Globalisation and Exposure to Multiculturalism.

The following constructs were not reflected on specifically during the interview process but rather were identified spontaneously by the participants as playing a role in developing society's belief system regarding gender roles

4.3.2.1 Family

In accordance with the ideas put forward by Davidson (1979) participants reflected on their belief that family plays an important role in determining which beliefs and attitudes an individual will develop with regards to gender roles. Specifically

participants appear to feel that children tend to adopt the gender roles which are exhibited within the family system.

“I mean with how people are brought up its how parents tell them what boys and girls are supposed to do...what tasks are given to them to do, I think boys are brought up differently to girls...they are expected to do different things”(Participant No.7-male)

I think it's based on how you grew up and what it was like in your family, how your dad did that and how your mom did that and how your grandparents did it. So to me it's really society and people's culture and beliefs and what is acceptable that really created this whole...(Participant No.6-female)

Critically one participant reflected on the fact that it is not families in isolation which create these belief systems and ways of being. Rather, it is the family as an element in the broader context of community and society which is significant.

“You always take on the mindset of sort of the way your parents always did things. The concept of mom stays at home looking after the house and family, dad goes out to work and does the financial side. I think that's the beginning of where those mindsets are sort of played in. It's not just your parents that do it it's all the other kids you know their families do the same. That's sort of where it comes in” (Participant No.8-male).

In addition one participant noted the significant role which changes in family structure have played in changing the social norms regarding the roles males and females are expected to play in the family.

“You don't see the stereotypical mom, dad, two kids, with mom always walking around with an apron sort of story. I think we now end up with a lot more divorced single parent households, those gender roles are being blurred a little bit. I think like all social norms it's evolving. Where you actually imprint from I suppose is more a case of circumstance, random, what is your exposure to different archetypes really” (Participant No.8-male).

“I see this as the breakdown of the stereotypical family unit as probably being the catalyst, the start of all of this. So maybe it's a bit of a contradiction when people talk about the breakdown of traditional family values, this could be the positive spin off from that. We're getting rid of some fairly rigid social structure and allowing people to sort of... step forward... to a sort of... equalizing of the sexes or being able to express yourself more as individuals, in terms of historical roles... But you know... it's led to more single parent families which if you're lacking one

half of the set structure you have to compensate for that somehow. That goes out as an example to other people to say if they can do it, if they can perform both roles why can't we switch in our relationship and take on portions of each other's roles. So where it begins I don't know I think maybe it's the springing back of what people perceived as being the negative side of the next generation the divorced families the single parent families. It's an evolution for them it's what we've taken out of those perceived not positives and we've taken that forward " (Participant No.8-male).

A study conducted by Yodanis (2005) suggests that in countries where divorce rates are high there is a positive correlation with greater equality in intact marriages. However, her explanation for this phenomenon differs somewhat from the participant's in that she postulates that this level of equality is a result of the women acquiring greater leverage in a marriage when the possibility of divorce exists.

Another significant element of the results pertaining to family looked specifically at family structure and task division. This was spoken about in particular relation to the issue of child rearing and the changes in how couples may elect to raise their children. There is a suggestion that there is a movement away from men being limited to role of provider and women restricted to the role of care-giver.

"If we're speaking about relationships and not individuals, as a unit you can decide should you want to have kids that there'll be one provider or two providers, I guess it depends on the unit. You can choose to step away from your kids and bring money in. At some stage when someone needs to be home you can choose whether it be a male or female. I think for certain periods, the initial periods it needs to be the mother for obvious reasons. But thereafter if the relationship chooses that someone should stay home and look after the kids I don't think it should matter who it is, be it male or female" (Participant No.5-male).

"Families which rely completely on au pairs are actually quite common so there is no breadwinner or provider 'homebody' role anymore. It's sort of mingled or it's both people providing and having employed someone to do the caregiver role. That's how it's different from my grandparents days. The concept of my gran working after she had children on a full time basis was unheard of. It was grounds for divorce. [laughter]" (Participant No.8-male).

Wood (1994) reinforces the idea put forward by participants that family plays a central role in shaping children's views of gender in a general sense as well as their own. She highlights that there are many processes involved in the role of family

including unconscious identification, and internalizing of gender as well as learning from the communication of gender and modeling. As a result most children's initial views on gender roles reflect the attitudes and behaviours of their parental figures.

It stands to reason then that children who come from families with a less traditional structure are likely to adopt less traditional views and behaviours when it comes to gender roles. In addition the increase in women taking part in paid work will undoubtedly have an impact on the way in which children internalize the roles of men and women resulting in an increasing view that task division between men and women is less distinct than in previous generations.

4.3.2.2. Education

One of the ways in which education was viewed as playing a role in gender role development related to experiences during childhood which illustrated that males and females are treated differently:

For instance in school we....when I went to my primary school the girls were allowed to play on the jungle-gyms during the short breaks boys were allowed to play on the jungle-gyms during the long breaks. I think like your gender is inevitably going to in a lot of ways it restricts you or it makes you more able to do certain things because of how people perceive you (Participant No.2-female).

In this way educational institutions reflect the value systems of broader society (Wood, 1994). However, the impact of these experiences can further perpetuate inequality or as illustrated below they can play a positive role by exposing individuals to experiences which foster perceptions of equality and foster a consequent change in beliefs and behaviors.

“Well you get to see your sisters at school like I said we're pretty much doing the same things. I'm in class with ladies I would be lying if I said to you I beat them all the time. There are things that they do which I cannot do hence I say to you it brings that awareness to us men that there's nothing really different here we are all the same. They can do things that we can and visa versa” (Participant No.1-male).

“ I think in this day and age probably quite hard because it’s a bit of a transitional... had a girl who studied with me who studied as a civil engineer but her father still felt she could still have an arranged marriage and that was just the way it was. It blows me away that a well educated person and very good at what she does and this old school mentality slots her into this kind of society or gender role or whatever it may be. There are certain rules that she must follow because she’s a girl if she were a guy it would have been viewed very differently. It’s all very strange and I think at this stage people are probably willing to stand up and change these things whereas before you would have just accepted it” (Participant No.5-male)

In fact the majority of participants referred to education in terms of the positive role it plays in creating gender equality, which appears to suggest that a lack of education may be a contributing factor in perpetuating unequal treatment of the sexes. Despite the fact that a study by Bradley (2000) suggests that the participation in certain educational courses is still occurs very much along gendered lines, with women participating in education, social sciences and humanities and men participating in natural sciences, mathematics and engineering, exposure to tertiary education was still reported by participants as having a positive impact on gender equality. In this way education may need to be considered as an important catalyst for positive change.

“If you didn’t go out and get tertiary education you still have the same mentality that you see where you stay say in your rural area type case. You still see the same behavior that you won’t get in a society that we’re staying in now” (Participant No.1-male).

“In varsity you find that you want to have more fun you don’t want to settle down and get tied down and a lot of people just choose to be free and do what they want. They go out; they tour and do all sorts of things before they think of settling down” (Participant No.4-female)

“I think it could be an issue of education. I don’t speak for poorer communities because I was never part of one but I think education plays a role. There’s a high number of people who are not educated and see their culture is the right path to follow, they don’t have any alternatives or options to consider” (Participant No.5-male).

“...but the question when a girl leaves school is not who am I going to marry when am I going to have kids it’s what am I going to study at university. When

University is finished it's not now I'm educated lets raise a family start a house hold, it's more a case of what career am I going to get, how soon before I make partner"(Participant No.8-male).

As with other social constructs educational institutions have the ability to impact both positively and negatively on the development of more egalitarian gender roles. Perhaps the critical nature of the content at a university level of education accounts for a more contemporary view of gender roles. However, the literature on gender and education tends to focus more on access to education for women and more needs to be done to understand if and why exposure to tertiary levels of education increases attitudes and behaviours consistent with greater gender equality.

4.3.2.3. Work

Both the literature and the results suggest that women have become more involved in paid work than they were previously (Gallinsky,Aumann and Bond, 2009). While the participants acknowledged the headway that women have made a certain amount of discrimination in the work place appears to still exist.

"I think if we had real equality then we wouldn't have sexism issues, you will worry only about the ability of being able to do it but here males have been dominating for so long that a lot of them feel threatened. A lot of them don't want to work with women. Some of them will never say you're a woman so you got demoted but you can clearly see females being chased away from departments. We still see a lot of that now. I don't think it's balanced yet it's probably going to take until our generation gets older and then the next generation will see it as a norm then we'll balance" (Participant No.4- female).

"Having the same qualification as your male counterpart still makes you inferior and you still have to go the extra mile for people to actually start realizing and actually acknowledging you for the same position that your male counterpart is in" (Participant No.6-female)

Despite this one participant reported having a more positive perception of gender-based discrimination in the work place. This suggests the possibility that discrimination is not universally present in the work place and that some important gains have been made in recent years which have allowed women to experience more equality.

“A friend of mine was saying ten years ago it was so difficult for women in business... it was so difficult to like be respected... and I’ve never had that experience and she’s only ten years older than me so It’s so strange that she can remember that now because for me I’ve never ever experienced that in any way. I think the ground work has meant that its easier for people to step outside their role, there were always going to be people that will do that but for the more middle of the road people it easier now and I think that ground work has made all the difference” (Participant No.3-female).

Interestingly, resistance to a change of traditional gender roles appears to also result in some discrimination against men who elect to take on more traditionally female duties such as caring for children. This finding is strongly supported by the literature which has noted a strongly negative attitude towards men taking on more of a role in the sphere of child care (Lester, 2008, Renzetti and Curran, 1999). This socially based attitude is further enforced by a lack of adequate paternal leave policies (Wambugu, 2004). The example below illustrates just how significant a role traditional gender roles discourse can play in inhibiting individuals who no longer base their lifestyle choices on d social perceptions of appropriate gendered behaviour.

“Umm... Someone that I work with... their son got very sick recently and he actually stayed home to look after his son and his wife continued to go to work. Their reasoning was... she is the higher salary earner and her job is more fulfilling to her, she can carry on, it’s pointless for them both to stay behind and he can do just as good a job as her. Our employer didn’t see it that way, you’re the man of the house she’s the mother and she should stay and look after the kid. Why should we grant you any family responsibility leave for what should be your wife’s job? Honestly that’s mind boggling, it’ rubbish. You can’t argue that. The trend in our office is if someone in your family gets sick, you as the wife will be the one who covers that court. You’re the one who takes them for x-rays and stuff and make sure the fever breaks. So that’s one way” (Participant No.8-male).

In addition to discrimination related salaries and perceived ability, gender roles in the work place have meant that there are certain occupations which are traditionally occupied by either women or men (Christy 1990, Messing, 2006). The participants gave some examples of how they feel this is changing. Nevertheless such change

appears to be outside of the norm and the eradication of occupational stratification along lines of gender seems to be a long way off.

“In other roles like in the mining industry where women are using a lot of heavy duty equipment especially in the coal mines and it’s simply because they’re more reliable and are less aggressive on the machines. So that’s a big shift and when you say that to people a lot of them are surprised that women are working these machines and they tend to perform better than the men... I think different types of skills, it’s still very male dominated the mining industry but there are certain roles that women just tend to do better than men and its not necessarily the obvious choice but there are ladies involved in every single aspect” (Participant No.5-male).

“You know I mean myself having been a woman doing a course in property studies is very different. I’m in a situation at work at the moment where it’s very gender related, the industry having been dominantly known as a male dominated industry and now having all these projects that are run by women. You know it really impacts on the way people perceive you. You are qualified or whatever people will still feel you’re inferior, it’s got that...it presents that obstacle of having to prove beyond what a man would normally have to do simply because you’re female. Personally it’s quite a big challenge for people, for their own growth and to make in today’s society” (Participant No.6-female).

Overall however, many participants appear to view the area of paid work as being a significant arena in which more gender role equality has taken place.

“Well they’re certainly changing, there are a lot of powerful business women and there are a lot more fathers now who stay at home with their kids if that’s what they choose. I think that’s an absolute shift and that’s just a decision that the family would take” (Participant No.5-male).

“If you compare to the past we are more independent in that after varsity we find jobs we carry on with our lives. We don’t depend on our parents, we don’t rush to get married so we can depend on our husbands and we can look after ourselves on our own. I think for me that’s the independent part that the older generation did not have because women couldn’t find jobs or the few that managed to start their own businesses were recognized because it was so rare for women to be able to do that. Now it’s hardly a thing to talk about because people just find jobs and they carry on” (Participant No.4-female).

“Now you get women coming home at eleven having driven from a meeting all by herself and the husband is at home sleeping with the kids. As an individual it does come and hit you and you’re like this is so different because it’s a new system all together” (Participant No.6-female).

Other participants noted the change and recognized that the independence afforded to women and demands of paid work may result in new demands on a relationship level. However such demands also create the opportunities for both partners to take on new identities.

“I think that if I think about it in this way there’s a lot more responsibilities for ladies, for women as men now we get to acknowledge that. In the past our grandparents didn’t work, our grandmothers rather, let me put it that way, didn’t work. They stayed at home and handled all those chores and what not, it was perceived as a woman’s task but today we all work we come home and we’re tired. We pretty much understand where they’re coming from. We can’t expect them to be having higher energy levels than we do” (Participant No.1-male).

“I think financial elements make a big difference to things, I think that in relationships and in the society that we live in financial freedom opens up a lot more doors than it did before. I think that for instance women are expected to have a job ...it’s a given, you need to support yourself. Whereas before I think it was unfeminine to work. Financial freedom opens up the option to look at things differently and to have an equal footing in a relationship. I think that also there’s more options... if the only person you ever know is..... if every woman you met in your life... was a house wife that had kids, the first woman that doesn’t do that would be very shocking. Now we know of so many people who do both or one of the other who have fluid gender roles in relationships and it’s not necessarily same sex ...heterosexual. There’s so many options put there that makes it easier and easier for people to experiment with different gender roles or to reassess theirs” (Participant No.3-female).

4.3.2.4. Media

The participants reflected on the role of media as a social construct. As mentioned previously social constructs not only contribute to the development of social norms but in turn reflect the existing norms of society. Media was very specifically highlighted as operating in this way. Participants noted that while media has an impact on the development of gender role norms, it also acts as a reflection of the gender roles which already exist in society.

“ I think it’s the same as society or people around you, except that it’s like a condensed version so you’re taught like...I think there are a lot of stereotypes on TV, gender stereotypes. I think that unconsciously they reinforce what’s already there. I think if you took away TV the gender roles would still be the way they are but they would not be reinforced by this background of the same thing being repeated. Sometimes even a bit exaggerated, TV is a reflection of real life it sort of reinforces that...I think it mirrors it a little bit more and a little bit more exaggerated. I think it can sort of be a little bit more over the top than real life but I don’t think it is to blame or anything like that” (Participant No.3-female).

“It still plays quite a large role in terms of we get quite a lot of our social norms from the media whether that’s a good or a bad thing I’m not sure. I suppose you can argue both ways that the media is reflecting as it’s being portrayed coming from the media. My grandparents talking about they were both involved in the war, they’re English and the British government went on a fairly wide campaign of re-instituting the sort of the family roles... It was very media driven in terms of gender roles there. Now it’s maybe a bit more subliminal... there’s no specific pamphlet going out saying husbands must do this and this and wives must do this, this, this. I think it is playing a large portion but not as much as your actual family environment or your social environment but I think it’s there in the background slowly ticking away” (Participant No.8-male).

As with all social constructs, media can simultaneously play a role in creating the dialogue and awareness which is necessary for individual and social change in addition to perpetuating traditional views of the role of women and men in society.

“It’s actually something that I think is in two parts actually. I think general media and the kinds of things that you’re going to read in the newspapers, I hope... or the kinds of things that I tend to read will be talking about women’s liberation, but not about bra burning, but about gender equality and stuff like that or equity. In my opinion there’s the other side of that which is like the magazines that promote this view that women still should be in certain role. So you have the kind of teenage magazines which state you should be beautiful, you should have your hair done all the time and wear the perfect clothes and all of that and...uh... that’s kind of promoting the view that women are only going to be there for aesthetic value rather than something more. So in my opinion there is two kinds of levels to that media question” (Participant No.2-female).

Coppock, Haydon and Richter (1995) believe that the role played by media is an extremely negative one. They suggest that the media has a very narrow portrayal of women and that their interests and activities are depicted as being limited to their role in the home as mothers and wives. The representation of these roles usually

involves passivity and dependence on men. Alternatively they believe women in the media are frequently exploited for their sexuality and physical appearance.

In addition Renzetti and Curran (1999) suggest that there is a keen awareness of gender stereotypes on television amongst children. Significantly studies suggest that more girls (69%) than boys (40%) responded that they want to look like a character on television. While 31% of girls and 22% of boys actually changed something about their physical appearance in order to look more like a television character. Thus despite the fact that a very limited sector of the media may cater to creating awareness about gender equality, the significance of the messages portrayed in popular media needs to be recognized as playing an important role in perpetuating non-egalitarian ideals.

4.3.2.5. Urban vs. Rural populations

A few participants looked at the issue of rural populations as being more traditional in terms of gender roles. Many felt that urban populations were more likely to have a more contemporary attitude towards gender roles than their rural counter parts.

“I think that if you took the middle of the road society and didn’t take any of the extremes, like maybe the rural, but if you took the average urban population... I think there is gender equality I don’t think that there is very often ... It’s just an assumption... but I think that there is gender equality” (Participant No.3-female).

“Let me highlight something. If you look at rural people their main thing is livestock the only thing that they do is mainly physical, the men rather, of course if it’s more physical that not many ladies will participate in it hence the perception that there are a lot more..how can I put this...they are bigger than women if I can put it that way... in the black community this is what’s been happening if you have children and for some reason they turn out a bit slow at school things like that the father will say you’re just like your mother. I mean such things they highlight how rural and urban cases compare here but if the child is smarter the dad is going to say son you’re just like me” (Participant No.1-male).

“I think it really limits especially people who are not exposed the modern way of doing things especially in rural areas. It really limits their individual growth and their expansion as individuals” (Participant No.6-female).

“I think a lot of men come from rural areas...its exactly the same scenario...so I think there has got to be a change in the family structure there. So I think if you can get that right it might be a bit easier, it might be an easier transition but I think in African culture its going to be met with a lot of resistance” (Participant No.7-male)

Morrell (2001) confirms this idea by suggesting that the social hierarchies which preceded colonialism remained in place in rural areas of South Africa. He suggests that while colonialism may have destroyed the material base of the African economies it did not destroy the history and rituals that served to legitimize sexual division of labour and male power.

This view is in direct conflict with that of O’Sullivan et al. (2006), who suggest that exposure to Victorian ideals and Christianity formed the basis of a misogynistic social structure. Regardless of its origins both authors agree that rural areas in South Africa are more likely to propagate conformity to traditional patriarchal gender relations.

In addition the majority of rural dwellers in South Africa, more specifically African members of society, often exist in extreme poverty. As Boonziaier, (2005 as cited in Kalichman et al, 2008) suggests, men who have limited resources and lack opportunities for social advancement often resort to exerting power and control over women.

Most likely then the different perceptions of gender role equality in rural versus urban areas may be born out of a perpetuation of historically located traditional beliefs but lack of access to resources creates an environment which fosters the perpetuation of such beliefs.

4.3.2.6. Globalisation and exposure to multiculturalism

While participants were asked to reflect on the difference in gender roles between South Africa and the rest of the world, the emergent themes of globalization and exposure to multiculturalism emerged independently and are thus included in this section of analysis. The emergent findings related to three distinct issues.

Firstly South Africa was identified by participants as being in a stage of transition. Many of the participants seemed to feel that as a country our attitudes regarding gender roles are not as liberal as westernized countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States. However, the same participants also suggested that South Africa holds far more contemporary views than many Asian and African countries. In essence it appears that participants believe that while South Africa has far to go in the issue of gender equality it has made and will continue to make extensive progress in this regard.

“I think South Africa is different to a lot of countries because it has the ability to show like an extreme in terms of what your traditional gender roles should be, and it also has a more liberal view of what your gender roles should be depending on what culture you have. I think that that on a large scale in my opinion it would be different to other countries like European countries where it’s more continuous there is more collusion in there” (Participant No.2-female).

“I think gender roles in South Africa... in my experience of first world, I was in the UK for a while, I think that we are more old fashioned. Gender roles are more fixed here than they are in Europe. We have more traditional gender roles than they have. Whereas I’ve also been to Thailand and to Malawi and in comparison to that it was a shock because their gender roles are much much more fixed than that, especially in Malawi I couldn’t walk in the city without wearing a skirt it seemed ridiculous. I don’t think of a country that’s far worse that I think they’ve got very set gender roles and in comparison to that we seem like a more liberal free for all. So I think it very relative to where you go, I think compared to Europe and Britain it definitely is more traditional than I thought it was” (Participant No.3-female).

“I can’t say there’s much change, well there is if you compare like maybe we haven’t totally changed yet compared to the States... that women are only starting now here. Compared to more traditional places like Asia, for them our women are way too independent for them, you have too many rights, you make too much noise. Compared to more traditional society they still expect women to be in a certain role. I think South Africa is in between, you’re not all the way in the back because we also have older generations that have those ideas but the new

generation thinks totally differently. So we're at a transforming stage" (Participant No.4-female).

"Well it's quite open ended it depends which part of the world. If you're living in the first world you're from America and what have you, women there have more opportunities than in Africa and other third world countries. It's just a case of being opened up to different ideas and different ways of thinking. I think Europe is very good like that because it is really multi-cultured and they are all relatively accepting of each other. I think Europe is pretty open-minded. Whereas certain Asian or certain African countries are more isolated and definitely reflect that in their actions. I don't know if there are gender roles per say" (Participant No.5-male).

"I think there are some countries that are still marginalized where women are still expected to do certain things where distinction is still part of societies. As South Africa I believe us having been in this democratic system of power we have come a long way. Empowering women and getting them to feel more individualized instead of just living under certain rules or guidelines which determine or which oppress their way of living...I think there's a lot of change that needs to be brought about, women in some countries are still very much treated the way South African women were treated ten years ago" (Participant No.6-female).

"I think the rest of the world is more accepting of an equal opportunity among the sexes. They have broken away from the standard stereotypes where as we are much more towards the man will do the braaing and the woman will do everything in the kitchen. My family in UK the mind set is different on what is the male job and what's the female job. You can quite happily switch in and out of roles, sort of a rolling substitution. To swap places you really need to be a jack of all trades. Where as here it's no so much that. There are certain things guys will do and there are certain things girls will do. It's breaking down but it's not quite there yet. We are all heading to the same point we are just a little bit behind and because we are trying to catch up to that point and not having gone through all the steps maybe we are developing certain diversity and I can't really say what that is" (Participant No.8-male).

The second issue identified by participants as it relates to these constructs, is the impact which the political history of South Africa has had on gender role formation. In particular the participants identified that the isolation which resulted from apartheid played a significant role in perpetuating more traditional attitudes towards gender roles. This isolation refers to the isolation from other countries but also within South Africa where different cultures and races were cut off from each other.

"I think in South Africa it's only been in the last fifteen on twenty years that people regularly go overseas and travel. I think exposure to other cultures and other ideas

opens you up...generally...so I think that also plays a part” (Participant No.3-female).

“I think even in a diverse country, we were never exposed to each other... we’d never meet people from other cultural backgrounds, you mixed exclusively with people who had very very similar cultural backgrounds, so I think that you don’t realize that the way you do something is not the way everyone does something until you’ve met people like that, and then you can only question ...and then you can only see it as something you have been taught. If you don’t realize that it’s not the same everywhere, then its just the way things are done” (Participant No.3-female).

