

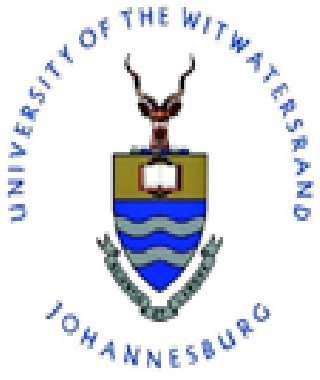
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Men, Masculinity, Aggression and Dominance: An Exploration of How Young Men are Socialized to Deal with Situations of Man-on-Man Aggression and Dominance

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Men, Masculinity, Aggression and Dominance: An Exploration of How Young Men are Socialized to Deal with Situations of Man-on-Man Aggression and Dominance

By

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

at the University of Witwatersrand

Johannesburg

2019

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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

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2019

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Abstract

There is a considerable body of research placing young South African men at the core of interpersonal violence. Within these studies they are frequently positioned as both perpetrators and victims of extreme and homicidal modes of aggression. In light of this gendered nature of interpersonal violence, this study was directed at exploring how young men's responses to a situation of man-on-man aggression and dominance might be linked to how society encourages or expects a certain masculine performance from men in such situations. This study's secondary goal was to offer some ideas about how young men might establish a masculine identity through aggression and dominance. In the pursuing research aims, a total of 14 young adult men attending university participated in this qualitative study. From the analysis what became evident was the continuous pressure that young adult men experience in society, through various social institutions, to somehow fit into dominant or hegemonic constructions of masculinity. Within the context of this study, the proximal cause of aggression and dominance was attributed to broader concerns regarding presentation of a masculine identity, self-worth and social status.

Keywords: *Masculine identity, gender socialization, identity development, aggression and dominance, interpersonal violence, hegemonic masculinity*

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1. Chapter 1

1.1. Introduction

Theorists across a number of disciplines, including political sciences, anthropology, sociology and psychology depict manhood as precarious and elusive as a social status (Bosson & Vandello, 2011). Cultural statements such as *"men are made, not born",* serve as an indicator of the precarious and intangible nature of manhood (Gilmore, 1990), with a masculine identity being earned rather than being biologically inherited, and at any moment it can be taken away (Bosson & Vandello, 2011).

Literature pertaining to men and the construction of masculinity has shown that men often engage in various behaviours to gain and maintain their masculine status (see for example Ref 1, Ref 2). In addition, such literature indicates that in most societies the acquisition of a masculine gender identity is not an easy process. The literature reveals that most men are indoctrinated from a young age with certain ideas of masculine behaviour (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Gilmore, 1990) then are later required to display these behaviours in a public domain, sanctioned as appropriate by their male (and female at times) peers (Bosson & Vandello, 2011).

There are a number of situations that provide men with the opportunity of displaying these *man making* behaviours (Bosson & Vandello, 2011; Crowther, Goodson, McGuire & Dickson, 2013) such as those that allow men to generate dominance in social relations (Ratele, 2013), those that involve risk taking where men can demonstrate fearlessness and situations where men can demonstrate physical aggression or the readiness to demonstrate it (Vandello & Bosson, 2013).

A situation of man-on-man aggression and dominance offers a favourable setting for males to act in a manner which proves their masculinity for various reasons (Connell, 2002; Kimmel & Mahler, 2003; Whitehead, 2005; Wojnicka, 2015). For the most part, the expression of aggression and dominance by males in most societies is seen as a cultural script for gaining a masculine status (Connell, 2002; Kimmel & Mahler, 2003; Whitehead, 2005; Wojnicka, 2015). Thus, the expression of these behaviours helps men avoid precarious non-masculine positions (Kimmel & Mahler, 2003; Whitehead, 2005). A great deal of literature suggests that in most societies, including South

Africa, the display of behaviours that signal aggression and dominance in interpersonal settings is considered as an act of honour, more so, if the display of these behaviours are in response to provocation (Saucier & McManus, 2014; Prewitt-Freilino & Bosson, 2008; Stevens, 2008; Swart, 2006). Additionally, some research studies show that a masculine status is further legitimized when the display of aggressive and domineering behaviours happen between men because they belong to a social category that is linked to power (Whitehead, 2005; Wojnicka, 2015). Therefore, the expression of these behaviours between men is seen as an expression of power (Whitehead, 2005; Wojnicka, 2015).

According to Bourdieu (2002) the show of aggression and dominance between men forms part of various masculine competition games where by men can test and validate each other's masculinity. This show of aggression and dominance helps them achieve a masculine status more readily, as opposed to occupational or educational alternatives which signal material, cultural and capital success; all of which are tenets of a dominant form of masculinity (Kimmel & Mahler, 2003; Whitehead, 2005). Schrock and Schwalbe (2009) contend that a masculine status is readily achieved in these situations because the display of these behaviours can be used by males without material resources to defy subordination. They posit that aggressive and domineering behaviours symbolically represent a claim to privilege; they elicit respect from peers and allow men to resist exploitation (Schrock & Schwalbe, 2009).

Although there are a number of men who resist adopting a masculine style of being that demands that they show aggression and dominance (Crowther *et al.*, 2013; Ravn, 2017), masculinity scholars continue to uncover evidence that men of all classes in Western nations (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Eastman, 2012) and countries like South Africa (Jewkes *et al.*, 2015; Ratele, 2013) are under continuous and immense pressure from society to conform to a type of masculinity that prescribes aggression and dominance.

Prominent researchers in the field of masculinity, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), state that aggression is socially encouraged and expected as it is a prescription of an ideal and abstracted form of manhood, referred to in the literature, as hegemonic

masculinity. Dominance and competitiveness are also qualities closely associated with hegemonic masculinity that males are encouraged to demonstrate (Morrell, Jewkes, Lindegger & Hamlall, 2013).

Hegemonic masculinity is a culturally idealized form of masculinity commonly conceptualised as a set of values that are determined by men in power with the purpose of including or excluding marginalized men and women from certain positions of power and organizing society in gender inequitable ways (Jewkes *et al.,* 2015; Joseph & Lindegger, 2007). Hegemonic masculinity is the combination of several features (Jewkes & Morrell, 2012). According to Jewkes *et al.* (2015) and Jewkes and Morrell (2012), these include a hierarchy of masculinities and the differential access to power that occurs among men (over women and oppressed men);with the difference in access to power, albeit not solely, conceptualized in terms of differences in sex, but also in terms of race and class (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). In addition to these features are the interplay which takes place between the ideals that men hold, their identities, interactions, power and patriarchy (Jewkes & Morrell, 2012).

It is largely debated that this form of masculinity is not only problematic for females because it frequently keeps them in positions where they are dominated by males, but it is also taxing on males because its encouragement of competitive relations, between males, comes at the expense of their health and quality of life (Jewkes *et al.*, 2015; Seedat, van Niekerk, Jewkes, Suffla & Ratele, 2008). Seedat *et al.* (2009) continue to state that hegemonic masculinity becomes a health risk because a show of strength and physical resilience is valorised no matter the danger or the violence involved. The impact of this is most evident in South Africa where the contents of hegemonic masculinity are the demonstration of strength, toughness, as well as the willingness and capacity to use violence. (Jewkes *et al.*, 2015; Morrell *et al.*, 2013). It is also evidenced in the excess of mortality as a result of interpersonal violence between men (Matzopoulos *et al.*, 2015). It is beneficial for such reasons that research in the field of masculinity to engage in an exploration of how society informs the manner in which males conduct themselves, in particularly, situations whereby