“I think we are little behind in the global trends in terms of gender equality. We have a very forward thinking constitution but our politicians bugger everything up. So I don’t know, I think it is more of..of a conservative mind set. I do also think I’m coming at this with a very white mind set and I can’t really say if it’s true for the Asian or the Black population in this country because I think our country is very different from all the others because of our history, apartheid and all that. We were kept apart so my mind sets are very much the Afrikaans “Tanie” and “Meneer” concepts and that’s very prevalent. It’s something the government pumped out because they were a conservative government and they were protect our families no matter what and to keep that control structure that the old government had in place they had to enforce that into the population. Now that all the doors have been opened and all the walls have come down we’re playing catch up in terms of what the rest of the world sees as a male and female role. I think we’re getting there and we’re getting there on a more accelerated curve than other countries have done it. So there’s a bit more tension between the generations and a lot more uncertainty within the generation itself as to why are we doing this, what is the part that feels right?” (Participant No.8-male)

The significance of the effects of apartheid become evident when one looks at the third main issue related to globalization and multiculturalism i.e. diversity as key to change. Many participants identified exposure to diversity through globalization and our own multicultural society as playing a significant role in creating the conditions necessary for more equality to become accepted as a norm in gender relations.

“Well South Africa is a very multi cultural place so there’s going to be huge differences because comparing Africa to a European country or another African country, those three cases there are very different. If you going to...lets compare South Africa first with an African country I feel as though there’s a lot more tolerance for gender changes now to any other African country because of the multi culture. I mean you’ve got white people here you’ve got Indians you’ve got pretty much everybody. Those things made the transition a lot more faster and smoother unlike any African country where it’s just predominantly black people. They going to stick to what they’ve been knowing, if things changes it’s going to be sublime it’s going to be so slow. Now if you compare to European country where they’ve

been exposed to gender equality, women have been working there for a long time, it's things that they've been used to so there's going to be differences" (Participant No.1-male).

"I was fortunate enough that...you're younger than me so you probably had it at school where I had black guys at school I had Indian guys at school. You heard about certain cultures and certain ways of thinking, I think they had the chance to have that interchange with white cultures that they wouldn't have had in the past. I think in doing so it opens your mind to that sort of thinking and allows you to make the choice of which path you choose to follow. I think there are guys who are progressive while they still realize their culture is important and see through certain items as either, not rubbish, but maybe less appropriate than what they would think if they didn't have this knowledge or openness to knowledge before" (Participant No.5-male).

"I think a lot of white South Africans, particularly Afrikaans South Africans are as disadvantaged as an uneducated black person, not uneducated but a black person receiving schooling in an ex- homeland, its small isolated communities and isolation does not breed an open mind" (Participant No.5-male).

Arnet (2002), gives an interesting explanation of the psychological impact of globalization. He suggests that globalization has resulted in individuals developing two distinct identities. The global identity is linked to global trends and cross-cultural sharing of knowledge, whereas local identity is more closely linked to a local value system. This explanation of the simultaneous occurrence of such identities makes it possible to account for the movement towards a global but more specifically western culture of gender equality, and the delays in transition perpetuated by more traditional value systems and the historical lack of exposure to alternative identities.

4.4. Negotiating gender roles in intimate partner relationships

This section looks specifically at the ways in which gender roles have an impact on relationships as well as how that impact is played out and negotiated in the relationship.

However, as the following extract suggests, there are a multitude of factors which impact on a relationship and the element of gender roles is simply one aspect of this,

“There has to be conflict it’s a natural consequence of being in a relationship, or living with anyone there’s always conflict, and you’re always negotiating that which is some sort of compromise. I think it just fits in with all the elements including, ‘you left your shoes on the floor’, ‘you didn’t hang up the towel’...that sort of stuff. Part of it is just living together, part of it is who you are, part of it is how you perceive gender roles, all different things coming together and how you sort them out” (participant no.3-female).

Nevertheless participants appeared to readily recognize the importance of both partners having similar attitudes and beliefs about gender roles. In cases where one of the partners is more or less traditional than the other it is believed that conflict will arise.

“I think it’s a big thing because I think that in a way in a relationship there is an expectation of somebody else. So if you are in a relationship with someone who has very set ideas on gender roles and an expectation of you to be that way it will cause friction. If you don’t match those and you don’t believe the same thing, I think its...its...I’m not saying it’s the same as values but it’s one of those things that is like values and if you want kids and if they don’t match up it just causes more friction, it makes it more difficult to get somebody to match what you would like without compromising. I think your gender roles definitely affects your relationship and how you view each other and what you expect from each other” (Participant no.3-female).

“Umm...well I think it impacts on their expectations...I mean if like if the man has got certain expectations of the woman she must fulfill those otherwise the relationship wont work...it wont be as... I think they’ve got fulfill those expectations and obviously a very masculine stereotypical man who views women as having to fulfill the stereotype of a woman ...if he ends up with somebody who doesn’t then its not going to work, you’ve either got to have two people who expect the other to fulfill the stereotype where the man goes to work and the woman stays at home all day or...people who don’t view each other in that way” (Participant No.7-Male)

A similar issue which was identified as impacting on relationships relates to the degree to which male partners are willing to accept more liberal gender roles and the consequent implications which these changes have for their identities. The change in

identity can create a situation of potential conflict in relationships which may need to be negotiated.

“I think that it’s something that people struggle with to a large extent and I think maybe it’s becoming easier for maybe younger people who are seeing the transition and living the transition than for people who their roles were clearly defined and are now having to...say for instance the man who is a bread winner and having to enter, not enter but continue a relationship with a woman who is also a primary breadwinner and she’s no longer looking to wash the dishes and do all the laundry. I think it’s quite difficult for people who are in that situation” (Participant No.2-female)

“With me I talk to my boyfriend I tell him that it doesn’t mean because you battle to find a job you battle to earn an income you’re not contributing to the family, to the house. Money is only one thing... I tell him if you’re able to be at the house you can fix things in the house doing all the things that need to be done. If we’re both working then we need to pay someone else to do it and then I say there’s different ways of contributing to the family it’s not just finance. It’s how people see it, that’s why guys struggle if they can’t do their part because their part is more the finance side because they’re not at home most of the time. So we just talk about it. Brainwash him slowly and see if it will stick. That’s why I think it impacts men more if they are not able to do their part” (participant no.4-female).

“It has a huge impact both in business relationships and personal relationships. Yes for the simple fact that it’s something that we’re all trying to get used to we grew up in different environments and the change having taken place quick. It’s a strange environment one that we’re all trying to encourage, it does affect relationships. For the men it’s very hard to accept, for some females as well they might take in a way that will offend men or make them feel belittled. It tends to affect the relationship with the men”(Participant no.6-female)

“Negotiating them in today’s society? I’m still trying to do that. [laughter] It’s a tough one I have to say. It brings a lot of conflict in relationships...umm... but understandably so as well. It’s now a situation where you as the wife could be earning more, you know, and he’s not and therefore you’re contributing more to your daily life. You pay for the house you pay for the car...it’s really been sort of like a shift where the power has now moved from the guy to the woman. But yet... you know but there’s still that distinction that makes him male and you female and the fact that he is of course more masculine and he will have to do all the masculine stuff in the house .And you will not be able to go up that ladder and do...you know. It’s really a matter of adjusting, the different situations will need different approaches as all partners are trying to fit into this whole new modern way of doing things. It’s quite a shift...Maybe it’s because we’re all so very new to it” (Participant no.6-female)

“Depending on an individual’s perception or how her situation looks... in some cases I’ve seen it go terribly wrong where relationships just didn’t work out based

on that where there is that... it's more like a power control type of thing. There's that power element where because now you do certain things you're viewed to have more power. Initially or back then the man was the one who had the power...all of it for that matter, so..." (Participant No.6-female)

A study by Sangara and Ikeda (2006) on the link between psychological well-being in men and whether or not their wives work, suggested that the stronger the traditional attitudes held by husbands, the stronger they feel they have a responsibility towards their role as provider. Thus when their wives work they feel inadequate in this role and subsequently experience a decrease in subjective well-being.

However, one participant noted the benefits of being more open to equality in gender roles, suggesting that the various changes which are taking place allow for opportunities to develop new ways of being and that such a novel experience can be an asset to relationships. A possible explanation for this would be that the individual in question did not hold very traditional views of gender roles and as a consequence did not feel that a change in roles had a negative impact on either himself or his relationship.

"I think if you're more flexible on your set role playing then I think it makes for more interesting relationships, you can push boundaries, you can switch dynamics and the reward is not so much learning something new but experiencing something new. I think that adds not a little excitement but the level of interaction is interesting in your relationship which helps. You don't get bored, you don't start thinking this grass is green but I'm sure there's greener grass somewhere. I think it does have a really big role and I think we underestimate how big that role is" (Participant No.8-male).

As the study did not require participants to reflect on how gender roles are negotiated in their own relationships participants had a tendency to speak quite generally about this impact. Nonetheless, the follow extracts illustrate very specific qualities or behaviors needed to make the negotiation of gender roles easier.

"I think it's constant communication we're not going to work on assumption here if he sees me clean here it should click that tomorrow he should be doing the same.

Like I said I don't feel I should be doing that, I'm not going to do it until you say something"(Participant No.1-male)

"I think it's not so much that you consciously negotiate them. I think that if there is conflict around things sometimes, the underlying reason is gender roles. I think that it's just that every relationship has problems sometimes. For instance I don't want to iron, I want my partner to buy all the groceries and he must be the breadwinner and he feels that's a silly concept then we have to resolve it. Talk it out or it becomes a big issue and the relationship will end. So I think that people are kind of negotiating them in terms of negotiating their relationship...I don't think it's a specific conversation..."

"Communication is very important but I think attitude is also important because I don't see any difference. I think there's always role switches because for a moment you have a job but you never know maybe later on you don't have a job. That is just how you see the whole thing, how the two adjust to whatever happens. If the attitude is not right and you don't actually communicate it's not going to work"(participant no.4-female).

"Me and my partner skirt the middle ground, we tend to come to solutions fairly quickly, but when it comes down to sort of our empathy. You put yourself into someone else's position and see it from their point of view and I think that's key as opposed to imposing the reasons for your view. I think it comes out without any sort set way. I can't see a common denominator between couples and how they resolve the gender issue..." (Participant No.8-male).

However, one should bear in mind that factors such as communication and empathy are important elements in successful relationships more broadly and are perhaps not unique in their application to gender roles. However, as Wood (1994) implies communication in relation to gender is extremely significant as not only does it allow partners to convey content but there is a more covert level at which partners have a relationship level of meaning. In other words the way that partners communicate and what they say usually involves assumptions about the nature of their relationship and the degree to which it is acceptable for both partners to express their needs.

Another major element identified as being a factor which requires negotiation is task division. Clearly more traditional gender roles facilitated the

development of very clear distinctions between the domestic tasks performed by women and those performed by men. However, such distinctions are no longer present in more contemporary gender roles and the lack of guidelines in the form of social norms has created a situation which participants perceived as requiring a great deal of negotiation.

“Well it could be one of two things – if people feel strongly negatively towards doing certain things in a relationship then there’s definitely going to be problems there but if it’s the other like in my case I don’t feel as though I couldn’t be able to do certain stuff that my partner does there’s not going to be any impact. We’re not going to get affected by it” (Participant No.1-male).

“I think that in some relationships you could argue it’s the way certain roles and responsibilities, like who washes the dishes, who takes care of the money, who does those kinds of things those are all parts that can have quite an impact in a relationship” (Participant no.2-female).

“We talk about it; we’re pretty open about it so there’s nothing you need to feel bad about. There’s no duty as such at home such that a certain person needs to do certain things, everyone puts in their bit and you carry on” (participant no.4-female).

“To me it’s like making people equal partners in a relationship... Having the men come back from work and cook as well if they can while the wife is doing something else, having the wife wash the car. It’s really about individualism and being in a partnership as an individual not as a... I mean myself having grown in a family where your dad did that and your mom was always there to take care of you and you now come back home and your husband is back maybe he’s cooking and now you’re just laying watching TV. If somebody else walks in that looking very different and being a weird situation where the wife is sitting reading the paper and the husband is busy cooking. It poses that question that people will walk in and say why is she doing that and you’re doing that? That distinction is always there...” (Participant no.6-female).

The division of household labour serves to reflect socially constructed attitudes regarding gender. Thus as Pitt and Borland (2008), point out the attitudes held by a man and a woman in a relationship regarding family roles are a key predictor of household labour participation for men. Arguments that emphasise gender role ideology suggest that when a couple holds traditional views about gender roles they are unlikely to share household tasks equally. Men in particular are likely to do

female-typical housework, and in fact do more household labour in general if their beliefs regarding gender roles are egalitarian. Thus the aforementioned examples of increased gender role equality are highly contingent on the views of the couple in question and may not be a true reflection of the reality of many South African households.

4.5. The Link between Macro and Micro Factors

Initially one of the research aims of the study was to look at how changing gender roles are negotiated in relationships. While this still remains an extremely relevant aspect of the study, a necessary step in engaging with this finding is to discuss in greater detail the factors which were identified during the interviews as having particular impact on intimate partner relationships.

As is evident in chapter four, the results of the study suggest that an important effect which gender role change has had on relationships, relates to the issue of household division of labour. The participant's reflected on the idea that due to female participation in the workforce there is a need for partners to share the housework equally. In addition to the amount of housework done, there was some reflection on the type of work. Thus it is not simply a case of men spending more time on domestic labour but the idea that men are engaging in activities historically performed by women and visa versa.

However the interpretation of these findings suggested that while the degree to which this process takes place is reliant on the gender role ideology of both partners, the views of male partners were found to be particularly significant in as far as they predicted greater equality in the sharing of domestic tasks (Pitt and Borland, 2008).

Fuwa (2004), conducted an international study examining gender based task division in the home. The study found that while women's work in the home had indeed decreased significantly and the amount of work performed by men had doubled, women in general still performed more household duties than their male counter parts.

More significantly however, the study aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the link between macro- level factors and micro-level relationships. The results suggested that there is an important relationship between culture, politics and domestic task division. In other words, simply participating in the workforce is not a guarantee that a woman will automatically engage in less housework.

In countries where there was a culture of egalitarianism, woman who work are likely to share domestic duties more equally with a male partner. However, in countries with more traditional views women participated in a far greater degree of housework, regardless of whether she possessed individual assets such as income contribution and work force participation. As Fuwa (2004) states,

“This suggests that changes in individual level factors may not be enough to achieve an equal division of housework, without the reduction of macro-level gender inequality in economic and political power. Analysis of alternative macro-level variables reveals both cultural and structural influences on micro-level gender relationships” (p.752).

Understanding this relationship is a very important element of this study. Essentially it makes it possible to link the findings to the social constructionist perspective which has been discussed throughout, and reiterates the fact that both inter and intra-personal realities cannot be divorced from broader social discourse.

However, an area worth exploring in greater detail is the extent to which individuals in this study are aware of the degree to which they have internalised the influence of the social world. All participants recognised that a necessary element in preventing conflict within an intimate partner relationship is similarities in partner's gender role ideologies. To some extent this suggests that there is a recognition of the relationship between broader social values and the manner in which gender roles impact on a relationship.

4.6. The Role of Power in Equality Development

Another essential example of the way in which gender issues impact on relationships relates to the identification of power as a factor. More specifically participants identified that the impact which loss of power has on male identity has the potential to result in some form of power struggle within a relationship.

Traditionally, masculine power plays an extremely complex role in society. Historically a significant source this power came from nearly exclusive access to the work force and subsequent financial resources. Both women and families in general relied heavily on men to act as breadwinners. Changing circumstances have meant that financial independence is no longer the exclusive realm of men.

Collier (1995), Heward (1996), Valle de Almeida (1996), Westwood 1996, Willott and Griffin (1996,1997) as cited in Chant (2000) suggest that research on men, households and familial masculinity in the twentieth century has seen an increasing reference to masculinity as being in a state of crisis. They suggest this stems from the fact that the loss of role of breadwinner and the traditional patriarchal family has had more of a negative impact on men than on women. Burn (1997) as cited in Chant (2000) sums up the central idea very clearly in the following statement:

“Worldwide, men largely derive their identity from being providers or breadwinners, and lack ideas, or alternative gender scripts, to find other meaningful roles in the family in this changing economic environment. Research worldwide reports that men are confused about their roles in the family and about the meanings of masculinity in general and are requesting opportunities in which to discuss and deal with these changes”(p.202).

Morrell (2001) also refers very specifically to the relationship between power and masculinity. However, he recognises a strong stratification of power within the South African context with non-hegemonic forms of masculinity typically wielding less power in society. One could argue however that dominant forms of masculinity are being challenged by movements towards a more contemporary masculinity that is less misogynistic in nature (Ratele, Forthcoming).

What is significant in linking these ideas with the findings of the study is the relationship between power and knowledge. Epstein and Johnson (1998) as cited in Morrell (2001), suggest that it is impossible for individuals to place themselves outside of culture and wield power precisely as they wish. They offer the following explanation:

“Power is always limited and shaped by systems of knowledge which also shape the subjects and objects of power...power/knowledge position us as subjects of particular kinds. They put pressure on us to adopt particular identities...in this particular sense, power and knowledge as discourse ‘constructs’ social identities’(p.18).

If one understands knowledge as being linked to power then it stands to reason that the nature of the knowledge which individuals have access to will be linked to the nature of the power which emerges from that process. In other words the social identity of men and women will emerge from the discourse presented to us via the social constructs in society. Thus if we are to better understand what processes

facilitate equality, it is important to examine which social constructs in particular emerged as playing a significant role in egalitarian knowledge and discourse development.

4.7. Social Constructs that Facilitate Gender Role Change

The study looked at several social constructs in effort to understand their impact on gender role development. These included: culture, religion, family, education, work, media, urbanisation and globalisation. While social constructionist theory postulates that all of these constructs both create and are created by society (Bruffee, 1986) the study reveals a more nuanced understanding of the nature of this process. Firstly, the elements of communication, attitude and empathy as factors identified as important in negotiating changing gender roles within a relationship context need to be understood as emerging from and helping to create contemporary gender relations and cannot be viewed as elements separate from this process.

In addition, one can understand these social constructs as falling into one of two categories. Firstly it appears that certain constructs emerged in the study as playing the role of communicating and perpetuating gender role ideologies that are already present in society. Specifically participants identified culture, religion and family as playing an important role in gender role construction. However, this role appears more typically to involve communicating pre-existing 'traditional' social norms.

Alternatively, education, work, media, urbanisation and globalisation emerged as constructs which seemed to facilitate the development of more contemporary views and gender ideologies. Furthermore these can be further classified according to the degree of impact. For example, media was identified as having the potential to create discourse around gender equality. Despite this the results reveal that

participants felt media to be playing a fairly limited role in this regard and in fact was perceived as being more likely to perpetuate conventional discourse on gender.

The role of paid work is similar in nature in that while it certainly provides the opportunities for women and men to interact in a way that is more in line with higher levels of equality, the participants highlighted examples which suggest that at present the workplace plays a significant role in cultivating social views that continue value men and women differently.

Education, urbanisation and globalisation on the other hand all appear to be seen by participants as impacting strongly on a social movement towards egalitarian gender values. The nature of this role appears to be directly linked to the issue of knowledge formation. In other words these constructs specifically seem to expose individuals to new knowledge around ways of being and the potential for social acceptance without the need for oppressive patriarchal forms of power.

One of the most significant consequences of these findings relates to the implications it creates regarding cultural tolerance. In South Africa, as in many other countries in the world traditional gender roles and the accompanying problems of misogyny and patriarchy are deeply entrenched in many different cultural views (Morrell, 2001, Ratele, forthcoming). Participants perceptions of South Africa as in a phase of transition lends weight to the idea that it is uniquely placed as a country which encompasses elements of both the first and third world and which reflects both extremely traditional and contemporary views of society. The value which this holds for providing potential insight into gender role change is significant.

Crucially, the study appears to suggest that while acknowledgement of cultural and religious tradition is an essential component of developing a deeper understanding

of gender within the South African context, a movement away from the idea of these constructs as beyond reproach is necessary if egalitarian social knowledge is going to become a factor in the discourse of South African society.

As a result, the study represents a specific form of discourse which views equality and its link to human rights issues as being preferable to traditional views of gender. There is in fact not a neutral position that merely presents alternative views in gender. Ultimately, the study is in agreement with authors such as Sideris (2004) and Burn (1996) and seeks to recommend various social constructs which will increase the likelihood of the development of a social constructionism headed toward ideals of gender equality.

4.8. The Role of Language

Burr (1995) suggests that, “Language itself provides us with a way of structuring our experience of ourselves and the world. And that the concepts that we use do not pre-date language but are made possible by it”. Our way of being in the world does not exist independent of language but rather these things are made available to us by the language which we are exposed to. The possibility of alternative ways of being through alternative use of language and consequent categorization is essential to the social constructionist perspective.

It is very important to bear this issue in mind when one looks at the results of the study and to question carefully the origin of the language and discourse utilized by participants. Based on what Burr is suggesting it becomes clear that the discourse used by participants, and consequently the themes which emerge, cannot be separated from other discourse on culture, religion, gender etc. which occurs within

their social context. In light of this is essential to continuously question the origin of the language used by participants and to raise the possibility of alternative views.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

5.1. Limitations of the Study

5.1.1. Co-habitation

The selection criterion of co-habitation can be rationalised by the view that having lived with a partner is likely to give participants a relevant frame of reference when talking to issues such as household task division. However as Smock (2000) points out, “Cohabitation tends to be selective of people who are slightly more liberal, less religious, and more supportive of egalitarian gender roles and nontraditional family roles” (p.4)

This factor can essentially be viewed as both a strength and a weakness. While it allows for a deeper understanding of more egalitarian discourse, perhaps rather less information was received on traditional gender role ideology than would have been attained from individuals who belong to different sectors of society, such as those who are married or choose not to co-habit until after marriage.

5.1.2. Class

The issue of class was identified both by the literature and the participants as potential factor in the development of gender role ideology (Morrell, 2001, Shefer, 2002). Class and the economic advantages or disadvantages which accompany it, means that it is likely to have an impact on the resources in terms of for example education, technology, travel etc. that provide the means through which an individual may be exposed to more contemporary discourse.

This does not exclude individuals from a working class background from engaging with gender role equality. However, it has the potential to impact on the percentage of members of the working class who are likely to adopt egalitarian views.

In addition, the literature in the study has shown that there is a significant link between a loss of economic power and an increase in the movement towards enforcing patriarchal power (Chant, 2000., Morrell, 2001., Sangara and Ikeda, 2006). There is also some evidence to suggest that individuals from the upper class may be less likely to engage in cohabitation (Smock, 2000).

In light of all of this an under-representation of individuals from different classes and the strict focus of individuals from a middle class background, essentially excludes the perceptions of individuals from both working and upper class.

5.1.3. Lack of personal reflection

Participants in the study were not requested to reflect on personal experience but rather to give a general opinion of the issues related to gender role formation. This

process may have allowed them to reflect more clearly on the social rather than the personal aspects of the study.

Nonetheless incorporating personal experience into the study does allow for a richer sense of the individual level engagement with gender issues and perhaps more reflection on the internalized aspects of gender role ideology. Segal (1992) expresses the value of a more personal approach very eloquently when she states,

“Sex role theory fails to explain either the passion or the pain of rigid adherence to dominant gender stereotypes of some, resilient resistance to them on the part of others, or confused and contradictory combinations of the two in yet others. We need a fuller picture of the contradictory compulsions and constraints operative at both a social and a psychic level, if we are to get any real grip on the dynamics of sexual identity” (p.69).

Thus, while a definite strength of the study is an inclusion of the social factors which impact on gender role formation, a more personal reflection of how these have an impact may have been beneficial.

5.2. Recommendations for future research

The recommendations for future research rely heavily on the limitations of the study. While the study has provided greater insight into the role which various social constructs play in the process of gender role formation, these reflections are based on the opinions and perceptions of an important yet limited sector of society.

Thus while participants represented a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds it may be beneficial for future research in this area to understand these processes from the perspective of individuals from a broader range in terms of both class, religion and sectors which are traditionally viewed as less-liberal such as rural populations and those not involved in cohabitation.

In addition, there was a specific age group used in this study. Considering the suggestion by Galinsky, Aumann and Bond (2009), that older generation's views on gender roles are seeing the most significant change it may be useful for future research to incorporate the perceptions of and impact on a variety of generations.

Another potential area of weakness in the study is the exclusive utilisation of thematic content analysis. For future studies it may also be useful to consider using other critically orientated methods such as discursive analyses. These methods may allow for a more nuanced understanding of the emotional and psychological elements being communicated by participants.

5.3. Conclusion

Gender and gender roles are a significant part of the world of individuals, communities and society as a whole. Understanding gender roles in a non-deterministic sense creates the opportunity for people to become aware of the potential sources of information which shape our internal world. More critically it means that we can understand gender and more specifically gender roles as having the potential to be altered by the knowledge and discourse which individuals access through society.

Ultimately, this study has been able to provide some insight into which factors individuals perceive to play a role in determining gender role ideology and behaviour. While all social constructs identified in the study can be understood as impacting internalised notions of gender roles some factors appear to play a more significant role than others in creating knowledge around egalitarian roles rather than perpetuating less contemporary views or gender inequality.

In addition, despite the fact that many participants claimed to have egalitarian views, their perceptions of which constructs impact negatively on relationships

highlights the fact that even in more liberal sectors of society, social elements related to unequal power distribution between the sexes still exist. It is hoped that the greater understanding afforded by this study will play a role in creating awareness which specific social factors act as sights for progress and which do not. Having insight into this process and the differing nature of these constructs will allow for the development of forms of knowledge and discourse necessary for greater equality.

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Appendix A: Interview Transcripts

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW – Participant No.1

RESEARCHER: What is your current understanding of gender roles?

PARTICIPANT: Of what?

RESEARCHER: Gender roles.

PARTICIPANT: Gender roles....I'm pretty much flexible when it comes to that. I don't think okay I do think there is a bit that I cannot do in a relationship, pretty much everything like kitchen stuff, cleaning up the house, laundry I could do. When it comes to stuff that I haven't been exposed to like when there's a child involved I wouldn't feel that comfortable attending to nappies and what not. Pretty much there isn't many differences that I see.

RESEARCHER: So if you had to define what a gender role is what would you say?

PARTICIPANT: I would say tasks that a male in a relationship would do and a female in relationship would be able to do. Something along those lines.

RESEARCHER: So it's tasks that sometimes both and do but sometimes there are differences depending on whether you're male or female.

PARTICIPANT: I think so.

RESEARCHER: How do you think that gender roles are created?

PARTICIPANT: I think upbringing, society as well. If like in my case I grew up seeing things being done in a particular way of course I'm not going to be streamlined to do what my parents used to do, like I said environment as well. If I

feel a certain way about something I'm not going to be comfortable with doing it or not doing it so I feel that pretty much environment and upbringing.

RESEARCHER: So it's the things that we see in our family and other places in our social environment that cause us to develop certain ways or certain types of gender roles to do some things and not others. In what ways do you think that gender roles might impact on a person's identity or way that they view themselves?

PARTICIPANT: The way that I view myself not my partner viewing me?

RESEARCHER: Ja. So the way gender roles might impact on how a person views themselves.

PARTICIPANT: I think they don't have that much impact pretty much because for instance I do dishes say I didn't like doing dishes there's not going to be any impact on how I view myself in that regard. I don't know if that really helps. It does?

RESEARCHER: Ja. So you're saying that for you your identity or the way that you view yourself is not really informed by gender roles so much.

PARTICIPANT: Not really.

RESEARCHER: Do you think that's true for everyone? Do you think for some people it does impact on their identity?

PARTICIPANT: Ja. For some people maybe it does because some people feel quite strongly about gender roles but as for me it happens if it doesn't happen it doesn't affect me that much.

RESEARCHER: So you're saying maybe for some people there is quite a strong view.

PARTICIPANT: There's people that's very culturally inclined so if their culture does not permit them to do certain things there's not going to be any flexibility around that. They're going to stick to morals like I say they're going to feel very strongly about that.

RESEARCHER: Assuming that you do. In what way do you think gender roles are changing or are different to what they were in the past?

PARTICIPANT: Well I think these days compared to the past if I compare myself now to my parents there's lot of changes. There's a lot more flexibility and willingness to do certain things, a lot of things that I feel my parents wouldn't be able to, my father in particular, wouldn't be able to. I've never seen him, well on a

few occasions I've seen him cook but besides that I've never, even cleaning I've never seen him do that. Of course these things are very different when you are in a relationship with someone than when they were married he never got to do that but before he got married he lived by himself and he got raised as a person as well. He got to do all those things but once in a relationship he stopped doing them.

RESEARCHER: That's quite an interesting point. You're saying that maybe your role as a gender role only becomes gendered when you're in a relationship.

PARTICIPANT: That's true because I've stayed with my girl.....we stay together if I stay at home I feel like I did a lot more chores by myself I didn't have anybody to say it's your turn or mine to do that and stuff like that.

RESEARCHER: So you're saying also...just to go back a little, from your experience even if it's just in a domestic environment there's been a big change for you in terms of what you are able to do and do do as opposed to your father.

PARTICIPANT: Very huge change.

RESEARCHER: What do you think you can put those changes down to? Why do you think has changed?

PARTICIPANT: I think now it boils down to your current partner and the open mindedness, if I can put it that way, of us males these days. I'm willing to listen to my partner as opposed to how it was back in the day when the man was the boss. If he says something it goes, these days the lady has to have a say so I think that's the main change.

RESEARCHER: Okay so maybe you feel like maybe women have more power in relationships than men?

PARTICIPANT: They have more say now, I think, than it was in the past. It influences how we co-exist these days.

RESEARCHER: Just to follow that line of thought a little bit ... ummm...you sort of saying you are more prepared to listen... or her voice takes up more space in a relationship...or a women, and I'm talking about women generally here, have more say than they did previously. What do you think has had to happen for you to be more open to listen? What do you think has been the influence for people to see women as having more say?

PARTICIPANT: I think that if I think about it in this way there's a lot more responsibilities for ladies, for women as men now we get to acknowledge that. In the past our grandparents didn't work, our grandmothers rather, let me put it that way, didn't work. They stayed at home and handled all those chores and what not, it was perceived as a woman's task but today we all work we come home and we're tired. We pretty much understand where they're coming from. We can't expect them to be having higher energy levels than we do. I think that attributes to that.

RESEARCHER: So you're saying that women having taken up more space in the workplace impacted on how much power they have in a relationship?

PARTICIPANT: Definitely.

RESEARCHER: My next question is – in what ways do you think gender roles might have an impact on people's relationships with their partners?

PARTICIPANT: In what ways? Well it could be one of two things – if people feel strongly negatively towards doing certain things in a relationship then there's definitely going to be problems there but if it's the other like in my case I don't feel as though I couldn't be able to do certain stuff that my partner does there's not going to be any impact. We're not going to get affected by it.

RESEARCHER: So you're saying then maybe in relationships where there are very rigid or very strict gender roles that can't be negotiated, that's where it's going to cause a problem?

PARTICIPANT: That's where there'll be a lot of problems.

RESEARCHER: In what ways do you think that it might be advantageous or disadvantageous to prescribe to traditional gender roles?

PARTICIPANT: Where it would be advantageous or disadvantageous to...

RESEARCHER: What are the advantages and disadvantages of traditional gender roles?

PARTICIPANT: Well I think for someone that's very rigid towards gender roles now in this current time will find so many advantages when looking at the traditional ones because it basically favors them. When looking at things like I'm not going to do what my father did not do or you've got to be the wife you've got to be this, you've got to do the lady duties as perceived by the traditional gender roles. For somebody that I can't think of any disadvantages but rather advantages. Assuming that I was somebody that's very uptight about what I do and what I don't do.

RESEARCHER: So you're talking from just a male perspective that there were advantages for men in terms of traditional gender roles that they don't really experience now.

PARTICIPANT: Mhmm...from a male point of view

RESEARCHER: And for women what do you think that advantages and disadvantages are?

PARTICIPANT: The advantages now is that they don't get to do things by themselves no more. That's one. That's the most outstanding one, they get acknowledged now in relationships than they were in the past. So I think from a woman's point of view that's the most solid one.

RESEARCHER: So you're saying a disadvantage of traditional gender roles for women was that those tasks weren't shared and now they are. They didn't have the power that they now have in a relationship. Do you think there was an advantage for them in traditional gender roles?

PARTICIPANT: No. You're talking women right? No. If anything all the advantages were for the men.

RESEARCHER: Do you think there were disadvantages for the men?

PARTICIPANT: If there were, they were very little. I can't think of any disadvantages for the male.

RESEARCHER: So in light of the fact that there is a kind of current trend towards gender equality what do you feel this means for women and men in a very real sense? How do you think this is impacting on their lives?

PARTICIPANT: Well I feel as though because of the changes some people depending on your cultural standpoint it's going to be hard for other people to come to terms with it. Looking at a typical man from say Zululand if his whole life he knew that I'm more superior than my woman the changes now they're not going to go down well with them. That's what I feel.

RESEARCHER: So it's going to be very difficult for them to adapt to that.

PARTICIPANT: To adapt to the changes.

RESEARCHER: So how do you think people are working that out? Do you think men are resisting it or they are kind of going with it or can you not really generalize?

PARTICIPANT: I would say there's a majority that are going forward, they are trying to work around that problem but of course there's still that minority that's still clinging on to the past depending on.... it's mostly influenced by your education levels as well. If you didn't go out and get tertiary education you still have the same mentality that you see where you stay say in your rural area type case. You still see the same behavior that you won't get in a society that we're staying in now.

RESEARCHER: So you're saying education more particularly tertiary education sort of changes men's perception. In what way?

PARTICIPANT: Well you get to see your sisters at school like I said we're pretty much doing the same things. I'm in class with ladies I would be lying if I said to you I beat them all the time. There are things that they do which I cannot do hence I say to you it brings that awareness to us men that there's nothing really different here we are all the same. They can do things that we can and vice versa.

RESEARCHER: In a way it kind of evens the playing field because now you are where as women before didn't get to go to a tertiary level of education they do now and that the men at that level see them as equals because they've seen what they can do.

PARTICIPANT: Let me highlight something. If you look at rural people their main thing is livestock the only thing that they do is mainly physical, the men rather, of course if it's more physical that not many ladies will participate in it hence the perception that there are a lot more..how can I put this...they are bigger than women if I can put it that way.

RESEARCHER: The outcomes of the very physical tasks are very valued which in a way makes them valuable because they are able to do things that women can't.

PARTICIPANT: On the contrary the woman is the one that's going to make sure that wherever you're living the standard is clean they cook for you they clean for you they raise your kids for you. I mean at the end of the day...in the black community this is what's been happening if you have children and for some reason they turn out a bit slow at school things like that the father will say you're just like your mother. I mean such things they highlight how rural and urban cases compare here but if the child is smarter the dad is going to say son you're just like me.

RESEARCHER: So there's something about positive qualities of belonging to men and negative qualities are attributed to women. In what ways do you

think that gender roles in South Africa might be different compared to other places?

PARTICIPANT: Well South Africa is a very multi cultural place so there's going to be huge differences because comparing Africa to a European country or another African country, those three cases there are very different. If you going to...lets compare South Africa first with an African country I feel as though there's a lot more tolerance for gender changes now to any other African country because of the multi culture. I mean you've got white people here you've got Indians you've got pretty much everybody. Those things made the transition a lot more faster and smoother unlike any African country where it's just predominantly black people. They going to stick to what they've been knowing, if things changes it's going to be sublime it's going to be so slow. Now if you compare to European country where they've been exposed to gender equality women have been working there for a long time, its things that they've been used to so there's going to be differences.

RESEACHER: So you're saying that South Africa is almost somewhere in between it's kind of like in a transitional phase. There hasn't been a long history of equality for women and that also the diversity of the country brings new ideas to people and that allows for more rapid change than other African countries. How do you think that couples are negotiating gender roles in relationships?

PARTICIPANT: Negotiating? I think....case scenario - if I did not agree with a lot of things that my partner feels I should be doing the negotiation bit of it is basically me having to listen understanding the stand point that she's coming from and being willing to do that. Negotiation? It's pretty much it.

RESEARCHER: You're saying for people it means that there's got to be communication.

PARTICIPANT: There's got to be extreme communication.

RESEARCHER: And there's got be something about putting yourself in the other person's shoes.

PARTICIPANT: More tolerance.

RESEARCHER: Do you think it's a conversation that's happening a lot for people? Do you think it's something that particularly young couples are having to communicate about a lot or do you think it's quite a natural process that takes place?

PARTICIPANT: I think it's constant communication we're not going to work on assumption here if he sees me clean here it should click that tomorrow he should be doing the same. Like I said I don't feel I should be doing that, I'm not going to do it until you say something.

RESEARCHER: So it's taking a lot of talking. In what ways do you feel that culture impacts on gender roles?

PARTICIPANT: In what ways? Culture is normally a very...it hampers a lot of things you know. Especially gender and gender equality and other genders. I feel as though depending on how strong your culture is towards gender differences, can I call it that?

RESEARCHER: Sure.

PARTICIPANT: It's going to impact in a very wide spectrum. I feel as though I'm going to repeat myself. Things that were perceived not to be the male tasks if your culture is very strong in that it's going to impact very strongly on what we're trying to work towards.

RESEARCHER: From what you said I'm hearing two main points – it depends firstly on a specific culture how strong gender differences are in that culture and it also depends on how much of the culture a person adopts in their life.

PARTICIPANT: Cultures are very different, you find that other people are going to be more tolerant on certain things and others are very..... this is how we do things and this is how it's going to stay type thinking. So it's a huge difference there. Difference in culture that's what plays the huge role.

RESEARCHER: Do you think that culture has an impact on...I mean what you're talking about is about how people choose to live out the culture. Do you think that a person's culture impacts on learning about gender roles significantly? You've spoken about upbringing and family and environment as being a way of learning gender roles. Do you think that culture is quite important?

PARTICIPANT: Yeah it is. That's what basically I meant when I said upbringing. You're going to be brought up according to your culture and how flexible your culture is basically determines how you're going to interpret changes into what your partner needs and what you should be doing to be one.

RESEARCHER: That is quite an interesting point because in my mind there is an assumption when you say upbringing where I think automatically of a

family for you what you're saying is a family that exists in a culture. In what ways do you feel that religion might impact on gender roles?

PARTICIPANT: Christian speaking I don't think...I think the main impact – there's a lot more tolerance towards gender differences, gender equality and....I'm forgetting the word.

RESEARCHER: What word are you looking for? Gender roles?

PARTICIPANT: Gender roles. I think Christianity speaking if anything has more advantages in that regard because you find that we're preaching about unifying being one and helping other so if anything more advantages, not much disadvantages, can't even think of one.

RESEARCHER: So for you...with Christianity particularly theres only advantages in terms of gender equality.

PARTICIPANT: Ja.

RESEARCHER: You can't think of anything.

PARTICIPANT: You find that even now these days in churches there's female pastors. They're really into this whole thing of gender equality.

RESEACHER: And other religions?

PARTICIPANT: Uh... what other ones do I know... Is traditional things a religion? No it's not. It can't be.

RESEARCHER: What do you mean? Like African tradition?

PARTICIPANT: Ja

RESEARCHER: In a way... it's not an institutionalized religion ...but it's a belief system I suppose?!

PARTICIPANT: I would have said then in that case it's not for gender equality. It's still very traditional. A man has kingchief... but as far as other religions I'm not quite familiar with how they operate really so...

RESEARCHER: Are there any other aspects of society that we haven't discussed that you feel might impact on gender roles?

PARTICIPANT: I'm trying to think of aspects. Not really.

RESEARCHER: Okay. That was my last question but before you finish if you could just please state your age and your occupation.

PARTICIPANT: I just completed my civil engineering studies, I'm 24.

RESEARCHER: That's all from me, thank you very very much.

END OF INTERVIEW

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW – Participant No.2

RESEARCHER: Tell me your age and occupation.

PARTICIPANT: My age is 27, I'm currently working at CSVr doing research, I'm also working at a college in Bryanston as an educator.

RESEARCHER: Alright. My first question is... what is your current understanding of the concept of gender roles?

PARTICIPANT: Well..... um.....gender roles I would assume have something to do with how people relate to their gender and how other people view their gender, so what you do because you are a certain gender.

RESEARCHER: So you're saying it's partly how people relate to their gender but it's also that you do things because you identify with being that gender?

PARTICIPANT: Ja.. because you have a social build up of what you're supposed to do and you kind of internalize that so you do things because of how you relate to you gender.

RESEARCHER: How do you think those gender roles are created?

PARTICIPANT: I think socially. First of all I guess your parents, how your parents react to you how they interact with and say it carries on into school, the kind of sport you're allowed to do at school. The people you play with, those kinds of things. So for me it's completely social.

RESEARCHER: Okay so you pick up on how you should behave according to your gender in your environment and you're saying that starts at a very young age?

PARTICIPANT: Ja.

RESEARCHER: In what ways do you think that gender roles impact on individuals' identity or way of viewing themselves?

PARTICIPANT: In what way? Well I suppose that....and I'm not sure if I'm answering your question correctly. A person being a certain gender allows...shouldn't allow them but it does; tend to allow them to get involved in certain roles. Get involved in certain aspects of life. For instance in school we.....when I went to my primary school the girls were allowed to play on the jungle-jims during the short breaks boys were allowed to play on the jungle-jims during the long breaks. I think like your gender is inevitably going to in a lot of ways it restricts you or it makes you more able to do certain things because of how people perceive you.

RESEARCHER: So you're saying then that your gender even from a very young age becomes part of your identity because it defines, to a certain extent, what you feel you're allowed to do in the world and what you're not?

PARTICIPANT: Yes, I'm definitely saying that. I think it's also what other people perceive you're allowed to do and what they perceive that you're not. So it's not just that I'm a girl and I can't do these things, someone else is saying you're a girl and there for you can't do these things.

RESEARCHER: So you're saying in some way then that maybe gender roles, and you've given examples of a girl, so I'm just going to go with that, that in some ways for women gender roles can be quite restricting in terms of their identity development?

PARTICIPANT: Ja, I think so.

RESEARCHER: Could you explain that to me a little more.

PARTICIPANT: Do you mean give examples or...

RESEARCHER: Ja. What ways are you thinking of?

PARTICIPANT: I just think that look... I'm mean talking specifically from a point of view of a woman I think that you... often socially people will restrict you in certain areas. For example I went to an all girls' schools and they said that we weren't allowed to do athletics because it's un-lady like. Now it completely arbitrary, those kinds of things, you shouldn't be restricted in terms of what sport you want to do, you shouldn't be restricted in terms of how your hair is supposed to look just because you're a girl... you know. The whole Im a girl therefore my hair should be long or tidy or whatever, it shouldn't be restricted. I think there are a lot of aspects that define you in terms of gender and restrict you in terms of gender. I

think most of them in my opinion are quite arbitrary. Does that answer your question?

RESEARCHER: It does. In a way if what you're saying is that...because my question is just how do gender roles impact on individuals' identity or ways of viewing themselves? So I suppose you answer does provide some of that and if I'm understanding what you're saying is why all those things exist like what you've spoken about that we tend to internalize that quite a lot and that's how it becomes part of our identity.

PARTICIPANT: Ja, I think so. I think the point for me primarily is that they are externally based.

RESEARCHER: In what ways do you think that gender roles are changing or are different to what they were in the past if you do think so?

PARTICIPANT: For me I do think so. In my life specifically because I think that women are given a choice in terms of whether they want to adhere to their gender roles so again I'm talking from a perspective of a woman; I think that to a much larger extent there's this view of equality. I would hope that the example I gave you in the primary school girls break and boys break and who gets the swings for longer I would hope that those kinds of things have become more equally based, either all the kids get to play on the jungle-jims together or they get equal time on that. So that's the first things, secondly for me in terms of my life I think that I have been given the choice to do what I want to do more so than I think that a lot of people were in the past. So I can choose to do things in a more equal environment or I can choose to do things that are gender specific like...I'm not sure...I'm trying to give you an example. Like for instance I do climbing and climbing is a very male dominated sport but I've chosen to do it in spite of that and I think I do quite well at it because I've chosen to do it. It's not like it's exclusive it's just...ja.

RESEACHER: So you're saying it comes down to two things for you that generally socially you're seeing more equality between men and women and also in a more personal capacity that it means for you there is more choice in maybe even more variety in the types of things that you choose to do.

PARTICIPANT: That's basically what I'm saying.

RESEACHER: So you've given me an example of how there's more equality. Do you think though there are any others that you can think of socially that are occurring where there is more equality between men and women now?

PARTICIPANT: I think that there is a large drive in the workplace for instance where equality is more equally divided. I think to a large extent one could argue that

the home is, well depends on your house but can be and can also not be. I think sports, well sports is difficult because to a large extent men are the ones who are popular so they get more sponsorship and stuff like that so I'm not sure but I think it's becoming more equal but it's taken some time.

RESEARCHER: So for you it's work and in some instances domestic situations depending on the specifics and consensus and also in terms of sports and the types of sports women are able to engage in. In what ways do you think gender roles have an impact on people's relationships with their partners?

PARTICIPANT: I think that they are bound to have some kind of impact because you relate to another person as a woman or as a man so your gender is inherently completely mixed up in that. Did you ask what ways you think or did you ask....

RESEARCHER: The question is in what ways do you think that gender roles have an impact in people's relationships with their partners?

PARTICIPANT: So my point is gender roles are inherent in the relationship because you relate to another person. I think that in a relationship, assuming that there is what you might call chemistry, you're going to relate to certain aspects of a person's sex. The person's sex is also going to play an impact on gender. So it's how you assume how a girl is supposed to look in order to look pretty and stuff like that...so its aesthetics in the other person. I think that in some relationships you could argue it's the way certain roles and responsibilities, like who washes the dishes, who takes care of the money, who does those kinds of things those are all parts that can have quite an impact in a relationship.

RESEARCHER: In the beginning you were saying it's got something to do with expectations and attraction but also you're saying that it's something about task division almost... and that those might need to be negotiated in a relationship?

PARTICIPANT: Definitely

RESEARCHER: Do you sort of..... in your opinion do you think that the negotiation of those tasks is something people are struggling with at the moment or do you think it's sort of been quite an easy process considering that those roles have changed?

PARTICIPANT: I think that it's something that people struggle with to a large extent and I think maybe it's becoming easier for maybe younger people who are seeing the transition and living the transition than for people who their roles were clearly defined and are now having to...say for instance the man who is a bread winner and having to enter not enter but continue a relationship with a woman who

is also a primary breadwinner and she's no longer looking to wash the dishes and do all the laundry. I think it's quite difficult for people who are in that situation.

RESEARCHER: You're saying it becomes quite difficult when people have been used to one way of being in a relationship or have what you could term a more traditional gender roles ideologies, if that's the right word, but now as that's changing generally that adaptation is where the difficulty is coming in. So do you think it's easier for people whose roles are less traditionally expected? You're saying also that for younger people that it's easier.

PARTICIPANT: I think so. I think younger people have been exposed to more... and again I'm talking from my life so some factor might be a little bit of a bias view...but in my opinion there is a lot more expectancy of equality and the media assumes equality and or tries to push for equality to a large extent. So people are kind of clicking over in their thought process to a view that equality is more normal.

RESEACHER: So you're saying now maybe people are being exposed to more ideas which promote equality between genders and so it becomes more expected in a relationship than it was before?

PARTICIPANT: Ja

RESEARCHER: You mentioned briefly the issue of media and it portraying more equality, can you tell me a little bit more about that?

PARTICIPANT: It's actually something that I think is in two parts actually. I think general media and the kinds of things that you're going to read in the newspapers, I hope... or the kinds of things that I tend to read will be talking about women's liberation, but not about bra burning, but about gender equality and stuff like that or equity. In my opinion there's the other side of that which is like the magazines that promote this view that women still should be in certain role. So you have the kind of teenage magazines which state you should be beautiful, you should have your hair done all the time and wear the perfect clothes and all of that and...uh... that's kind of promoting the view that women are only going to be there for aesthetic value rather than something more. So in my opinion there is two kinds of levels to that media question.

RESEACHER: So you're saying you are seeing it more in the media. There are certain mediums which bring up the issue or at least highlight it but there seems to be a more kind of innate things where we're not seeing massive changes.

PARICIPANT: Ja.

RESEARCHER: In what ways do you think that it's advantageous or disadvantageous to prescribe to traditional gender roles?

PARTICIPANT: I think that it's advantageous in that people know what their roles should be. There's quite clearly defined roles, this is what I as a woman I should be doing, this is what I as a man should be doing. They are very clearly defined and you know what you're expected to be doing. I think that that of course is problematic in that it means that women or certain genders will be assumed to stay in certain aspects for the rest of their lives. The alternative is where you don't have those clearly defined boundaries I think some people do find that quite difficult and I think they find it quite challenging for their identity and what they base their identity on. Alternatively they have more options so both sides have advantages and disadvantages.

RESEARCHER: In light of the fact that there is this sort of current trend towards gender equality that we've been talking about, what do you feel this means for women and men? How does it impact on their lives?

PARTICIPANTS: I think that it's advantageous to a large extent and I think that women are feeling more advantaged by this than men are because there are more opportunities that are opened up to them. They have the ability in terms of not just for themselves but in terms of social recognition so they are able to do things that they would not have been able to do before. I think that on the other hand make it quite difficult for them because they're stuck in this point where they need to show certain... they feel...again I think part of their identity is created on gender roles and it happens with women both sides. I think that having women enter into their turf must be quite scary.

RESEACHER: What do you think scares them about that?

PARTICIPANT: I think because there is still the societal expectation that men are going to earn money and provide and be the security basis, that's like physical security if someone breaks into the house, it's monetary or economic security it's like all that stuff. Suddenly they are put into this position where they are not providing where they are not the sole provider. So I think that it has the potential of causing an identity crisis.

RESEACHER: In what ways do you think that gender roles might possibly be different in South Africa compared to other countries?

PARTICIPANT: I think that South Africa is interesting because there is so much in terms of cultural diversity and social diversity and all of those. I think South Africa is different to a lot of countries because it has the ability to show like an extreme in

terms of what your traditional gender roles should be and it also has a more liberal view of what your gender roles should be depending on what culture you have. I think that that on a large scale would be in my opinion be different to other countries like European countries where it's more continuous there is more collusion in there.

RESEARCHER: So you're saying that South Africa is different in terms of the fact that there's not like one standard of gender equality that seems to apply to the whole country but that there's a lot of variety and several factors that result in different levels of equality for different people.

PARTICIPANT: Ja, exactly.

RESEARCHER: How do you think that couples are negotiating gender roles in relationships?

PARTICIPANT: When you say couples are you talking broadly in terms of couples of my age or another age or culture?

RESEARCHER: No, whatever. There's no right or wrong that I'm looking for I'm just interested in whatever you have an opinion on. It could be all of those things; I think it's happening in all those areas.

PARTICIPANT: I think like I said before, for older people where the roles were more clearly defined as traditional, I think that the negotiating is a much more difficult process because you base so much of your identity on your gender and your gender roles. For instance as an example I know someone whose parents had a very traditional household and more recently the mother's gotten a very top level job and is earning significantly more than her partner. I think that they've been fighting a lot and not been able to cope with this change and what their relationship has become. So I think that in terms of negotiation on that level I think it's very hard because you base so much how you view your role and how the other person responds to you in that capacity. Alternatively I think that for people my age I think there's a more accepting view of gender roles. So gender roles are slightly more fuzzy and you don't as the woman, you don't have to come home and cook supper because you share cooking or you share cleaning and stuff like that. It's more negotiable and it's kind of free in a younger person's life.

RESEARCHER: So you're saying age is a big factor?

PARTICIPANT: I think so and I think look I mentioned culture earlier and I don't have much interaction with many different cultures but I think that makes a big difference as well depending on your culture and what the roles in your culture are

will relate to how you view the other person and how you view yourself in terms of gender roles.

RESEARCHER: That was going to be my next question so I was wondering if how you feel that culture does impact on gender roles.

PARTICIPANT: Do you want me to answer that?

RESEARCHER: Yes, if there's more stuff that you'd like to add then definitely.

PARTICIPANT: I think that culture does impact on gender roles, I think that also again in religion and I know I'm bringing up a whole lot of stuff now. You have this view of how you're supposed to act in terms of your gender according to your cultural base, according to your religion so in some very intense Christian religions or Muslim religions, Jewish religions or whatever you have this assumption that the woman should be subservient and I think that culturally this idea of women being subservient is continued. Culture does play a definite role in terms of gender and gender roles.

RESEARCHER: I was going to follow on that question with the same thing about religion so I suppose my question is if you're explaining it in that way do you see them as somehow being interlinked?

PARTICIPANT: Do you mean gender?

RESEARCHER: I mean religion and culture? Do they have the exact same impact I suppose is my question?

PARTICIPANT: No I don't think they have the exact same impact. I think they've got a similar impact and probably the reason I say that is for me both religion and culture are society based so because you base it on society on people and what people's expectations of what certain genders are. I think that's where the link comes in. Alternatively I don't think that religion and culture are the same but I think that they do have similar relations to how gender is applied.

RESEARCHER: So you're saying there is a similarity simply because of the fact that they are social institutions if you want to call them that but you say that the impact or how they inform gender is not exactly the same?

PARTICIPANT: I think because for me religion has this basis that there is something else out there and so you live a good life on that basis and this is a very broad explanation but because of that like Biblically you were supposed to as a woman do certain things where as culturally it's become a cultural norm to do

certain things. For me religion is based on something that you're supposed to do in order to achieve something else which would be fit into heaven or whatever you might want to call it.

RESEARCHER: So it's slightly different, not even slightly, it's different in terms of maybe that in culture it's almost become more innate where as in religion it's almost put out there.

PARTICIPANT: Ja. I think so, now I'm going back on my answer, I think that culture enforces a religious aspect, innateness becomes part of this religious view of gender. So it's not just that you're doing something in order to achieve this goal it's that culture is enforcing it and you're continuing that part if I may call it that.

RESEARCHER: Just so that I'm clear, are you saying that religion might inform cultural views on gender norms or are you saying it's the other way round that culture kind of makes those religious practices the norm?

PARTICIPANT: I would say that technically they should be separate. Although I think that culture plays a role in making the religious aspect normalized.

RESEARCHER: Okay, that's pretty much all I have. My last question is are there any other aspects of society sort of society, culture and religion which you sort of feel impact on gender roles that we haven't discussed?

PARTICIPANT: No. I don't think so. I can't think of anything right now.

RESEARCHER: Okay, that's fine. Thank you very much.

END OF INTERVIEW

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW- Participant No.3

RESEARCHER: Please state your age and occupation.

PARTICIPANT: I'm an accountant and I'm 30.

RESEARCHER: The first question is what is your current understanding of the concept of gender roles?

PARTICIPANT: I would say I understand gender roles to be the sort of behaviors that are expected based on your sex. If you're a female you're expected to do certain

things, if you're a male you're expected to do certain things or you do things based on your sex.

RESEARCHER: So are you talking about like tasks or behaviors or both?

PARTICIPANT: Both. I think that gender roles can mean the girls do the cooking and the guys do the braaing or they can do the things that are expected to behave in a feminine way or in a masculine way. I think its tasks, I think it's how you fit into society, how you're expected to fit into society based on your sex and not on anything else.

RESEARCHER: How do you think these gender roles are created?

PARTICIPANT: I think most of them are socialized. I think that people are brought up; a lot of it is how you're socialized. You're brought up or taught how to behave in certain ways. Girls are taught things like little girls are meant to be pretty and boys told you are so clever and so tough. I think that a lot of it is socialized and everything is what you are innately as well, but I think the role that you take based on your gender is taught. I don't know if this is something that you do without realizing it, you don't think that is a role but think that's just your nature.

RESEARCHER: So you're saying from very young it's something that maybe even parenting has a role in?

PARTICIPANT: Ja. I think parenting, your feedback from other children in nursery school. I think that most of us are taught the same thing and we reinforce it to each other without realizing it. I think its TV, I think it's everywhere. I think it's just the society that we're in.

RESEARCHER: You mentioned TV, I suppose I'm just interested to hear a little bit more about the role that you feel that plays.

PARTICIPANT: I think it's the same as society or people around you, except that it's like a condensed version so you're taught like..... I think there are a lot of stereotypes on TV, gender stereotypes. I think that unconsciously they reinforce what's already there. I think if you took away TV the gender roles would still be the way they are but they would not be reinforced by this background of the same thing being repeated. Sometimes even a bit exaggerated, TV is a reflection of real life it sort of reinforces that.

RESEARCHER: So it maybe even sometimes plays it up a little bit more if you see it more frequently?

PARTICIPANT: I think it mirrors it a little bit more and a little bit more exaggerated. I think it can sort of be a little bit more over the top than real life but I don't think it is to blame or anything like that.

RESEARCHER: In what ways do you think gender roles impact on an individual's identity or way of viewing themselves?

PARTICIPANT: I think they have a massive impact on identity and how you view yourself. I think you view yourself in terms of a frame of reference that you have. Whether you're living up to that, or not living up to it, or choosing to live outside that. I think the whole time whether you're conscious of it or not, it's a massive part in who you are and how you interact with other people. I think that whether I'm aware of it or not I'm conscious of the fact that...or I can be conscious of the fact that... you're expected to behave in a certain way in certain situations and there's a lot... I think...I think that it's a big part of how you identify yourself or how you identify yourself in relation to other people. I think you can do a sport like climbing which I think is not at all a masculine sport but viewed as a masculine sport, it makes it difficult, not exactly difficult, but it definitely brings another element to how people view it. It doesn't match what they perceive a girl should be doing which impacts on how you view yourself.

RESEARCHER: It's almost that your identity is affected by people's reactions?

PARTICIPANT: I think you get feedback from other people, I think you choose to take that or not to take that. I think that sometimes that feedback can make you look at things in a certain way. I think that feedback is a part of it; the other part is how you view yourself in terms of a gender role. What you view as what is expected of you in a gender role as being a woman, what you expect of men. I think it's how you react without realizing it.

RESEARCHER: So it's part of...it's almost like an innate behavior thing that....not innate but...it's not even conscious all the time it's how it plays out in the way that we act. If we don't do that then it somehow doesn't quite fit in with the way we view ourselves.

PARTICIPANT: It's not like you think in a situation that I am a girl there for I must do these things or I shouldn't do these things or it's not expected. It's just that you do that and if something that is outside what people think you should be doing or outside what you think you should be doing then I think sometimes you get feedback and then you think about it. The rest of the time you do things exactly without even realizing it. Sometimes in terms of gender roles you're not outside them you're just doing without thinking.

RESEARCHER: In what ways do you think that gender roles are changing or different to what they were in the past?

PARTICIPANT: I think that now is probably one of the first times that gender roles are changing quite significantly. I think that with more information, more financial freedom and more options I think that roles *are* changing. I think there's less expectation to behave according to a gender role than has ever been before ,or that I know of, than there seen before. I think there's a lot more freedom in that and you know...maybe at the same time maybe more anxiety related to it as well. If you...if your behavior is carved out for you it can be frustrating or it can be easier than making your own sort of roles..so I think that there are those dynamics as well.

RESEARCHER: You've mentioned a couple of things now that you kind of feel contribute to that change. Could you just elaborate on those a little bit more?

PARTICIPANT: I think financial elements make a big difference to things, I think that in relationships and in the society that we live in financial freedom opens up a lot more doors than it did before. I think that for instance women are expected to have a job ...it's a given, you need to support yourself. Whereas before I think it was unfeminine to work, financial freedom opens up the option to look at things differently and to have an equal footing in a relationship. I think that also there's more options... if the only person you ever know is..... if every women you met in your life... was a house wife that had kids, the first woman that doesn't do that would be very shocking. Now we know of so many people who do both or one of the other who have fluid gender roles in relationships and it's not necessarily same sex ...heterosexual. There's so many options put there that makes it easier and easier for people to experiment with different gender roles or to reassess theirs. It's not like it was even ten years ago where it was a given that you will do this you will do that, you will behave within a certain pattern. I think it's opened up and especially South Africa has opened up a lot in the last ten or fifteen years and has become and more and more accepting. And I think those are the things that contribute to changing gender roles.

RESEARCHER: In light of what you're saying I'm wondering what you feel enabled that process?

PARTICIPANT: The roles to become more flexible?

RESEARCHER: Mmhmm... What's causing it?

PARTICIPANT: A lot of things. Off the top of my head I think information out there, there's a lot more emphasis on tolerance which there wasn't in the past. I think people to do unusual things in relationships and roles. There's also been a lot

of fighting for gender roles to change. I think generations now don't know that the base...that groundwork has been there for a while. A friend of mine was saying ten years ago it was so difficult for women in business... it was so difficult to like be respected... and I've never had that experience and she's only ten years older than me so It's so strange that she can remember that now because for me I've never ever experienced that in any way. I think the ground work has been meant that its easier for people to step outside their role, there were always going to be people that will do that but for the more middle of the road people it easier now and I think that ground work has made all the difference.

RESEARCHER: Why do you think that gender roles have an impact on people's relationships with their partners?

PARTICIPANT: I think it's a big thing because I think that in a way in a relationship there is an expectation of somebody else. so if you are in a relationship with someone who has very set ideas on gender roles and an expectation of you to be that way it will cause friction. If you don't match those and you don't believe the same thing, I think its...its...I'm not saying it's the same as values but it's one of those things that is like values and if you want kids and if they don't match up it just causes more friction, it makes it more difficult to get somebody to match what you would like without compromising. I think your gender roles definitely affects your relationship and how you view each other and what you expect from each other.

RESEARCHER: Are you saying there's got to be some kind of similarity in how you understand gender roles and your expectations?

PARTICIPANT: Ja...not exactly. ..just... If you have an understanding of a person to behave in a certain way just based on the fact that they are whatever sex male or female and if they're not doing it causes ... I'm not saying you can't around it...it just one of those expectations that you have of people.

RESEACHER: Do you think that it's sort of relatively common for people to be able to find a partner who is similar on how they view those things or do you think that it is actually at that point where it is causing a lot of friction and a lot of negotiation that has to happen?

PARTICIPANT: I only know based on my experiences I don't have friends really... I don't think it's so difficult really it's just one of those things where you read a person in that initial stage before you start a relationship. I think that if you don't read that right then there will be a lot of negotiation around it. I think even if you read that somebody is similar to you and you think you know what your view is and what their view is there is still going to be a lot of negotiation around those things because it is a changing thing. Your gender role now, what you think it is

now is not necessarily what you think it will be in five years time. So much happens to you in that time and your idea of who you should be in that time can change completely and possibly that person doesn't change. I think there's always going to be negotiation around it and I don't know if its necessarily an additional element to conflict but it could be, I mean may be things like that when you get older and have kids and things like that...maybe it becomes a bigger issue.

RESEARCHER: I'm just interested in one thing that you've mentioned the idea that it's possible for your beliefs on what your role should be, based on gender, to change.

PARTICIPANT: Ja...I think they can change a lot because I think that because you will change as a person you're not stagnant. I think my views on my gender roles are different now to what they were maybe five or six years ago. A lot of that is because of people I've met and lot of that is because of women I've met that have very different views of the world than I had experienced before, and I think part of that is also the relationship I'm in now. My partner is very...umm...I don't think he sees gender... he has a much more open view of gender roles than I do, he doesn't really think a lot about that because of your gender you need to behave in a certain way. I think that has made me change a lot of the way I look at things. If I changed like that now I think in ten years time the idea could be completely different. I think it moves with what you experience and what you learn.

RESEARCHER: I think it's got something to do with what you were talking about earlier, the idea that there's not a historical reference carved out for how this should work. So it has to be quite a fluid kind of thing...

PARTICIPANT: I think so. Maybe like the next ten years, I know it's not a real generation but maybe the next generation will look at it differently (unclear). I think that in the times we are in now and the age we are in now, it's very different to the way it was. I mean...I've got an aunt who is only ten years older than me but in her marriage they are completely *completely* like the girl's and a boy's jobs. She's only ten years older than me there isn't like a big gap. I don't know any couples my age that are like that now, there seems to be less and less compartmentalising.

RESEARCHER: So it's changing very rapidly.

PARTICIPANT: I think so.

RESEARCHER: In what way do you think it's advantageous or disadvantageous to prescribe to traditional gender roles?

PARTICIPANT: I think that the disadvantage is that you tar everyone with the same brush or maybe 50 or 60% are happy with that and it suites them perfectly, but for

the 40% there'll be a lot of unhappiness and questioning of, what's wrong with me? why don't I fit in? It causes completely unnecessary stress, whereas if you took that expectation away, maybe 60% will just do that anyway because it feels natural to them but the 40% it would eliminate that 'I am wrong', 'why don't I fit in with everyone else?'. I think there's a lot of stress in that, and it just seems completely unnecessary. I think that the advantage of a carved out gender role is that it does make things work at certain times more efficiently and better maybe. Historically I think if we didn't have definite gender roles of men being breadwinners and women being nurturers it would have all tipped over to the same point. In every civilization there are definite roles carved out through many different civilizations that had nothing to do with each other. I think that it makes things work more efficiently, but for the individual...I don't think it's the best thing.

RESEARCHER: It's almost as though it kind of serves a greater purpose.

PARTICIPANT: But I don't know if it makes the people that fit into that plan always happier. Maybe for some people...I would have been a very unhappy little girl, but I think maybe other people would have been very happy...I don't know...maybe just less opportunities.

RESEARCHER: Why do you think that there is this current trend towards gender equality? What do you think that means for everyone?

PARTICIPANT: Its difficult because I think theoretically there is gender equality, you have equal rights, you have equal access to everything, so I don't know if there isn't gender equality at the moment at least not on paper. You can't force people's minds into gender equality... but I think that maybe it opens up some options, maybe it gives you more choices. I think that if you took the middle of the road society and didn't take any of the extremes, like maybe the rural, but if you took the average urban population... I think there is gender equality I don't think that there is very often ...It's just an assumption... but I think that there is gender equality. It just lets people be more...I don't know how to put it...the options are there it depends on whether you want to take it or not, you can continue in the same way and do whatever suits you... but the option is there for people.

RESEARCHER: So let's just take that idea that you're talking about ...if you were to take an average urban population of people that already have a relative level of equality already, how do you think that plays out practically sort of in a way that people live? Is it a change that they have to adapt to, what do you think that really means in people's lives that feeling of equality?

PARTICIPANT: I think it's probably the same like a gender role itself, by the time it comes it's so slow and so progressive that I don't think anyone has to change to it.

By the time that point arrives when things are relatively equal there's equality between the genders, between the sexes, I'd say that you don't even know its there you just behave under the assumption that its all fine. I think that somebody who wasn't exposed to that kind of thing, then they would have to change and adapt to it then I think maybe then that would lead to a bit of questioning in their mind, "How do I react in relation to other people?, I've always done things a certain way". I think for people who have lived here, I wouldn't say I feel like anything is different than it ever was because for me I've been moving with that. Maybe for someone who went overseas and came back they would say it's not ...there is no equality...but for me it feels like there's nothing to adapt to.

RESEARCHER: So maybe you're saying it hasn't been like a sudden change that you've noticed or sudden way that you had to adapt to your role. It has been more of a gradual development thing that you've gone through?

PARTICIPANT: Ja...I haven't instigated anything, I haven't had to question anything, its just been like normal, growing up where it feels like everything has always been that way and I have no experience of it not being that way. I don't remember apartheid I know it happened ...you've just sort of grown up with the fact that it was there.

RESEARCHER: On that note the next question is in what ways do you think that gender roles are maybe different in South Africa compared to the rest of the world?

PARTICIPANT: I think gender roles in South Africa in my experience of first world, I was in the UK for a while, I think that we are more old fashioned. Gender roles are more fixed here that they are in Europe. We have more traditional gender roles than they have. Whereas I've also been to Thailand and to Malawi and in comparison to that it was a shock because their gender roles are much much more fixed than that, especially in [Malawi] I couldn't walk in the city without wearing a skirt it seemed ridiculous. I don't think of a country that's far worse that I think they've got very set gender roles and in comparison to that we seem like a more liberal free for all. So I think it very relative to where you go, I think compared to Europe and Britain its definitely is more traditional than I thought it was.

RESEACHER: What do you think are some of the reasons for that? Why do you think South Africans are possibly more traditional in how those roles play out?

PARTICIPANT: I think maybe part of it is that we are quite a conservative society in general. I think we are ,in general, much more conservative than the English, like we are much more...like I find it strange that , like I've got an English cousin and

her two little girls.. like a little 14 year old girl would wear like fishnet stockings and like three skirts over that. In South Africa you'll never see a 14 year old girl dressing like that now, they are just a lot less conservative and lot more open minded. I think culturally we are more conservative and I think partly they have opened up to the rest of the world. I think there they have been exposed to a lot more, a lot more regularly, I think in South Africa it's only been in the last fifteen on twenty years that people regularly go overseas and travel. I think exposure to other cultures and other ideas opens you up..generally...so I think that also plays a part.

RESEARCHER: It's almost like... what you're saying is exposure to diversity...has something to do with how liberal a society becomes?

PARTICIPANT: I think even in a diverse country, we were never exposed to each other... we'd never meet people from other cultural backgrounds, you mixed exclusively with people who had very very similar cultural backgrounds, so I think that you don't realize that the way you do something is not the way everyone does something until you've met people like that, and then you can only question ...and then you can only see it as something you have been taught. If you don't realize that it's not the same everywhere, then its just the way things are done.

RESEARCHER: Do you think that might account for the lack of liberalism that you're seeing in southern countries, like Malawi as an example, do you think that that could be put down to a lack of exposure to diverse ways of thinking?

PARTICIPANT: I think a lot of that is that ...and a lot of that is related to being poor. You don't travel you don't have a lot of money to do that. I think that quite religious places as well also, Malawi is also very religious. There's a lot of factors that add up to ...that add up to being quite a closed society that doesn't see a lot of changes.

RESEARCHER: You've touched on some of this already but if there's anything that you'd maybe like to elaborate on. The next question is how do you think that couples are negotiating gender roles in relationships?

PARTICIPANT: I think it's not so much that you consciously negotiate them. I think that if there is conflict around things sometimes, the underlying reason is gender roles. I think that it's just that every relationship has problems sometimes. For instance I don't want to iron, I want my partner to buy all the groceries and he must be the breadwinner and he feels that's a silly concept then we have to resolve it. Talk it out or it becomes a big issue and the relationship will end. So I think that

people are kind of negotiating them in terms of negotiating their relationship...I don't think it's a specific conversation .

RESEARCHER: So it kinds of fits in with the process of negotiation naturally happens in a relationship.

PARTICIPANT: There has to be conflict it's a natural consequence of being in a relationship, or living with anyone there's always conflict, and you're always negotiating that which is some sort of compromise. I think it just fits in with all the elements including, 'you left your shoes on the floor', 'you didn't hang up the towel'...that sort of stuff. Part of it is just living together, part of it is who you are, part of it is how you perceive gender roles, all different things coming together and how you sort them out.

RESEARCHER: You touched on it briefly just now when you spoke about religion possibly being a factor in gender role development or adoption whatever it might be. My question is in what way do you feel religion does impact on gender roles?

PARTICIPANT: I think it's quite a big thing because depending on the religion... for instance a lot of the Muslim... I think not even necessarily fundamentalists ...do teach the wife taking a submissive role and then it obviously goes to an extreme in and that..like the burka...which I think is an extreme case in. I think that there is that taught ...on top of your natural socialization as another layer added to that. In a lot of Christian teachings there is also an element of that there is a negotiation but you obey your husband. It has to be some..you know... I think that there is what happens naturally as a consequence of where you live and if in addition to that you live in a very religious upbringing or groups where you choose to join one it add another layer to that. That layer is very gender role specific and I think it increases it.

RESEARCHER: So then what you're saying is that those divisions that are innate in society are kind of magnified by religion?

PARTICIPANT: Ja...like its definitely not watering it down.

RESEARCHER: Do you maybe feel that in some ways it counters equality in roles?

PARTICIPANT: I've had this debate... my sister is quite fundamentally Christian , I know there's quite a large spectrum of Christian, but she quite fundamentally Christian and we've had this debate before about whether it does not decrease equality. I think it does...and if at the end of an argument you can't come to a resolution you have to... I don't what the word is...acquiesce ...or whatever it is to

your husband. There isn't equality there. Her point of view is that there is equality on it because there has to be a respect element for it to be like that and nothing fundamental will be able to compromise such a huge bit for general day to day things that if there's respect to compromise them is not a bad thing. I think it does go against that because if we're both compromising then there is equality, but if one person based on their gender casts the final vote then it's not equal...I know it's not in black and white, I mean the actual workings of relationship might be very different but if those are the rules then it pulls down the level of equality.

RESEARCHER: My next question is in what way do you feel culture impacts on gender roles?

PARTICIPANT: I think that like I said earlier it's usually taught. If you socialize or you are brought up in a learning and a culture that is very gender role intensive and you...it teaches you that then I think there will be a lot more to it than a culture that doesn't have that effect. I think it's a very big part of it because it's a taught thing.

RESEARCHER: We're almost done my last question is just if there are any aspects of society that you feel impact on gender roles?

PARTICIPANT: No I don't think there **is any specific element of** society, I think it's society in general that impacts on the roles. But I think it's also people that you meet that make a specific impact on your gender roles. You can have ideas but people you meet can completely blow them away and that changes your idea of gender roles.

RESEARCHER: What you're saying is that not necessarily like this big broader society thing all the time, maybe not so distant but social in a sense of quite close relationships or interactions.

PARTICIPANT: Two people from the same background can have different views of it because of they are and their very close relationships with people and specific things that happened to them. I think background is sort of similar for everybody but there is a sort of taught background that you get, you watch the same TV, and you go to varsity and that sort of thing, but within that there's differences and those differences are often the experiences that you have with people in a relationship. I think it's a bit of both.

RESEARCHER: So you're saying there's quite a common or standard background against those and relationships occur.

PARTICIPANT: I think if you come from a similar background or the same socio-economic situation then you still might have very different views so it might be those close relationships that have an impact.

RESEARCHER: Thank you very much

END OF INTERVIEW

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW – participant No.4

RESEACHER: Could you please tell me your age and your occupation.

PARTICIPANT: Age 31, occupation I'm a software developer.

RESEACHER: My first question is what is your current understanding of gender roles?

PARTICIPANT: The concept of gender roles, the concept I think normally is just separating into male or female and I think everyone's concept is more on the traditional part that males are supposed to do certain things. Is there anything more I should know?

RESEARCHER: There is no right or wrong I just want your opinion. What you're saying then is that the tasks that people do based on whether or not they're males or females or is it more than that?

PARTICIPANT: Gender is something fixed from change when they talk about gender it is depending on how people look at it. From a traditional background you will see the male role is supposed to bring things to the family, the female role is supposed to be staying at home type of thing.

RESEARCHER: How do you think those gender roles are created?

PARTICIPANT: I think it actually started over time like from our grand parents' time, it's a fixed model. It's been carried on, there is no specific way of it being created it's just over time. It happens to be so.

RESEARCHER: You're saying it's historical but you also mentioned grandparents so you're saying it's something that we kind of learn from previous generations?

PARTICIPANT: I think it's carried over from generations and that's why they imposed the idea to the next generation, that that's how things should work. I think we are at a level where we are rebellious of everything in this generation.

RESEARCHER: What do you mean by rebellious?

PARTICIPANT: I think it's in many levels not just the gender roles. Now females can get jobs they don't want to stay at home, they want careers. I think the rebellious applies to many other things. Women are supposed to get married and have children, everything that's related to that I think now no one really wants to follow it but they keep pushing for it. I think some actually realize that this is the new generation but not all of them.

RESEACHER: Okay, so some people still think we should stick to this idea of traditional roles.

PARTICIPANT: Ja. I think because my whole group of friends is very diverse I still have friends that are still getting into arranged marriages they're going to get married in Pakistan. For me it's like that is so my mother's time, in his time they still need to negotiate how much the male is contributing. In a lot of places I think it's still happening, for the people here now it's not a common practice anymore.

RESEACHER: So it's not like it's just one way now that there's sort of like a diversity some things are changing, it's a broader spectrum. In what ways do you think that gender roles can impact on an individual's identity or way of viewing themselves?

PARTICIPANT: You're asking how it would impact or what the impact would be.

RESEACHER: In what way would I impact on someone's identity?

PARTICIPANT: I think it depends on how the person is brought up and how they see themselves, in what role they should fit in. If they don't fit into that role now in their 30's or when they start their career it will be a struggle. For a female to be able to see themselves getting married, staying at home and raising a family now you have to work to be able to earn a living it can be a struggle if that's not how they see themselves to be. The same for men if they don't manage to find a job and end up staying at home it also has a big impact on them. They will not be able to do their part. It's not really expected of them on my side I would say, it's not expected for men to be able to bring things home. They can be house husbands.

RESEARCHER: You're saying then that maybe gender roles are in some way linked with a way of how we value ourselves, in cases where people don't live up to their gender roles they see themselves as having less value in some way?

PARTICIPANT: I think a lot of people impose that and they think that they're under achievers they not living up to the role, I think. You see lots of people having that conflict. I don't think I have a problem with that.

RESEARCHER: Tell me more about that conflict. What do you mean by that?

PARTICIPANT: You see people not being able to work and staying at home, they really feel that they're under achievers. They are unable to contribute to the family, at the same time they are at home and doing all the things that a family needs so they don't have to go out find a job and bring money into the family. It's hard for them to switch the role between the two, to being on the other side.

REASERCHER: Are you speaking about men here specifically that are staying at home or are you speaking about men and women?

PARTICIPANT: I think men specifically struggle if they have to switch roles, I think women are enjoying switching roles.

RESEARCHER: Why do you think that is?

PARTICIPANT: That depends. For women that are more independent, the bunch of friends that I know that when you're independent you have your own career you have your own family you do your own thing not really concerned. You enjoy your freedom. Then for some women that see themselves being house wives and they are unable to do that they are unhappy that they have to work. From my side I enjoy being independent doing my own thing.

RESEACHER: So for women it means more options?

PARTICIPANT: I would say yes. Actually it's more options for men as well if men would let it go.

RESEARCHER: So what are the options? What options are you talking about for men? "If they could let go" are you saying let go of traditional gender roles and be okay with doing what would usually be done by females?

PARTICIPANT: Ja. I mean the same thing that women fight to be treated equally and all the list of things that we're fighting for does not mean that all the house work and other stuff is something that has to belong to a woman or that men won't enjoy. I think if they do they're afraid that they would be named gay or something just because they enjoy house work.

RESEARCHER: So it's something about their masculinity then affected by doing what would be traditionally seen as female activities?

PARTICIPANT: I think they see themselves as being on the field doing what they're good at.

RESEARCHER: You say “doing what they’re good at” do you think men see themselves as not being good at domestic duties?

PARTICIPANT: I think in my point of view men always see themselves as being the hunter to go out and take care of the family. They see themselves as being good at it. If you battle to find a job you battle at achieving what you think you should achieve I think maybe it is not a bad idea that you turn around and do something else.

RESEARCHER: In what ways do you think that gender roles are changing or are different to what they were in the past? Assuming that you do think so.

PARTICIPANT: Are gender roles changing? I think it is changing I think it even happens in my family. You didn’t think it was happening to everyone you just thought maybe this is just one case but there has to be opportunity for the woman to be able to do that. Sorry what’s your question again?

RESEARCHER: My question is in what way do you think gender roles are changing or are different to what they were in the past?

PARTICIPANT: It is definitely changing. They’re only changing in the new generation not in the old generation and I think changing in a more equal level that basically each individual has to do both roles. It’s not a fixed job that men are supposed to do this and females are supposed to do that. You do both, both genders do both.

RESEARCHER: So it’s not being divided according to whether you’re a man or woman anymore, people are just generally expected to do.

PARTICIPANT: I see it as that but then again it’s easier for women to accept it and see it like that but it’s not the same for man to look at it that way. You have to brainwash them slowly. To say no its fine there’s nothing wrong it depends on how you look at it and how you see yourself in it.

RESEARCHER: How else do you think gender roles have an impact on people’s relationships with their partners?

PARTICIPANT: It depends on which way you mean impact. Positive impact or negative impact?

RESEACHER: Both.

PARTICIPANT: I have to think about this one. For myself I see guys actually struggling in relationships because they see themselves as being more on the masculine side and I think take myself for example my boyfriend sometimes really

struggles because he thinks I'm too independent he doesn't know what to do. There are times when he wants to help me but I have done everything I can do that I don't need help from him. I think it makes the relationship a bit difficult from that angle but it maybe opens a channel for people to communicate better in some ways. We talk about it; we're pretty open about it so there's nothing you need to feel bad about. There's no duty as such at home such that a certain person needs to do certain things, everyone puts in their bit and you carry on. My friend's relationship was impacted so much that they couldn't continue anymore because she is so independent that she thinks her boyfriend is useless. I think in that sense it's quite bad because no matter how much the guy tries he feels that he'll always be an under achiever because he can never outdo the woman.

RESEARCHER: In what ways do you think that women are....you speak about women being more independent, how are they independent? In what ways are they more independent than in the past?

PARTICIPANT: If you compare to the past we are more independent in that after varsity we find jobs we carry on with our lives. We don't depend on our parents, we don't rush to get married so we can depend on our husbands and we can look after ourselves on our own. I think for me that's the independent part that the older generation did not have because women couldn't find jobs or the few that managed to start their own businesses were recognized because it was so rear for women to be able to do that. Now it's hardly a thing to talk about because people just find jobs and they carry on.

RESEARCHER: So you're speaking about an independence that comes from financial independence in a way? That because you no longer rely on men for financial support you have more options in terms of going out to get a career as opposed to getting married.

PARTICIPANTS: I think with all this equality it comes out that women are able to find a job and gain their financial independence but I think in another way you must be emotionally independent as well that you don't see yourself as unable to stand up because you don't have a man on your side. I never know how that feels; you need to have a man on your side.

RESEARCHER: So it's more than just the realities it's a change in how women feel or think as well.

PARTICIPANT: I think women are changing how they think I don't know if it's in general, the friends that we have and talk to, a lot of them don't even think they will ever get married because you can make yourself happy on your own. You don't need to really have anyone else. The only thing is I don't know whether it's

happening to everyone or just the few of us and we're odd. A lot of them can carry on quite happily but if someone comes along that's also nice. So maybe there is a change in people.

RESEARCHER: So you're saying it's not like a need anymore it's not absolutely necessary it's a choice that people make to give into a relationship.

PARTICIPANT: I think before traditionally it was more of a need that's why you get arranged marriages and have babies, you do that during high school. When you get to varsity you don't have that anymore.

RESEARCHER: Why do you think that is?

PARTICIPANT: Sometimes I think its people getting greedy in high school or some people guys and girls all they want is to raise a family and it's the most exciting thing. In varsity you find that you want to have more fun you don't want to settle down and get tied down and a lot of people just choose to be free and do what they want. They go out; they tour and do all sorts of things before they think of settling down.

RESEARCHER: So it's something about the experiences that you have in your university years that makes you want to live more independently in some way?

PARTICIPANT: For me I wouldn't say....I'm not sure..... Probably in university you have a good time but I know what is in store for me. I think for me it's more a case of running away from my parents, subconsciously, so I don't have to carry on with the family business I can do my own thing. University gives me the opportunity to be on my own and do my own thing. You have to move out of the house you have to stay in a 'res' and all you have in friends and study 24/7. So that is the part that has stored me away from my parents.

RESEARCHER: In what way do you think that it's advantageous or disadvantageous to prescribe to more traditional gender roles?

PARTICIPANTS: Disadvantage and advantage? I think it differs from person to person, some people still want the traditional values and maybe it makes them feel more at ease, a lot of them do get worried if they don't meet someone and don't get married. They say the clock is ticking and it's time to settle down. I can't really think of an advantage or disadvantage of being more on the traditional side. I think it's an advantage you go back to the olden times then maybe life is so much easier because you just wait for the man to do everything. Then the disadvantage is that everything they do you don't have a say because they make the call. I don't know I think some people like it better some people not.

RESEARCHER: So maybe what you're saying is that the advantage to that is that you kind of know your role and there's a comfort in the dependence and that can be an advantage for some people?

PARTICIPANT: Less stress. I'm not sure. I think every now and then you think about why I have to work so hard why I have to do all this. I think you do that if it was my mother's time then I wouldn't have to do all this. You just make sure that the house is clean and that's that.

RESEARCHER: In light of the fact that there is this sort of current trend towards more gender equality what do you think this means for women and men? How does that impact on their lives?

PARTICIPANT: I think from what I understand men feel they're impacted more than women. I think at the same time women actually take on more stress, women can't let go. Eventually you feel that you're playing two roles. When you go out you feel like you're a male and when you're at home you feel like you're the woman you have to do everything you're supposed to do. I think men feel like they're losing ground because there are very capable women at work maybe the impact on their side is that they don't think they're as capable as the next colleague. At the same time they can't really say much because as soon as they raise an issue and the other person is female then they can get sexism. I think it happens in a lot of places and men are feeling threatened by women, I think on their side stress is higher.

RESEARCHER: In what way do you think that gender roles are different in South Africa as compared to other parts of the world?

PARTICIPANT: I can't say there's much change, well there is if you compare like maybe we haven't totally changed yet compared to the States... that women are only starting now here. Compared to more traditional places like Asia, for them our women are way too independent for them, you have too many rights, you make too much noise. Compared to more traditional society they still expect women to be in a certain role. I think South Africa is in between, you're not all the way in the back because we also have older generations that have those ideas but the new generation thinks totally differently. So we're at a transforming stage.

RESEARCHER: So we haven't quite reached a place where there is complete equality and we're not extremely traditional?

PARTICIPANT: I think if we had real equality then we wouldn't have sexism issues, you will worry only about the ability of being able to do it but here males have been dominating for so long that a lot of them feel threatened. A lot of them don't want to work with women. Some of them will never say you're a woman so

you got demoted but you can clearly see females being chased away from departments. We still see a lot of that now. I don't think it's balanced yet it's probably going to take until our generation get older and then the next generation will see it as a norm then we'll balance.

RESEARCHER: What do you think that's about? You say South Africa is in between or is in the process of starting to move towards more equality in general. What has happened in Europe and America do you think or not happened in Asia or other developing countries that we sort of...what is the difference I suppose is my question? Why does Europe and America have such an advantage?

PARTICIPANT: I don't know why. When I want to go overseas my friend's say you should actually go to the states you'll be much happier there because you're not being discriminated as much as here. I don't really feel I'm being discriminated here, probably because I'm in IT. I'm so rare in that department, out of ten guys there might only be two girls. If I'm back in Taiwan I think the people are obeying their duty so much, people don't really walk out to make their voices heard. The shift is slow when a woman is able to do something too much people get scared of them in Taiwan. For me that is the difference, if you go to the states, I don't know about the UK but if you go to the States you'll be more accepted. Here they accept you being independent but people are scared of you being independent.

RESEARCHER: So it's accepted but there's still some kind of reaction to it.

PARTICIPANT: Like you're so independent you probably won't find any man. That was stated, you probably won't find a guy because guys don't know what to do with you. So I'm fine I'll just do my work and live my life.

RESEARCHER: What do you think had to happen for independence to happen in America or the States that you're talking about?

PARTICIPANT: I think over time you actually accept that it's happening. I think the same thing here they accept because there's more and more women coming in to do men's job. They might not like it they might reject it but over time they will see a few people that are doing a good job. I think acceptance will only come slowly. Not everyone is rejecting but also not everyone if accepting, there is no quick solution to say it will just happen. Over time when this continues to happen they will see.

RESEARCHER: If it's an issue of time do you think the states are where they are now because this movement towards equality started earlier than it has here?

PARTICIPANT: That's a good question. I think maybe it also has to do with some traditional values that each culture has in them. South Africa has the Afrikaans culture that also holds them back in a way. You get men doing men's job and women doing women's job. I think the same in Taiwan and they're still not coming out of it. This is why they say the State's is more open. I don't know. Open to everything. Opinions and everything.

RESEARCHER: So it might also have something to do with the big issues like politics and culture and that kind of thing has an impact on it?

PARTICIPANT: I think culture has a lot to do with how we are now or how we will be later.

RESEARCHER: I'm going to ask you more about that just now. Actually no, let's stick with it. What do you...in what ways do you think culture influences gender roles or impacts on gender roles?

PARTICIPANT: I don't know how to describe it but like the Afrikaans culture, the Chinese culture, the Indian culture are very strong cultures. If you grow up in the family the thing sticks with you and for you to break out of it you almost feel like you're betraying something. I think maybe that's why it takes longer for things to change because slowly the grandparents might not accept it but the parents might accept that their kids are going different ways or they're going to live their lives. With time each generation will accept a little bit more and then eventually you will smooth out easier. I think in comparison to the States because they are open-minded in the sense that you don't have to wait for generation after generation. We're stereotyping the Americans. I have nothing else to compare.

RESEARCHER: My next question is how do you think couples are negotiating gender roles in relationships?

PARTICIPANT: How the couples are negotiating in the gender roles issues? Well I negotiate. With me I talk to my boyfriend I tell him that it doesn't mean because you battle to find a job you battle to earn an income you're not contributing to the family, to the house. Money is only one thing [phone rings] I tell him if you're able to be at the house you can fix things in the house doing all the things that need to be done. If we're both working then we need to pay someone else to do it and then I say there's different ways of contributing to the family it's not just finance. It's how people see it, that's why guys struggle if they can't do their part because their part is more the finance side because they're not at home most of the time. So we just talk about it. Brainwash him slowly and see if it will stick. That's why I think it impacts men more if they are not able to do their part.

RESEARCHER: So it's about a lot of communication.

PARTICIPANT: I think that's more important, Communication is very important but I think attitude is also important because I don't see any difference. I think there's always role switches because for a moment you have a job but you never know maybe later on you don't have a job. That is just how you see the whole thing, how the two adjust to whatever happens. If the attitude is not right and you don't actually communicate it's not going to work.

RESEARCHER: So you sort of both have to be on the same page in terms of your flexibility around gender roles for that communication to work.

PARTICIPANT: I think otherwise it so easily slips and one side will always feel they are not contributing as much.

RESEARCHER: In what ways do you feel that religion might impact on gender roles?

PARTICIPANT: I'm not very religious so but I think.....let me think about it. I can't say much about Buddhism because I'm not sure what happens within my own religion. I think [Christianity] has very strong traditional values. Most of my friends are Muslim and for them the man has to be the back bone of everything and I think that is what holds you back from accepting what's changing. Lots of them are changing because they're accepting their friends to be equal female friends and stuff but will they do the same for their wives? You don't know. Religion has very strong traditional values and that holds them back accepting what's happening here.

RESEARCHER: So it's all about the values in the tradition of a religion that might cause people to have more traditional gender roles.

PARTICIPANT: I wouldn't say for all but some of them are so. Nowadays you see a lot of people, some people can be really religious in their religion but there's no difference you wouldn't even know that they are very religious. I will assume that there are some very traditional families that are very religious and they don't want changes.

RESEARCHER: I'm pretty much done, my only other question is are there any other aspects of society which you feel might impact on gender roles that we haven't discussed?

PARTICIPANT: I can't think of anything. Any other?

RESEACHER: Aspects of society.

PARTICIPANT: I can't think of anything.

RESEARCHER: Thank you very much.

END OF INTERVIEW

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW – Participant No.5

RESEARCHER: Can you just state your age please.

PARTICIPANT: 28.

RESEARCHER: 28. What do you do?

PARTICIPANT: Civil engineer.

RESEARCHER: So what is your current understanding of the concept of gender roles?

PARTICIPANT: I suppose in the old school sense it's what women are supposed to be doing what men are supposed to be doing. I don't really see the point of the term anymore. As a role itself it's not gender specific. Lots of people do various jobs or whatever. Slotting into society that...or used to be a male or female or visa versa.

RESEARCHER: So before what you were able to do was defined by your gender and now you're saying it's all mixed up.

PARTICIPANT: Often. If you did do something else it was frowned upon or whatever. To an extent it's still like that but it's certainly changing.

RESEARCHER: How do you think gender roles are created?

PARTICIPANT: I think they are historically based, to be honest. It was just an old school way of thinking that certain jobs or tasks were women specific or men specific, that's how they evolved.

RESEARCHER: So you're saying that it's something that's kind of always been?

PARTICIPANT: Ja, I think historically it's just evolved in that way, I think some of the gender roles are forced upon people. I think it is mostly historic.

RESEARCHER: What do you mean forced on people?

PARTICIPANT: I suppose there were certain items back in the day that were seen as male or female tasks and there was no question that those tasks could be performed by either gender which ever was specific to the task.

RESEARCHER: Where do you think that comes from? Do you think it's on a biological basis how those tasks are defined or do you think it's all social really?

PARTICIPANT: I think it's a bit of both. I think probably certain items...probably strength related were often considered masculine roles to take on and as for the social based I guess it would be social. I think there is still social issues that cause women, or men, to slot into various roles, just because once again it's a historical thing, and people don't want to break the mould.

RESEARCHER: Okay. In what ways do you think that gender roles impact on an individual's identity or way of viewing themselves?

PARTICIPANT: I think in this day and age probably quite hard because it's a bit of a transitional... had a girl who studied with me who studied as a civil engineer but her father still felt she could still have an arranged marriage and that was just the way it was. It blows me away that a well educated person and very good at what she does and this old school mentality slots her into this kind of society or gender role or whatever it may be. There are certain rules that she must follow because she's a girl if she were a guy it would have been viewed very differently. It's all very strange and I think at this stage people are probably willing to stand up and change these things whereas before you would have just accepted it.

RESEARCHER: So you're saying that for some people there are traditional ways of looking at gender roles...

PARTICIPANT: It's a culture thing aswell, she was an Indian girl and it's just the way it was and I think she broke that role by immigrating to Australia away from her father.

RESEARCHER: You're saying you think more and more people are taking a stand?

PARTICIPANT: It' strange because more and more I don't think things are being changed as drastically as she did it, but I think things are being kind of diluted a little bit. Slowly they'll shift away and they'll be able to make their own choice, one would hope that will be the case.

RESEACHER: What do you think is behind that kind of shift?

PARTICIPANT: I think it's a case of being in a society that is actually more accepting of all types of people to be honest. When you're surrounded by a community that...for instance I'm using this girl as an example if everyone was doing that you'd probably feel like an outcast if you stepped away from that. Whereas now she sees other people that aren't meant to do that and she makes a decision that that's not for her. Same with religion... it your own choice.

RESEARCHER: So you're saying the change that is happening is based on broader social changes? It's easier for people to be a little bit...

PARTICIPANT: You can step outside the mould without being hit with a rod, without having some kind of detrimental result of breaking out of that mould.

RESEARCHER: I know you've mentioned this a little bit it's just to get you to elaborate on it a little bit more. In what ways do you think that gender roles are changing or different to what they were in the past?

PARTICIPANT: Well they're certainly changing, there are a lot of powerful business women and there are a lot more fathers now who stay at home with their kids if that's what they choose. I think that's an absolute shift and that's just a decision that the family would take. In other roles like in the mining industry where women are using a lot of heavy duty equipment especially in the coal mines and it's simply because they're more reliable and are less aggressive on the machines. So that's a big shift and when you say that to people a lot of them are surprised that women are working these machines and they tend to perform better than the men.

RESEARCHER: So that's quite interesting what you're saying particularly in the work place for you, it's a strong example of what you're talking about. You're saying in areas that were very strongly masculine before that's kind of shifting and people are looking for different types of skills.

PARTICIPANT: I think different types of skills, it's still very male dominated the mining industry but there are certain roles that women just tend to do better than men and it's not necessarily the obvious choice but there are ladies involved in every single aspect.

RESEARCHER: You've spoken now about how gender roles are different now predominantly in the work place. Do you think they are different in any other ways?

PARTICIPANT: I guess they have to be different at homes and what have you. Often men are seen as the providers and that's not always the case anymore. Often the breadwinners are female and there no kind of...I don't know the right word...there's no negative to that, it's just the way it is.

RESEARCHER: So you don't really see it as...

PARTICIPANT: Emasculating or something like that?! No. Not at all.

RESEARCHER: Do you think that's how you feel personally or men in general are kind of...

PARTICIPANT: It's more of a personal thing.

RESEARCHER: In what ways do you think that gender roles have an impact on people's relationships with their partners?

PARTICIPANT: I think it can be quite significant in that certain people men or women... the men for instance... I don't know I guess it's just a stereotype that I have but something I do see, women want to be subservient to a dominant man. For me I it's just not the way I do things. There are men who just want to be dominating and that's their own issue.

RESEACHER: So you're saying in cases where there is a more traditional or historically based kind of outline of roles that that has quite a significant impact on relationships.

PARTICIPANT: I think it's even in modern relationships you see twenty year olds who still want to slot into these roles. I don't know how you break that mould I guess time will just have to deal with it. So ultimately it will be what society as a greater kind of population wants out of it. I'm sure people will evolve if that's the way things want to go.

RESEARCHER: You're saying then maybe those people that are, as you say young men or woman for that matter quite traditional, that their opinion wil in some way be forced to change as a result of broader society.

PARTICIPANT: I don't know if it will be a forced change it could be just a slow evolution that could happen in ten, fifteen or twenty years. I think if the herd as it is decides that women are now the dominant will be the dominant, if that's the way it's seen then that's the way it will evolve. It's just a numbers thing.

RESEARCHER: Okay so do you think that like gender roles as they are now, I'm not talking about what you're referring to as sort of very much on the one side of the spectrum kind of thing but maybe sort of in the middle. Do you think that people have just kind of adapted to that quite easily or do you think it's taken quite a lot of negotiation in relationships?

PARTICIPANT: I don't' know, you've got mine and my partner's experience has been that neither of us want to be dominated so we both kind of pig headed about

what we want to do so we do our own thing and it works. Sometimes you have to stick to that and we both do it so it's fine.

RESEARCHER: So there's sort of....

PARTICIPANT: Compromise from both people.

RESEARCHER: So in what ways do you think that it's advantageous or disadvantageous to prescribe to traditional gender roles?

PARTICIPANT: I'm not sure of the advantage because I see everyone as an individual who should be able to provide for themselves. I believe that as a girl you should have cash you shouldn't be in a subservient role looking after the kids and cooking and getting an allowance to live and the man providing as he chooses. I think it's up to the individual to make those choices. People tend to stick it out in situations they don't enjoy and that's really their own issue. Gender roles if they change hopefully people will be a bit more independent and start looking after themselves.

RESEARCHER: For you it's an independence kind of issue.

PARTICIPANT: Ja. That's why I don't necessarily believe in marriage because I think two people who can stay together that's cool... they can do their own thing and still be together. But then I suppose it all depends on religion, if you have religious reasons then you can get married. Currently there's no reason why I for instance need to get married, a lot of people get married but they choose to..

RESEARCHER: So maybe what you're saying then is that a lot of ways in which gender roles have played out in society... traditionally it's quite institutionalized?

PARTICIPANT: To a degree I think religion plays a big part in a lot of gender roles... for instance the whole.... I don't know the religion very well but Muslim spaces ...I don't think the burka thing allows freedom. There are certain people who abide by the rules in that religion and see it as a way to do things.

RESEARCHER: I hear what you're saying that it's a personal choice for people but also in your view you see that it has some kind of impact on the role that you play in the family and even just how you present yourself to society.

PARTICIPANT: Sure. Absolutely, each to their own. The way I see things its independence and I don't think by being prescribed an item of clothing to be worn gives you your independence.

RESEARCHER: In light of the fact that there is this current trend towards gender equality what do you feel this kind of means for men and women?

PARTICIPANT: Well I think it's just a case that women can be taken seriously in the roles that they historically deemed to be fit to do whatever it may be. Once again it's a case of guys now becoming parents and no longer this provider that they are meant to be. That's just the way it is, it's just a case of leveling the tables and once again given independence so you can choose what you want to do. If you want to be the person providing you can be that person and if you want to be the person...even if both parties want to fulfill a career they can choose that. No one should prescribe anything.

RESEARCHER: I'm just trying to unpack a little bit more. The way that this kind of change has impacted on people's lives is that for woman maybe there's more choice career wise, but you're also saying there is something in there about choice for men.

PARTICIPANT: If we're speaking about relationships and not individuals, as a unit you can decide should you want to have kids that there'll be one provider or two providers, I guess it depends on the unit. You can choose to step away from your kids and bring money in. At some stage when someone needs to be home you can choose whether it be a male or female. I think for certain periods, the initial periods it needs to be the mother for obvious reasons. But thereafter if the relationship chooses that someone should stay home and look after the kids I don't think it should matter who it is, be it male or female.

RESEARCHER: So you're saying for you it's not that much of an issue as far as you're concerned you can have equal input from both people.

PARTICIPANT: Sure I it should have equal input from both people and from there a rational decision can be made as opposed to just a prescriptive decision made.

RESEARCHER: I hear what you're saying and that for you makes a lot of sense, it's not just based on what society is telling you its how you feel things should and could be. Do you think though that maybe for some people, say for example men taking on a more parental role or woman going into more career orientated lifestyles, that they feel almost forced in that direction or there is some difficulty for people?

PARTICIPANT: Being forced into this historically alternate direction?

RESEARCHER: Ja.

PARTICIPANT: I don't think it should be forced, I think if anything they would be forced in the opposite direction. I think it would actually take a strong person to slot into the less obvious role and to see it through. I think society as a whole won't necessarily see those as standard gender roles I don't know probably people would ridicule... but as soon as society does not normally slot into that... negative connotation associated with it or whatever.

RESEARCHER: Just to be clear on this for myself. You're saying that for people that are going against traditional gender roles there will be that difficulty.

PARTICIPANT: There will be a difficulty and with that difficulty there will be some external peer pressure to slot into the correct path.

RESEARCHER: Maybe then you feel at some level things haven't changed as much.

PARTICIPANT: Certainly not, I don't think my views are by any means the norm. I think our culture in general is quite old school and I think majority of people in this country still have a lot of themselves rooted in their culture. The term culture is historically based but it doesn't mean it's wrong it doesn't mean it's right either.

RESEARCHER: I hear what you're saying and we'll talk a bit more about culture just now. When you say culturally that we are maybe not very progressive what do you mean by that? Do you mean South Africans generally?

PARTICIPANT: I'd say the average South African isn't. I think it could be an issue of education. I don't speak for poorer communities because I was never part of one but I think education plays a role. There's a high number of people who are not educated and see their culture is the right path to follow, they don't have any alternatives or options to consider.

RESEACHER: That's interesting what you're saying is that when there's a lack of education that it kind of doesn't allow you to look at alternate ways of thinking.

PARTICIPANT: I was fortunate enough that...you're younger than me so you probably had it at school where I had black guys at school I had Indian guys at school. You heard about certain cultures and certain ways of thinking, I think they had the chance to have that interchange with white cultures that they wouldn't have had in the past. I think in doing so it opens your mind to that sort of thinking and allows you to make the choice of which path you choose to follow. I think there are guys who are progressive while they still realize their culture is important and see

through certain items as either, not rubbish, but maybe less appropriate than what they would think if they didn't have this knowledge or openness to knowledge before.

RESEARCHER: Okay so your saying they don't have a different way of understanding things but culture is the only lens that some people have to look through. I suppose linked to the issue of culture obviously is the issue of race, and from what you're saying I'm just wondering if you feel a bit like white South Africans having education that reflects western culture quite a bit...if that's what you're saying... maybe that kind of education offers that.

PARTICIPANT: I don't think so. I think a lot of white South Africans, particularly Afrikaans South Africans are as disadvantaged as a uneducated black person, not uneducated but a black person receiving schooling in an ex- homeland, its small isolated communities and isolation does not breed an open mind.

RESEARCHER: So it's maybe something to do with exposure to more international...

PARTICIPANT: I don't think necessarily even international but I think just a free flow of ideas from various people. I think international just makes it even broader.

RESEARCHER: So maybe then from communities that are comprised of various types of people rather than just being a community that one type. Okay so I suppose this leads into my next question which is – in what ways do you think that gender roles are different in South Africa compared to the rest of the world?

PARTICIPANT: Well it's quite open ended it depends which part of the world. If you're living in the first world you're from America and what have you, women there have more opportunities than in Africa and other third world countries. It's just a case of being opened up to different ideas and different ways of thinking. I think Europe is very good like that because it is really multi-cultured and they are all relatively accepting of each other. I think Europe is pretty open-minded. Whereas certain Asian or certain African countries are more isolated and definitely reflect that in their actions. I don't know if there are gender roles per say.

RESEARCHER: That is just your kind of initial perception.

PARTICIPANT: Correct.

RESEARCHER: Okay. So you're talking about Europe as an example where you feel like there is a bit more opportunity for women and that once again that

comes from being exposed to diversity in some way. Do you think that the way this plays out for people in Europe is quite different from the way it is here?

PARTICIPANT: South Africa is too segmented I'm not even saying race but moneywise there is rich and a small middle class and a massive poor community. Europe is a massive middle class, if majority of the population start wondering how they're going to get their next meal. I think the situation is so vastly different and in doing so I think not having to worry about essentials like where is your next meal coming from and what have you. Your brain is allowed to relax and think about other things whereas if your next concern is feeding your family or whatever that's all you're going to be thinking about. I think that may guide it to a certain extent.

RESEARCHER: So you feel like maybe then class is actually the factor in so far as it kind of frees up energy to focus on...

PARTICIPANT: I don't know if it's the right term but sort of mind space. If you're not worrying about food you can spend time thinking about as opposed to worrying about stuff.

RESEARCHER: Okay. Do you think class can impact on gender roles in any other kind of way?

PARTICIPANT: I don't know just my perception I think the lower class tends to be more gender role specific I don't know if its...my initial thought is that they are far more aggressive that's not really slotting into a gender role but I think there is slightly more abuse in poorer classes. I don't think that is the right term of gender role if a man hits a woman. I don't know why.

RESEARCHER: That does have something to do with gender roles in some way because it's about maybe not even roles but gender equality. What you're saying is you feel that women who are in a worse off socio-economic status kind of are even more disadvantaged in some ways.

PARTICIPANT: Sure, I'd agree with that.

RESEARCHER: How do you think that couples are negotiating gender roles in their relationships right now?

PARTICIPANT: I think they are all very different. I think even among our friends not even our friends but people that we know there are slightly more old school kind of traditions. Whereas most of our good friends we all tend to be slightly more open-minded...I guess that's the right word ...but for me and my partner and I don't know how we organize our gender roles. I don't know if we have a role. I don't know. There's nothing that one person does that the other person wouldn't do or

doesn't do. Maybe it's a case of when your getting tired of doing one thing so much you yell at the other person to get them to help. I don't know if yell is the right word but express feelings of concern (laughing).

RESEACHER: Okay. I guess what I'm trying to understand a little bit more is where that's coming from. You think that couples that naturally pair up with a partner that has a value system that's similar to theirs that's why you're not really....

PARTICIPANT: I don't know where that comes from. Most of the couples that I know who do climbing, although that has no reference whatsoever, tend to be more equal I'd say. A lot of non climbing friend's relationships seem to be less equal. I don't know what that means. I don't know it's just the way it tends to be. Then again there are some of my one of a kind friend he doesn't slot into a mould at all he's a white British guy with a black Namibian girlfriend and I think they have very specific gender roles even though she's a very well educated person. I don't know how it works out. I think it's a process you go through with growing up with various people and you find what works.

RESEARCHER: Some of the next questions are things that you've touched on but if there's anything that you would like to add it would be great. In what ways do you feel that culture impacts on gender roles?

PARTICIPANT: I mentioned earlier I think there are just certain cultures that I don't know religion tends to be slightly male dominated in general.

RESEARCHER: That was going to be my next question about religion and how you see that as impacting on gender roles. What you're saying is that in some ways culture and religion are very strongly linked.

PARTICIPANT: To a degree I guess. I suppose not but...let me think about it. I'd say religion is and culture is to a degree but I don't think the two are necessarily linked to each other. Maybe they are I don't know.

RESEARCHER: Are there any aspects of society that you think impact on the development of gender roles?

PARTICIPANT: I don't know. I think your gender roles start being slotted into your specific role right from the start. Girls have girls' toys and boy have boys' toys that make them men, they are not allowed to play with dolls and what have you. I think right from the start it starts being coded into you which role you need to slot into. I don't know.

RESEARCHER: So you're saying parenting?

PARTICIPANT: To a degree and I think through parenting comes religion, and through parenting comes culture...that's the way its meant to happen. I think that all those are slowly filtered through.

RESEARCHER: All those things are like a value system that are instilled in children through a family or parents or whatever the situation may be. Do you think that the way that families raise their children now has will change slightly?

PARTICIPANT: I guess it is evolving and will evolve over time. I don't know what makes people break out of that. I'm not sure I guess it's just a path people choose to follow. Do you want to slot into your old role or whatever your role is deemed to be and you're happy with that then that's your business.

RESEARCHER: You're kind of saying at some point there's a choice?

PARTICIPANT: I guess so. I hope so, you hope that through your aging or whatever...your development, you start to see for yourself what works and what doesn't work and certain items and the rubbish that they are.

RESEARCHER: So you can maybe start distinguishing between what you believe and what society is kind of been telling you.

PARTICIPANT: Sure. Your upbringing be it culture based or religion based you can step aside and say that doesn't work for me... I don't know what it is... it's just not for me. Hopefully you're allowed the freedom to do that. A lot of freedom gets squashed before it gets any distance from the inner circle.

RESEARCHER: That's a really interesting point and very relevant. What things do you think kind of...what factors do you think play a role in squashing independent thought when it comes to gender roles?

PARTICIPANT: It's just silly things. For me religion wise I was always moaned at about getting confirmed so I can get married in a church. I must have been about 13 or 14 or whatever. I just didn't see the point because I didn't want to get married at that point obviously. I didn't ever see myself getting married at church and I don't go to church on Sundays... so what's the point in doing this just in case. Although my father pushed me my mother was relaxed about it. So I guess I didn't get forced into that situation where I was slotted into that mind set which I'm happy about although I was pretty reluctant anyway.

RESEACHER: You're saying in your case it didn't result in total exclusion.

PARTICIPANT: No.

RESEARCHER: But that maybe in some cases that that plays a role.

PARTICIPANT: Possibly I think in tighter communities.

RESEARCHER: Okay. We're done. Thank you very much.

END OF INTERVIEW

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW – Participant No.6

RESEARCHER: If you could just tell me your age and your occupation.

PARTICIPANT: I am 21 years old and I am a lease administrator.

RESEARCHER: My first question is what is your current understanding of the concept of gender roles?

PARTICIPANT: Well at the moment it's very interrelated I would say at this stage. One has led into the other... a lot of revolution coming into it as well very different to how it used to be. It's really been a change both going either way male female.

RESEARCHER: So you're saying there's definitely been a change in gender roles?

PARTICIPANT: Compared to the way it was traditionally.

RESEARCHER: If you had to define what gender roles are what would you say?

PARTICIPANT: I'd say what society perceives to be either what a woman should do ...or what suits or what is more appropriate for a woman to do or what is more fitting for a man.

RESEARCHER: How do you think gender roles are created?

PARTICIPANT: How they're created? I think...ummm.Ithink it goes back too... it's people's cultures that plays quite a big role it really what it's defined as in any culture. I think it's more of what took place back then that really led to the whole defining of what the female does and what a male should do etc.

RESEACHER: So there's that historical...

PARTICIPANT: A lot of it is very historically based because ask me a question about gender roles today it's still based on what happened back then. What was acceptable back then what, was made to be okay to society.

RESEARCHER: How do you think society got to that point where it was 'this is what a man does', 'this is what a woman does'? What do you think contributed to getting to that?

PARTICIPANT: Cultural beliefs really. I think that what really boiled up to that, to me it varies from person to person and whatever culture you're from. We all have different perspectives in terms of gender roles and I think it's based on how you grew up and what it was like in your family, how your dad did that and how your mom did that and how your grandparents did it. So to me it's really society and people's culture and beliefs and what is acceptable that really created this whole...

RESEARCHER: So it's a social thing.

PARTICIPANT: It's a social thing yes.

RESEARCHER: In what was do you think that gender roles might impact on an individual's identity or the way that they view themselves?

PARTICIPANT: I think it really limits especially people who are not exposed the modern way of doing things especially in rural areas. It really limits their individual growth and their expansion as individuals you know I mean myself having been a woman doing a course in course in property studies is very different. I'm in a situation at work at the moment where it's very gender related, the industry having been dominantly known as a male dominated industry and now having all these projects that are run by women. You know it really impacts on the way people perceive you. You are qualified or whatever people will still feel you're inferior, it's got that...it presents that obstacle of having to prove beyond what a man would normally have to do simply because you're female. Personally it's quite a big challenge for people, for their own growth and to make in today's society.

RESEARCHER: So you're saying for women particularly there's something about traditional views of the roles that women and men play in society or are allowed to play that kind of...for you it makes it necessary to prove more.

PARTICIPANT: And I feel it's really quite a shame in today's society as such that you still get to a stage where because of your gender you're still expected to convince or prove to people in certain ways. Having the same qualification as your male counterpart still makes you inferior and you still have to go the extra mile for people to actually start realizing and actually acknowledging you for the same position that your male counterpart is in.

RESEARCHER: How do you think when that kind of inequality is experienced, how do you think that impacts on people's identity?

PARTICIPANT: Women I believe it makes them feel well this is not really a general view for some people, most women really, it's a great obstacle. Your identity as a woman is compromised in a way it's a disadvantage that you're a woman even though you have all the grades and you have everything else, it's like a setback that you now need to go over unlike somebody else who is male. For some people it's a challenge it's very encouraging it's a positive thing because some of us want to go the extra mile and some of us you know thrive on proving people wrong but for some people it's a barrier and it brings people especially woman, it could have detrimental effects on people's identity in terms of who they are, are they feeling comfortable in themselves actually believing that they can be...

RESEARCHER: I mean you've spoken now about women mainly but the situation that you're talking about is very interesting because you're saying that a lot of men are feeling quite threatened by women coming into an industry that they were usually in charge of. Could you tell me a little about how you think changing gender roles might impact on men's identity.

PARTICIPANT: It's the big issue about their ego (laughing), to me it's just an ego trip. Look modern society has really transformed significantly and the impact has been severe for both parties male or female. Understandably having been in charge for centuries and having grown up in an environment where your father says this and then it's done your mom stays home and cook and your wife comes in and she now goes to work with you in the same company she's your boss. I understand where they are coming from really, it comes to the basics of male and female really where we're more emotional beings and we're not such physical people. To them it's more of a physical thing, they get threatened by you and because you're smaller they relate that to how things used to be they relate that to the size of your brain to the size of your body. It's really impacted very badly well significantly rather, good or bad.

RESEARCHER: So it's a big adaptation, it's a big change.

PARTICIPANT: Yes it is.

RESEARCHER: From what men knew.

PARTICIPANT: Especially African men. I feel that other cultures even though there was still a distinct barrier to say male can do that female can do that when you came to family life there was still that bit of a collaboration type of environment where maybe mommy and daddy will do something together of course not as often

as we do it today. In African culture it's a totally different environment, daddy does that and mommy did that and that's how we grew up and now having to be in this world where mommy says the last word because mommy earns the most money. It's quite a change.

RESEARCHER: It's a big difference... it's not like it's a gradual kind of thing that's happened, it's been quite a big jump is what you're saying. The difference is vast in Africa culture particularly.

PARTICIPANT: Yes, in African culture. Post 1994 that's when everything fell into women empowerment and you know that's when we started seeing black males coming into power as well while still adjusting to that, being the big man now, then women came and now women are on top of them. I think it was very quick speedy change and but somehow the distinct line between male and female will never disappear, it will always be there somehow. Gradually maybe we'll all get used to it I believe as humans female or male that distinct friction will be there.

RESEARCHER: There's always going to be some difference in your view there'll never be like a genderless...

PARTICIPANT: I doubt it, I don't see it.

RESEARCHER: In what ways do you think that gender roles might be changing or different to what they were?

PARTICIPANT: I think in today's society we are I don't marginal line we're trying to eliminate it a bit, not really but you know it's not as distinct as then. There's more of a collaboration where you get men and women coming into business together and really trying to accept each other as individuals with brains you know who are both destined for something great and who have the ability to achieve such. Unlike back then when your gender really determined where you ended. I think we're relying more now on people's personal abilities, their brains, their personal interests, their dreams and what they can achieve instead of whether they are male or female.

RESEARCHER: So then for you what you're saying is that the way that gender roles have changed is that it's not so much about roles anymore it's more like you look an individual as opposed to a person being their gender.

PARTICIPANT: Yes, what I'm saying is today your gender does not eliminate you to what you can become. It's become part of your characteristic but it's not your determining factor like it used to be, like you're a woman you wear a skirt and you're in the kitchen. Now it's become part of who you are but not really the end of you.

RESEARCHER: So it's not really about limiting anymore. It doesn't define your opportunities or your options.

PARTICIPANT: Well that line is getting eliminated... it still exists but....

RESEARCHER: So you're saying it's not completely there yet, but it's in the process of changing.

PARTICIPANT: It's in the process yes, that's what modern society is trying to get people to get used to a situation where both men and women can work towards moving a country somewhere instead of saying men will work and you will be there to rub their backs when they come back.

RESEARCHER: In what ways do you think that gender roles have an impact on people's relationships with their partners?

PARTICIPANT: It has a huge impact both in business relationships and personal relationships. Yes for the simple fact that it's something that we're all trying to get used to we grew up in different environments and the change having taken place quick. It's a strange environment one that we're all trying to encourage, it does affect relationships. For the men it's very hard to accept, for some females as well they might take in a way that will offend men or make them feel belittled in tends to affect the relationship with the men. Personally for me I believe the modern gender circumstance or situation should not be viewed in a way to belittle anybody but rather empower people as individuals instead of saying now that women are in power now the men must be belittled. To me it's like making people equal partners in a relationship.

RESEARCHER: It's about finding a way to have equality in a relationship.

PARTICIPANT: Having the men come back from work and cook as well if they can while the wife is doing something else, having the wife wash the car. It's really about individualism and being in a partnership as an individual not as a woman.

RESEARCHER: In what ways do you think that it might be advantageous or disadvantageous to prescribe to more traditional gender roles?

PARTICIPANT: In what ways?

RESEARCHER: What do you think the advantages and the disadvantages of more traditional gender roles are?

PARTICIPANT: To me traditional beliefs like where the lines between male and female were originally drawn, they violate a lot of the woman's rights as such. Women were not viewed as partners in a relationship, in a marriage or a business.

They were not in business. They were literally viewed as kids with no brains, with no capacity to make money or contribute to the economy of the country in any way. To me really that was the big disadvantage because I really believe for anything to happen ,especially in a relationship situation,both parties should be feel important and should be able to contribute equally even though it might not be in the same level but I believe both should have that freedom to voice out how they feel in order for a relationship to be successful. So to me really, traditional approach to gender is very disadvantageous because I believe in today's society we see how much women are contributing to society and how much impact they are having on the economy and you know how kids are thriving in that situation where both mommy and daddy are working. They're learning that being a woman doesn't really condemn you, or because you're just female doesn't mean you can't have dreams. I still believe there should be mutual respect and I think to achieve that in a relationship where both partners feel equal and one does not feel undermined by the other.

RESEARCHER: So you're saying there's not an advantage that you can think of.

PARTICIPANT: From that? Oh no. I wouldn't want to live in that time.

RESEARCHER: Because you're saying that it wasn't equal that in some ways that system really limited women and it was skewed to be advantageous to men.

PARTICIPANT: I think women were not given the full appreciation of their humanity, using your brain being creative and passing that wisdom on down to your kids. It was always the dad who was viewed as the one who has the wisdom and the one who can make a decision. To me that's not how God planned it to be, it's not how really the world was meant to function. If that was the case women were supposed to be kids to begin with and not grow up at all, if they were not going to be allowed to use their brains if they were not going to be allowed to start up ventures and get into business.

RESEARCHER: You've spoken quite a bit about the impact of more traditional roles on women and I would like to hear a little bit from your side about maybe the ways that you think there were advantages or disadvantages for men with the more traditional gender roles.

PARTICIPANT: For one they didn't have competition, meaning their word was final and what the spouse had to say was hardly considered. I think for them as well it provided that ego manly in charge thing where his decision was final. It gave them the upper hand basically, for men that's what they want in any situation today. You

get into an argument with them it's all about winning, it's about him being in power and him having the upper hand.

RESEARCHER: So you feel that that system held a lot of advantages for men.

PARTICIPANT: It helped ja.

RESEARCHER: Do you feel there were any disadvantages for men in the more traditional gender roles?

PARTICIPANT: African men I've had an opportunity of talking to or getting a view from, were really very positive or were very happy with how things were. Some wanted it to be that way because they still think women are incompetent, they base it on whatever their past was like. I really have not come across one who feels the way we women feel to say that we were oppressed and we could have contributed a lot more had we been given the opportunity. Ja look that...even the books that I read I have not come across a guy who was very supportive of their wife developing their own individual skills with a personal growth in sight. They were all very for whatever was happening, you know waking up in the morning and going to work and coming home and their wife has cooked and the kids are washed. I don't see any disadvantages for them really.

RESEARCHER: How do you think that couples are negotiating gender roles in relationships?

PARTICIPANT: Negotiating them in today's society? I'm still trying to do that. [laughter] It's a tough one I have to say. It brings a lot of conflict in relationships...umm... but understandably so as well. It's now a situation where you as the wife could be earning more, you know, and he's not and therefore you're contributing more to your daily life. You pay for the house you pay for the car...it's really been sort of like a shift where the power has now moved from the guy to the woman. But yet... you know but there's still that distinction that makes him male and you female and the fact that he is of course more masculine and he will have to do all the masculine stuff in the house. And you will not be able to go up that ladder and do...you know. It's really a matter of adjusting, the different situations will need different approaches as all partners are trying to fit into this whole new modern way of doing things. It's quite a shift.

RESEARCHER: So for you there is a lot of work that goes into trying to figure out how do we work with this new system.

PARTICIPANT: Maybe it's because we're all so very new to it. I mean myself having grown in a family where your dad did that and your mom was always there to take care of you and you now come back home and your husband is back maybe

he's cooking and now you're just laying on to the TV. If somebody else walks in that looking very different and being a weird situation where the wife is sitting reading the paper and the husband is busy cooking. It poses that question that people will walk in and say why is she doing that and you're doing that? That distinction is always there.

RESEARCHER: There's almost an element of judgment that comes in.

PARTICIPANT: True. Of course, in business as well. Like I said you're still expected to do certain things even though you still have so much more responsibility in today's modern society where you're now a business woman you're a mother and you're a wife. Unlike back then where you were just a mother and a wife and you didn't have to worry about coming home late and having late meetings. Now you get women coming home at eleven having driven from a meeting all by herself and the husband is at home sleeping with the kids. As an individual it does come and hit you and you're like this is so different because it's a new system all together. Depending on an individual's perception or how her situation looks... in some cases I've seen it go terribly wrong where relationships just didn't work out based on that where there is that... it's more like a power control type of thing. There's that power element where because now you do certain things you're viewed to have more power. Initially or back then the man was the one who had the power...all of it for that matter, so...

RESEARCHER: It's kind of like a situation where the power in a relationship is not just polarized on one side and when you try and even it out then it can become problematic and relationships can break down. In light of the fact that there is this sort of current trend towards gender equality that we've been talking about what do you feel this means for men and women? I suppose in a real sense how does this impact on people's lives?

PARTICIPANT: Please say that again.

RESEARCHER: In light of the fact that there is this current trend towards gender equality what do you think this means for women and men?

PARTICIPANT: Like Obama being president. It's just this change that you now have to live with and that you have to accept and respect. It's just a significant shift and yes with men it's really related more to power that's why most relationships fail, because now you're paying the rent you're viewed as having more power in the relationship. That's an ego down grade for the male counterpart. Some women actually even feel threatened by the fact that they have the money, most actually end up by themselves and not in any relationship because of that power. Men are now

not comfortable being with a woman who is rich and powerful because she earns more than them and will probably have all the power and control everything.

RESEARCHER: So it impacts on people's lives in that there is a change and you need to constantly work with trying to adjust to that change and that also for women it's meant something quite significant sometimes. When they do reach that level of equality with men in certain aspects it means a lot of sacrifices. It's maybe difficult not do that something does need to be sacrificed. In what ways do you think that gender roles are different in South Africa compared to the rest of the world?

PARTICIPANT: Rest of the world? I think there are some countries that are still marginalized where women are still expected to do certain things where distinction is still part of societies. As South Africa I believe us having been in this democratic system of power we have come a long way. Empowering women and getting them to feel more individualized instead of just living under certain rules or guidelines which determine or which oppress their way of living. In some countries there is still that whole rural...what do you call it? Governance where you have a king and he still lays down all the rules he still gets to marry so many women and do all that. I think there's a lot of change that needs to be brought about, women in some countries are still very much treated the way South African women were treated ten years ago.

RESEARCH: So you're saying South Africa is.....

PARTICIPANT: Advanced.

RESEARCHER: Its advanced compared to some other countries of more tradition governance I suppose. So for you then are you saying the political system in a country might have an influence on...

PARTICIPANT: I believe so. In countries like Swaziland where it's still more of a monarchy and the king really determines what goes on in the country and his personal view, like... if he believes women are not capable and should be kept in the kitchen and that it's still really what goes on in the whole country. What he says will affect how the next man views his wife. In a political system like we have in South Africa where we're more of a democratic country and there is no personal views or what somebody's opinion is. It is more about what the majority feel, it is what the majority is for that will get promoted eventually.

RESEARCHER: In what way do you feel that culture impacts on gender roles?

PARTICIPANT: Huge, significantly really. Your culture instills your beliefs, you grow up and your values and your beliefs you grow up living them. It's really hard

for people to accept change especially when it comes to their culture. That having been something that they are familiar with their whole lives their culture really becomes a huge barrier. You still get men today who will tell you I'm Zulu and you cannot do that or at work where it's a Zulu culture that a woman cannot look a man in the eye. It's a sign of disrespect while in today's society if you do not look somebody in the eye it's a sign of inferiority you're shying away from them or you're feeling belittled by them. It presents conflict, culture still has major impact both in personal relationships and in business. It's still an obstacle that we still need to get over. People are still very loyal to their cultures and they're very proud of them I think that's what makes the whole gender subject very sensitive even though we have come such a long way in trying to overcome the whole barrier. There is so much that affects it be it political situations in the country, the culture that people believe.

RESEARCHER: You're saying that for you culture is a way of transferring beliefs and values across generations and to different people in societies and that culture is also valued greatly by people. When a culture has more traditional views on gender that can get in the way of equality taking place.

PARTICIPANT: I believe any organization will have their way of doing things it's like that with the different families and different cultures that we were brought up in. It tends to be such a big part of you that it really defines the person you are to a large extent, what you will do and what you will not do your morals, values your ethics. It does pose a big obstacle to adjusting to modern society. To some people it feels like they are losing their individuality, you'll be losing a part of you if you're going to adopt this new cultural equality concept. You're losing part of your culture. That is also a big situation, a big compromise because you're going to be dropping something you've known all your life for a new concept. It makes the situation more of a gamble that people find themselves in and it's not even an easy one because going forward whatever decision you make is what you'll teach your generation. So the impact is quite huge as well.

RESEARCHER: So there's a lot of implications to that and it's also a very difficult change to make because what you're saying is that culture becomes very much part of who you are so changing that in a way requires you to change who you are. In what ways do you feel that religion impacts on gender roles?

PARTICIPANT: Pretty much like culture. In African culture specifically, African native culture specifically, playing the biggest role but really in modern society as well it still poses that obstacle. What you were taught when growing up or what you were taught your particular religion believes in or what they preach to you tend to

conflict with some of the issues related to gender equality. Especially if you're in a relationship where both partners are from different religions and it becomes an obstacle because now one might feel they need to compromise themselves in order to be with the other or in order for the relationship to be successful.

RESEARCHER: So you're saying that religion is the same as culture in so far as it informs people's beliefs about gender roles and if there's differences in that it will cause conflict. Are there any other aspects of society that you feel might impact on gender roles that we haven't discussed?

PARTICIPANT: Not that I can think of. No not really.

RESEARCHER: Nothing?

PARTICIPANT: I think we've covered the significant ones really. The obstacle that we still need to overcome if at all.

RESEARCHER: Okay, thank you very much.

PARTICIPANT: My pleasure.

END OF INTERVIEW

Individual Interview- Participant No.7

Researcher: How old are you?

Participant: 21

Researcher: Okay and you are currently living with your partner?

Participant: Yes

Researcher: Alright you have some idea of what this study is about and so I was wondering if you could tell me a bit more about your current understanding of the concept of gender roles?

Participant: My current understanding of gender roles is...what men and women are supposed to do in relationships...

Researcher: Okay so your understanding is ...it is sort of like a division of the type of tasks that you do?

Participant: mmm...ja

Researcher: Okay...so how do you think gender roles are created?

Participant: Ummm... I think through socialization mainly...how people are brought up...just what people are expected to do

Researcher: mmhmm

Participant: Ja...I mean with how people are brought up it how parents tell them what boys and girls are supposed to do...what tasks are given to them to do, I think boys are brought up differently to girls...they are expected to do different things...I think in society you can see how men and women are expected to do different tasks ...based on the responses of people around them

Researcher: Okay...so in what ways do you think that gender roles impact on an individual's identity or the way that they view themselves

Participant: Hmmm...ummm...how they view themselves...I suppose its like with women who do more or are expected to full more positions and things, they probably feel more in control of life...I guess just more integrated and less subject to male dominance

Researcher: Okay so your suggesting that like with a women that has more masculine roles ...that that is a positive thing and feels sort of empowering

Participant: Ja..definitely..ja

Researcher: Okay are there any other ways that you think gender might impact on identity?

Participant: Ummm...well I think people do associate strongly with their gender but that things are changing, men aren't as masculine as they were, and that women are doing more

Researcher: Okay...well do you think then like the way that not feeling as masculine or less feminine sort of impacts on the way that you view yourself..do you that people consciously recognize those things now and incorporate that into their understanding of themselves

Participant: I think so...I think they do ja...but that it also has a lot do with the stigma of being too feminine for example rather than a conscious choice

Researcher: Okay so your saying that some people are aware of it more of it than others

Participant: I think it is more significant for some people, I think ...I think some people might not be as open to the idea of associating with the other gender

Researcher: What do you mean by associating?

Participant: Well just fulfilling the stereotypical role...they may not interact frequently with women for example

Researcher: Okay so your saying that if you identify strongly with your masculinity that your less likely interact with someone of the female gender or someone who is more feminine

Participant: Ja

Researcher: Mhmm...okay...what do you think the reasons for that are?

Participant: I don't know I just think that if you associating very strongly with one polar extreme then you wont be open to the idea that the other extreme could be just as...vital

Researcher: mmhmm... Okay, in what ways do you think that gender roles are changing or different to what they were in the past, assuming that you do think that they are changing?

Participant: Well I think a lot of...I think on a social level...you know men they aren't seeing women as being you know..as fulfilling the female stereotype and so you are seeing women do sort of men's jobs in that way

Researcher: So an example for you of how this is changing in society is in the work place

Participant: Mmm...ja...ja , I think in the workplace women wouldn't be in the kind of jobs they are in today in the past

Researcher: Mmhmm

Participant: So I think that helps to combate the stereotypes, also I think they other side of the scale is men who opt to be in the "housewife" role, more men are seeing that it is okay and that its not a threat to their masculinity

Researcher: Okay so for you then changing gender roles means like around division of labour and changes in positions in the workplace?

Participant: Ja...you know it opens people's options up a bit more, you know women can pursue their careers and men can play roles that women played traditionally

Researcher: okay so its kind of like the more that starts to change the easier it becomes for people to make those choices that are a bit different?

Participant: Ja...I mean people around them wont act as negatively , I don't think, as it becomes the norm...

Researcher: mmhmm...okay in what ways do you think that these changing gender roles might have an impact on their relationships with their partners

Participant: Umm...well I think it impacts on their expectations...I mean if like if the man has got certain expectations of the woman she must fulfill those otherwise the relationship wont work...it wont be as... I think they've got fulfill those expectations and obviously a very masculine stereotypical man who views women as having to fulfill the stereotype of a women ...if he ends up with somebody who doesn't then its not going to work , you've either got to have two people who expect the other to fulfill the stereotype where the man goes to work and the woman stays at home all day or...people who don't view each other in that way

Researcher: when you say don't view each other that way sort of like that there are those traditional or...

Participant: Ja where you don't fulfill the traditional roles

Researcher: Okay

Participant: where if you don't want to stay home all day you don't have to

Researcher: Okay...ummm...in what ways do you think that it is advantageous or disadvantageous to prescribe to traditional gender roles...sort of the norm...or historically traditional I suppose?

Participant: I think it limits people a lot ...like I said if a man doesn't want to pursue a career and wants to be with the kids all day and do the domestic thing, he's got the option to do that

Researcher: Okay...so for you then its an advantage?

Participant: Ja I think so, provided...provided that you find somebody who is as open minded as you are...if you don't then its not going to work

Researcher: Okay, do you there any advantages to traditional gender roles? Do you think there are any positive aspects?

Participant: Well I think the system as a whole...if you can call it a system...it worked pretty smoothly, you had somebody providing the income and you had

somebody taking care of the house but...you know that's disempowering to women and I suppose you could see it as being disempowering to men as well . I think you know it works but I don't think that it's a good thing ultimately

Researcher: You said that in some ways those traditional gender roles are disempowering to men...

Participant: mmm

Researcher: Could you explain that to me a little bit more?

Participant: disempowering to men... well you know what I said about you know that men feel that they have to live up to this stereotype and if they don't then they are compromising their integrity as a person

Researcher: mmhmm

Participant: I think if they prefer doing things that aren't seen as fulfilling that stereotype then yes you aren't a good stereotypical man but your also not a good person, which is bad

Researcher: Okay, so kind of like...your saying that in some way gender roles are sort of linked to a broader value system...

Participant: Umm...value system?

Researcher: well your saying that if you don't fulfill that role then your not a good person

Participant: Yes well some people incorporate fulfilling their gender roles into their value system

Researcher: mmhmm

Participant: Ja, I think those are the kind of people who feel that they are obligated to fulfill that role, so it's a in their value system. I think that these days its not always the case

Researcher: Okay so your saying now there are more and more people who aren't really using gender as a basis to evaluate work or decide whats the right and wrong thing to do. So broader society doesn't see it as a means to define whether or not you're a good man or a good woman, that that is now a personal choice.

Participant: Ja, I think to a certain extent it will always be there, its part of who you are as a person but I think that nowadays you can choose whether to go along with it or you can choose a different way.

Researcher: Okay, considering that there is this sort of current trend towards gender equality, what do you feel that this means for men and women?

Participant: I think in this country a lot, particularly because I think that in sort of white culture equality and the emancipation of women has been a long time coming, we've got literature on it for the past...I don't know 150 years or something, whereas non-white culture doesn't have access to that literature, it hasn't been ingrained in them, in their cultures for so long, so I think this is quite a new concept for them. So I think its definitely a good thing because then you are empowering women to stand up for themselves whereas I don't think that's really the case now.

Researcher: mmmm... okay, so you kind of feel that this sort of general gender equality movement that Im sort of suggesting is happening, doesn't really occur for the vast majority of the South African population?

Participant: I think its definitely culturally bound, in this country at least.

Researcher: Okay, bearing that in mind then, what do you think that means then for people that don't have equality? The fact that there is that split, that maybe it is culturally bond...how is that going to impact on people's lives? I mean do you think that movement towards gender equality is going to be something that African culture eventually moves towards or do you think its going to stay as it is?

Participant: I think its got to be got to be paired with...I don't know what the right word is...but just in the way that families are structured. They've got to be structured differently...I mean you had migrant labour which really exacerbated the problem where women couldn't go off to work...they *had* to stay at home you know so you couldn't achieve it there. I think a lot of men come from rural areas...its exactly the same scenario...so I think there has got to be a change in the family structure there. So I think if you can get that right it might be a bit easier, it might be an easier transition but I think in African culture its going to be met with a lot of resistance. The subjugation of women is a traditional value. That's the way I see it.

Researcher: What do you think the kind of results will be of that? How will that resistance practically play out in people's lives? That resistance to change in gender roles?

Participant: They are just not going to change. In you're broader communities and families they are not going to accept it.

Researcher: So it might result in some kind of cultural or rather community rejection?

Participant: Ja, that's what I think.

Researcher: Okay, so in what ways do think...I mean this kind of links up to my next question so you have almost answered this but I don't know if you've got anything else...my next question was going to be, in what ways do you think gender roles are different in South Africa compared to the rest of the world?

Participant: Sort of in America and Europe all the cultures have had more time to adjust to each other, whereas obviously its only been sort of fourteen years now since we have really been exposed to each other and to different cultures and different views on gender roles.

Researcher: Okay so your saying the limited period of time we have had for cultural integration hasn't allowed for changing gender roles in some aspects of society to filter into all of society?

Participant: Ja, for example white women in this country have had access to literature and all of that allows for the change in gender roles. If you haven't had exposure to concepts of change like women's liberation then for some people this is really a brand new concept.

Researcher: Okay...umm...so in light of everything that we have been talking about which suggests that you think gender roles are changing, how do you think couples are negotiating gender roles I their relationships

Participant: Umm ...well I think it, it , its sort said to women if you want to be assertive, if you want to make new choices you're not wrong for doing so and its become quite a natural thing for there to be a case of equal sharing of tasks and equal power.

Researcher: So your saying that in your opinion, now the way that relationships work t is that here is not actually...or it doesn't require negotiation because there is an almost underlying acceptance that women are now equal?

Participant: Ja, well I think it obviously depends on the individual, I mean some men undoubtedly expect their women to fulfill those roles, but I mean in any relationship there's negotiation, ja so you know when you've got people who accept that women are allowed to be independent then it's a lot easier, you cant just turn around and say well you're a woman you have to do that!

Researcher: Do you think that it works the other way around? I mean I'm interested that you're using typically masculine expectations of women, do you think that women's expectations of men have changed?

Participant: Umm...not to the same degree! I think that men have been advantaged, so its expected that men should , not allow, but accept that women are empowering themselves and that their roles are now changing, whereas men have always been empowered so why should their roe change? You know what I mean? So...

Researcher: Alright, well we've also kind of touched on this a little bit , but if you feel like expanding please do. In what ways do you feel that culture impacts on gender roles?

Participant: Ja , um, different cultures have different gender roles, I think originally all cultures had the same roles and the same expectations in general. Just for survival...you know men are stronger so they go out and do all the work, but obviously life has changed, so obviously that has changed too, but in a sort of African rural area it might still be kind of similar still.

Researcher: So your saying in some ways almost evolution or survival has moulded the way gender roles develop in a culture?

Participant: Ja...originally...but having gotten away from the sort of rural, natural setting we don't really have that anymore.

Researcher: Okay, so do you think that religion impacts on gender roles in any way?

Participant: Ja, I mean you hear about in white culture how women aren't allowed to be free...aren't allowed to attain the same levels in the hierarchy that men are.

Researcher: mm hmm

Participant: So I definitely think religion...because I mean religion and culture are very linked. In terms of practice itself it circumscribes what you're allowed to do and what levels you are allowed to attain.

Researcher: And outside of that...outside of becoming a priest or a nun or part of a structure...do you think that has an impact?

Participant: Ja definitely...if you ascribe to a religion that structure innately suggests that men are more important than women and that filters down to other people who ascribe to that religion.

Researcher: Okay, ummm...are there any other aspects of society which you feel impact on gender roles.

Participant: mmm...well I think media... you watch t.v. and you see women who are lawyers and all the rest of it, so really think media can help in breaking those roles. But media again...you see how domestic products are targeted at women, they are not targeted at men. And traditionally masculine products are targeted at men. You'll find during the sport on t.v. its masculine products being advertised, they'll have baby products and home stuff targeted directly at women. So mean media, I think media inadvertently it concretising gender stereotyping. I mean they've got to practically reach a target audience...so they sort of reflect how society is still divided.

Researcher: mmm. So your saying media plays sor of plays a double role..?

Participant: Ja, in the obvious ways it wants to show integration but in areas where they don't have as much say...where they've got to...like with advertising they've got to mimic the reality.

Researcher: Okay. That's all from my side. Thanks very much.

END OF INTERVIEW

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW – Participant No.8

RESEARCHER: Could you please state your age and your occupation for me please.

PARTICIPANT: I am 27 years old, I'm a civil engineer. What else?

RESEARCHER: That's all. My first question is – what is your current understanding of the concept of gender roles?

PARTICIPANT: My current understanding of the concept of gender roles? My current understanding would be that there certain mind sets handed down to us by our families and society on what different genders should and shouldn't do. That's really my main understanding of the concept.

RESEARCHER: What you're saying is that it's not something that we're born with it's more like something that's passed on to us externally.

PARTICIPANT: For sure. It's definitely a learnt thing, it's not a natural thing.

RESEARCHER: My next question is going to be - how do you think gender roles are created?

PARTICIPANT: You always take on the mindset of sort of the way your parents always did things. The concept of mom stays at home looking after the house and family, dad goes out to work and does the financial side. I think that's the beginning of where those mindsets are sort of played in. It's not just your parents that do it it's all the other kids you know their families do the same. That's sort of where it comes in. I think to a certain extent media plays a role in there as well. Not to the same extent that it used to, you don't have shows dedicated to the better housewives guide, but I think it's slowly changing as we start to question historical roles. You don't see the stereotypical mom, dad, two kids, with mom always walking around with an apron sort of story. I think we now end up with a lot more divorced single parent households, those gender roles are being blurred a little bit. I think like all social norms it's evolving. Where you actually imprint from I suppose is more a case of circumstance, random, what is your exposure to different archetypes really.

RESEARCHER: You're sort of saying as you said before that it's quite social and that it's likely to be quite similar to the family that you grew up in...

PARTICIPANT: Ja, that is what I'm saying to a certain extent. It differs, in terms of ...I think my concept of gender roles is very different from my partner's. She's from a divorced family her parents divorced very early, she's used to having parents that perform both roles. My parents are still together and most of my upbringing was very much your stereotypical dad works and mom looks after the kids. Dad goes out and does work. My ways aren't as set as I think most people are because that whole dynamic changed as I grew up. Mom left the house and started forming her own career in various fields and dad ended up spending a lot more time at home doing stuff that mom used to do. So hopefully I'm fairly flexible on the idea.

RESEARCHER: So that then kind of evolved depending on as you say what it is that you are exposed to as a person. You mentioned briefly the contribution that the media might make on creating our understanding of gender roles. You're saying it's nothing like it used to be, it's changed quite significantly but you feel that it's still playing some role.

PARTICIPANT: Yes I do. It still plays quite a large role in terms of we get quite a lot of our social norms from the media whether that's a good or a bad thing I'm not sure. I suppose you can argue both ways that the media is reflecting as it's being portrayed coming from the media. My grandparents talking about they were both involved in the war, they're English and the British government went on a fairly

wide campaign of re-instituting the sort of the family roles, where as during the war everyone can do anything and everyone is involved in the war effort somehow and now you go back to try and set up a peaceful little island. There were pamphlets that went out so as to reintegrate the work force in different ways to the ways it was before. It was very media driven in terms of gender roles there. Now it's maybe a bit more subliminal... there's no specific pamphlet going out saying husbands must do this and this and wives must do this, this, this. I think it is playing a large portion but not as much as your actual family environment or your social environment but I think it's there in the background slowly ticking away.

RESEARCHER: My next question is – in what ways do you think that gender roles impact on an individual's identity or way of viewing themselves?

PARTICIPANT: It's a difficult one. I think everyone has a sort of set way or preferred way of viewing themselves and I think your gender plays a really large role in that. For example my dad prides himself on being the man of the house, the provider; I think it's very set in his idea of who he is. If you were to take that away from him I think it would have a very negative effect on his confidence just his general appreciation of himself as a person. I would like to think I'm a little less stuck in that role. I like to see myself as a non-conformist and I take pride in the fact that I would do what my dad would consider female roles. I do cooking every night, I'll do my fair share of washing and I'm not below having to wash the floors although that's historically not a male role. Getting a bit lost now. I think it sets into sort of the base, the cornerstones of how you see yourself. It's very gender applied and if you're not able to perform in that range or can't adjust your mind set around it then it is going to affect you quite significantly in terms of your self confidence, your sense of self worth. I'm not sure where I'm going with this.

RESEARCHER: What I'm kind of hearing you say is that in some way our self worth is linked to our ability to fulfill what we view as being....

PARTICIPANT: Our perceived roles.

RESEARCHER: Ja.

PARTICIPANT: Which are gender linked.

RESEACHER: What you're saying now is that it's those roles that are changing now which enable you to adapt your self-worth around that in some way.

PARTICIPANT: Yes. You're not trying to conform to a set idea you have a bit more freedom to establish your identity and play with what would normally be a

foundation stone of what you're supposed to be. You can let your natural personality come out and be a lot more expressive.

RESEARCHER: What is it do you think kind of enabled that to happen? What is different now that lets you play with that which prevented people from doing it before?

PARTICIPANT: I don't know, I haven't given it that much thought. I see this as the breakdown of the stereotypical family unit as probably being the catalyst, the start of all of this. So maybe it's a bit of a contradiction when people talk about the breakdown of traditional family values, this could be the positive spin off from that. We're getting rid of some fairly rigid social structure and allowing people to sort of... step forward... to a sort of... equalizing of the sexes or being able to express yourself more as an individuals, in terms of historical roles. With that probably goes the fact that you do land up with the rate of teen pregnancy having increased, due to whatever you want to blame it on, Brittany Spears or what have you. But you know... it's led to more single parent families which if you're lacking one half of the set structure you have to compensate for that somehow. That goes out as an example to other people to say if they can do it, if they can perform both roles why can't we switch in our relationship and take on portions of each other's roles. So where it begins I don't know I think maybe it's the springing back of what people perceived as being the negative side of the next generation the divorced families, the single parent families. It's an evolution for them it's what we've taken out of those perceived not positives and we've taken that forward.

RESEARCHER: So what you're saying is that gender roles had to be taken on out of necessity in certain cases but that even in other situations in society where traditional family structure still exists the spin off from that kind of necessity has somehow impacted on....

PARTICIPANT: Yes, that's exactly what I'm saying.

RESEARCHER: So then my next question is – in what ways do you think that gender roles are changing or different to what they were in the past?

PARTICIPANT: I think there's a lot more freedom and responsibility being taken on by the females in relationships, responsibility is probably a poor choice of words, but the question when a girl leaves school is not who am I going to marry when am I going to have kids it's what am I going to study at university. When University is finished it's not now I'm educated lets raise a family start a house hold, it's more a case of what career am I going to get, how soon before I make partner. It's more of an independence mind set not so much I need to find someone who I can rely on for the rest of my life and contribute to their life it's a case of I'm going to live my life

and be a family structure or fit in with that. I think it's an awesome thing...umm, guys have been a bit hesitant to give up the stereotypical roles because in essence they are giving up the power position. Maybe it's insecurity to go for a full power sharing concept but a stay at home dad is not unheard of these days. Families which rely completely on au pairs are actually quite common so there is no breadwinner or provider 'homebody' role anymore. It's sort of mingled or it's both people providing and having employed someone to do the caregiver role. That's how it's different from my grandparents days. The concept of my gran working after she had children on a full time basis was unheard of. It was grounds for divorce. [laughter]

RESEARCHER: In what ways do you think that gender roles have an impact on people's relationships with their partners?

PARTICIPANT: I think subtly it has a huge impact. I think you come in with these pre-conceived ideas when you go whether you've got these pre-conceived ideas or not. That's your blue print on how a relationship should go and if your blue prints clash it leads to bigger problems. I have certain friends who have very old school ideas on you have to listen when a man speaks. Luckily for them they've met some head strong girls [laughing]. One of them has had to change quite quickly and the other three are still hopeless cases. I think if you're more flexible on your set role playing then I think it makes for more interesting relationships, you can push boundaries, you can switch dynamics and the reward is not so much learning something new but experiencing something new. I think that adds not a little excitement but the level of interaction is interesting in your relationship which helps. You don't get bored, you don't start thinking this grass is green but I'm sure there's greener grass somewhere. I think it does have a really big role and I think we underestimate how big that role is.

RESEARCHER: So what you're talking about now is that in relationships that you are aware of, your peers as it were that there is an awareness that this issue requires some kind of negotiation or attention for people.

PARTICIPANT: There is definitely awareness whether it's always an awareness inside of the couple I'm not sure. One of my cousins is a classic example, she can't figure out why she's continually clashing with her boyfriend... it's some basic concepts. She's a bit more conservative in her mind set and her partner is not. He's super psyched at the idea that she's becoming a doctor and he'd like to be a bit more creative in his career path and umm... she's not enjoying that very much because there's an uncertainty of if things were to go forward can he provide. That's the nitty gritty of it as it filters down into the details it's a little harder to see. She's completely unaware of the concept of he's more flexible on his archetypal roles and you're not. She doesn't see that other people can see it differently.

RESEARCHER: I think that was a really interesting point there. What you're talking about is sort of the idea that almost in theory people like to adopt a certain perspective on gender roles but practically it becomes quite difficult to negotiate that. Not even so much in theory I mean the idea of becoming a doctor but struggling to integrate that very much career driven path with wanting to fit into more traditional roles. What I'm saying is that something out of both worlds that people are maybe struggling to bring together.

PARTICIPANT: To merger those two. I think part of that also is just a learnt response from people it's not so much as this is what I accepting. It's the basic operating system that people work about, they don't conceptualize that somebody else has a different view that's why they act in a different way. For them it's that's the way I think and they can't get their head around that somebody else can think in a different way. It's not decision based it's just that we're preprogrammed.

RESEARCHER: So it's almost like this innate thing that you're maybe not even realizing is kind of playing out. In what ways do you think that it's advantageous or disadvantageous to prescribe to more traditional gender roles?

PARTICIPANT: The advantages would be that it's a fairly well walked path, there are less questions to it. You can somewhat relate back to what did mom and dad do what did gran do. As soon as you break away from that you're kind of cutting more of your own path and the advantage to that is you get to make a lot of your own based decisions. I think you can be more expressive. I hope that's true, I'm not sure but I think at the end of it you get a better sense of self. I added two and I got to this point, I could have done this and this differently or you can sit down at 82 and think well I did that exactly like dad did that's why. So I think the advantage is definitely expression, you're always going to be challenged in some way where as the disadvantage is you're going to get stuck sometimes which will cause extra stress. That for me is the advantage.

RESEARCHER: So you're kind of suggesting then that with less traditional gender roles and changing or adapting gender roles it can be difficult because there's not the historical frame of reference that there has always been. What people know that this is what you always do and this is what I do and there is nothing to really fall back on when you're trying to figure out how to work that out.

PARTICIPANT: That's the disadvantage, you don't have that when you break away from traditional gender roles. But then you're not going to make the same mistakes that everyone else has been through.

RESEARCHER: What do you think...do you have any ideas of historic...you talk about repeating mistakes that have been made historically in terms of gender roles. What do you think those mistakes have been historically?

PARTICIPANT: I think the mistake has been that we're trying to rush it. That's the obvious one. You're set on finishing school starting your own family putting kids through school and retire. Before you realize it you're my age 27 and you've got a three year old and a two year old or a three year old and a new born. That for me...it seems for me like a massive anchor, there's a lot of stuff I want to do. When you speak to quite a lot of people of the generation above you who are sitting and thinking I'm sad I didn't do that I'm sad this didn't happen before we had children. I'm sad I didn't try a few more things before I got married. Now you're sitting at 50 to 65 thinking how am I going to make that up? Do I have enough in my retirement to do the things I've always wanted to do? And still be able to live off my savings until I die? I think that's becoming a very real worry for people of the generation above me. Whereas now people are a lot more willing to quell those inner quest desires... and then sit down and go through the family process...sort of carrying on with the lineage. You can do that now; medically there is no reason why people can't start families ten years later than they did three generations ago. So I think that's a mistake people are making. You must adapt to your lifestyle to the technologies that are around. As soon as you drop into a predefined role, you close a lot of doors and your mind set to a certain extent. You push out technologies and new concepts. I've got a few friends from my younger school days they've now been married for five years. Predictive text is a crazy idea to them [laughing] and that is so simple. I always think closing your mind to something is a bad idea and for me dropping to a historical pre-defined role does that and that's the biggest pit fall of it.

RESEARCHER: I'm interested to hear a bit more about the one idea that you mentioned because I think and am not sure if you feel the same but there seems to be this perception that changing gender roles is applying more extensively to women than to men in some way, in terms of changing levels of independence. What you're kind of saying is actually not having to fall immediately into the role of father or husband is providing a different kind of independence for men.

PARTICIPANT: Yes. I do agree with the concept that these changing gender roles is giving more freedom to the female role. I do also see your point that it is freeing up the male side in terms of they don't instantly drop into the finish my education and get a family and I need to really push on the career side to support the family. It does give men a bit more freedom to take it bit easier in their first couple of years of their working life. There's no mounting debts diaper bills there's no mortgage, you

have more financial freedom if you don't drop into the family role. You're not instantly starting to support someone else you have a single income to support a single person you're not supporting two people. In a way the freedom that females are achieving is the freedom that men are achieving. I think that's actually a good point, I hadn't thought of it until you said it the way you did. There is actually a general sort of liberation in terms of what you as an individual want to do regardless of your gender. With that comes different responsibilities, you're going to hit income plateaus you're going to get to an age where suddenly you're not as attractive to the opposite sex like you used to be. That is also a trade off. You have children at the age of 40 by the time you're 55 you won't be able to engage your son in sport. Playing cricket in the back garden is going to be a massive effort for you. You have to take a nap afterwards. If you have kids at 20, 25 you're only 40 by the time they become useful athletes. It has downsides but it frees you up to make choices for yourself.

RESEARCHER: Do you think that on that point talking about how this kind of change has resulted in sort of dual liberation in some way - do you think that it's possible that some men are finding it problematic or quite difficult?

PARTICIPANT: I think a fair portion of men are finding it problematic. I had a fairly conservative upbringing in terms of all the tick marks. Private religious schools, non divorced family, no one in my extended family has ever gotten divorced that's very conservative. So I've seen a lot of guys who are very set in the male I must be a provider and for them to step out of that is hard. Some people need that dependence. Take my parents for example when they got married my mom was very much the traditional stay at home mom take care of the household and caregiver and dad was the provider. It gives him an identity, it gave him the power he knew what income was coming in and he in effect then could control expenditure and be the lead decision taker. Now both my parents are employed and mom has done so well in her various careers that she now earns a salary more substantial than his. So it's no longer a case I think we should do this, I pay the bills and that's how it's going to be. It's now a case of I know you think we should do this you've got no right to enforce your mandate, let's negotiate. It's been a struggle for him and guys who've come up with dominant male figures or have not learnt to interact with the opposite sex in a non power related way. I've seen it in a few guys I went to school with, they're really struggling with the concept that you're not going to call the shots because you're a guy you're going to have to come up with a solid reason of why you want to do it that way and realize that the other person might not see it the same way. They'll acknowledge your reasons, but they feel differently. I think it's hard for a lot of guys out there.

RESEARCHER: I suppose my next question is very closely related to what we've been talking about but if there's anything that you would like to add... In light of the fact that there is this kind of move towards gender equality. What do you think this means for women and men? I suppose it's - how is that impacting on their lives?

PARTICIPANT: I think it's...I think it can be quite a struggle because it's an evolving equality. You don't really know where the line is drawn anywhere, your line will be in a different place to someone else's. Umm... Someone that I work with... their son got very sick recently and he actually stayed home to look after his son and his wife continued to go to work. Their reasoning was... she is the higher salary earner and her job is more fulfilling to her, she can carry on, it's pointless for them both to stay behind and he can do just as good a job as her. Our employer didn't see it that way, you're the man of the house she's the mother and she should stay and look after the kid. Why should we grant you any family responsibility leave for what should be your wife's job? Honestly that's mind boggling, it's rubbish. You can't argue that. The trend in our office is if someone in your family gets sick, you as the wife will be the one who covers that court. You're the one who takes them for x-rays and stuff and make sure the fever breaks. So that's one way. The other way this equality goes... and I think it brings in that extra little bit of awkwardness sometimes... you go out for dinner who's the first one to reach for the bill? It's a simple silly thing and very stereotypical of the equality debate but it does put a question there. Do you go on a turns basis? Do you go on who invited who out? Between me and my partner it's a case of if I get some sort of accolade at work I'll ask her out and I'll pay, if she gets an accolade at work I still think we should go out. Is it then her turn to pay even though I've initiated the going out? I don't know, it leads to uncertainties and that can easily lead to conflict. It's not just uncertainties between you as a couple and the outside world, it's uncertainties between the two of you in the couple. You need to keep an open dialogue and realize that yes it's personal but it's not meant to be offensive in any way. So I think in general it's a positive thing, the equalizing the sexes, but we must also keep in mind that there are fundamental differences between boys and girls and that must be respected. We don't need to get rid of all the umm...all the dogma that goes with it, it's important to open doors for ladies, it's not important but it should be done as a courtesy thing. It can change, my children, if I ever have them, may feel completely differently. I don't think I should impose that on them as this is the way it must be. I think it's a good thing equalizing the sexes but there will be teething problems before we land up with a truly equal gender society.

RESEARCHER: So you're saying actually in quite practical ways it's impacting on people.

PARTICIPANT: Ja. The devil comes out in the detail and in the practical ways. The simple things that should not be an issue aren't as simple as they used to be. You know, that possibly where relating to before, if you drop into the old school mind set these things are known, but because you are plotting a new path you can't rely on the same markers out there.

RESEARCHER: In what ways do you think that gender roles are different in South Africa compared to the rest of the world? If you do see it that way.

PARTICIPANT: I do see it that way. I think we are little behind in the global trends in terms of gender equality. We have a very forward thinking constitution but our politicians bugger everything up. So I don't know, I think it is more of..of a conservative mind set. I do also think I'm coming at this with a very white mind set and I can't really say if it's true for the Asian or the Black population in this country because I think our country is very different from all the others because of our history, apartheid and all that. We were kept apart so my mind sets are very much the Afrikaans "Tanie" and "Meneer" concepts and that's very prevalent. It's something the government pumped out because they were a conservative government and they were protect our families no matter what and to keep that control structure that the old government had in place they had to enforce that into the population. Now that all the doors have been opened and all the walls have come down we're playing catch up in terms of what the rest of the world sees as a male and female role. I think we're getting there and we're getting there on a more accelerated curve than other countries have done it. So there's a bit more tension between the generations and a lot more uncertainty within the generation itself as to why are we doing this, what is the part that feels right? Doesn't feel right? This is what they do somewhere else and there are a lot more questions and maybe a lot more turmoil as a result of conflict in terms of that. Let's focus on the question.

RESEARCHER: In what ways do you think gender roles are different in South Africa compared to the rest of the world?

PARTICIPANT: Compared to the rest of the world? I think the rest of the world is more accepting of an equal opportunity among the sexes. They have broken away from the standard stereotypes where as we are much more towards the man will do the braaing and the woman will do everything in the kitchen. My family in UK the mind set is different on what is the male job and what's the female job. You can quite happily switch in and out of roles, sort of a rolling substitution. To swap places you really need to be a jack of all trades. Where as here it's no so much that. There are certain things guys will do and there are certain things girls will do. It's breaking down but it's not quite there yet. We are all heading to the same point we are just a little bit behind and because we are trying to catch up to that point and not

having gone through all the steps maybe we are developing certain diversity and I can't really say what that is.

RESEARCHER: Okay. My next question is and we've covered this so it's something if you have more to add. How do you think that couples are negotiating gender roles in their relationships?

PARTICIPANT: Ummm...hmmm...I don't think there is a set way in how it's happening. It comes down to more of who you are and more your style of approaching challenges. If you're the sort of person who becomes very rigid and hard lined very quickly, and your partner is the same, it leads to a lot of very loud shouting. If you're a bit more flexible and more polite it can be resolved in a more amicable way. If you are too analytical in the process it takes forever. I can't say that there's a set trend. If I look at my friendship group, my peer circle, we have one couple which, I don't know how they stay together because they have such violently loud aggressive arguments and then they walk away and then they come back and somehow it's resolved. Whereas at the time of the actual time of the argument there were sobs and tears. We have other friends who will hum and hah through something constantly and never really come to a decision until it's too late and the circumstances have changed. Sometimes I feel you have to me and m partner skirt the middle ground, we tend to come to solutions fairly quickly, but when it comes down to sort of our empathy. You put yourself into someone else's position and see it from their point of view and I think that's key as opposed to imposing the reasons for your view. I think it comes out without any sort set way. I can't see a common denominator between couples and how they resolve the gender issue. Sorry.

RESEARCHER: No that's fine. There's no wrong or right answer to any of it. In what ways do you feel that culture impacts on gender roles?

PARTICIPANT: Again I think it's a massive difference, it's like we were saying before...its your mind set, which is a learnt mind set. That mind set changes very drastically between cultural groups. I mean...hmmm..Im trying to think how to say this without sounding derogatory, your general perception of a Muslim relationship is that the male is, by religion, by religious doctorate the superior member in the relationship. If you're a Muslim guy you come across a sort of non religious driven girl and you hit it off I think setting a basis for a relationship and I think if she's fairly strong willed and has advancement ideas for herself there's going to be conflict. I think religion and cultural groups do set out a path for the gender groups, whether it's intended whether it's just happened at the time it's just the way it is. I suppose it sort of sets it in stone more the gender issues because it's no longer a case of well you know mom and dad did this, this is our culture it's been done forever. So I think it's a contributing factor but it's a factor in the same way that we were

saying that your gender roles are formed by your environment and culture is your environment so it's a major contributing factor to your idea of gender roles.

RESEARCHER: Are there any other aspects of society outside of culture that you can think of that you might impact on gender roles?

PARTICIPANT: Peer pressure or peer conformity if not pressure. If you don't tend to stick within people of the same cultural mind set as you, if you interact in a different way then it's you're not only exposed to stuff that's imposed on you by your culture you're experiencing other ideas. I think that plays a role. I have an Indian friend she's from a very traditional mind set, her older brother is an organized marriage, he literally met the bride three days before, accidental, he wasn't supposed to meet her until the day of the wedding. He's happy with that it's his culture and that's the way it is. She's a bit more...by her own expression she's a bit more exposed to other cultures, she didn't go to a Hindu school which her brother did. So she's more open, she's living with her boyfriend now fiancé and it's unheard of. Her brother is not for the idea it's not his culture, it's not his idea of how things should happen. Having said that, it is quite conformist in terms of what the parents would say. When I told my parents I was moving in with my partner, I just told them, I was making a statement. They actually went out and sought permission, we would like to live together is it this okay? The parents get together and discuss it and say that's fine. Three months later they would like to get married and the parents get together again and have a discussion for two weeks. Yes it's okay and they come up with the framework whereas it's more that she's exposed to different parts of society from her culture that lets her do that. Her brother wasn't and he's very happy in the way his life has been structured for him and the role he will take over. So I think that's an example of how external influences have mellowed cultural dogma.

RESEARCHER: So it's kind of like diversity in

PARTICIPANT: Diversity in your environment and variety.

RESEARCHER: So it's overriding the immediate influence of the family.

PARTICIPANT: Maybe not overriding so much as softening.

RESEARCHER: Okay that's me thanks.

END OF INTERVIEW

Appendix B

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

- What is your current understanding of the concept of 'gender roles'?
- How do you think gender roles are created?
- In what ways do you think gender roles impact on an individual's identity or way of viewing themselves?
- In what ways do you think gender roles are changing or different to what they were in the past?
- In what ways do you think gender roles have an impact on people's relationships with their partners?
- In what ways do you think it is advantageous or disadvantageous to prescribe to traditional gender roles?
- In light of the fact that there is a current trend towards gender equality, what do you feel this means for women and men?

- In what ways do you think gender roles are different in South Africa compared to the rest of the world?
- How do you think couples are negotiating gender roles in relationships?
- In what ways do you feel that culture impacts on gender roles?
- In what ways do you feel that religion impacts on gender roles?
- What other aspects of society which you feel impact on gender roles?

Appendix C:



My name is Maire-Clare Kilroe, and I am conducting research for the purposes of obtaining a Masters degree at the University of the Witwatersrand. The aim of the study is to find out what ways people perceive gender roles in current society, how they believe these gender roles are established and how they see these gender roles as impacting on relationships. The study looks at the views or opinions of both males and females but does not require them to reflect on personal relationships or experience. I would like to invite you to participate in this study. You have been approached by a network correspondent who is an individual who is known to the researcher and who approaches individuals on behalf of the researcher and requests their participation in the study. A network correspondent is used to find participants who, for ethical reasons, are not known by the researcher within a personal capacity.

Participation in this research will entail taking part in an individual interview. This will involve answering a series of questions and participating in discussion about the topic with the researcher. The interview will last

approximately an hour. Participation is voluntary, and participants will in no way be advantaged or disadvantaged for choosing to participate or not participate. While questions are asked about your personal views or opinions, no identifying information is asked for or revealed in the research report. Therefore while no names are given, absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed as direct quotes from the interviews may be used in the report. You may refuse to answer any questions posed to you. You may also choose to drop out of the study at any point with no negative consequences. The interviews are to be tape-recorded, however, these recordings will be kept in a secure location by my supervisor and only myself and my research supervisor will have access to them. Once the research is complete the tapes will be destroyed.

The results of the research will be recorded and presented in an academic environment. However, if participants wish to receive a summary or a complete copy of the research these will be provided at their request. Your participation in this study would be greatly appreciated. This research will contribute both to a larger body of knowledge on gender in the South African context and may be helpful in determining better ways of understanding inter-gender interaction. If you have any queries or wish to participate in the study please do not hesitate to contact me on 0847643295 or my supervisor Peace Kiguwa on (011) 717 4537.

Kind Regards

Maire-Clare Kilroe

Appendix D:

CONSENT FORM

I _____, am agreeing to participate in a study on perceptions of gender roles and their impact on relationships. This study will be conducted by Maire-Clare Kilroe who is a student of the University of Witwatersrand. I understand that:

- Taking part in the study is completely voluntary
- I may refuse to answer any question I am asked
- I may drop out of the study at anytime without any negative consequences
- My name/identity will not be revealed
- I will be provided with a copy of a summary or the completed research at my request
- I am aware that participating in this research will not have negative or positive consequences in a personal capacity

I have been given an opportunity to ask questions about anything I did not understand about the study.

(Signature of interviewee)

(Date)

Appendix E:

AUDIO TAPE CONSENT FORM

I _____, give my consent for a tape recorder to be used during the interview between myself and the researcher (Maire-Clare Kilroe). I understand that the information which will be recorded is for academic purposes only and that the content will appear in a research report. This information may appear in the form of direct quotes. I also understand that my identity will at no stage be revealed and the use of my name will not appear in any section of the research. I also understand that these tapes will be kept in a secure location and that they shall be destroyed once the research project has been completed.

(Signature of interviewee)

(Date)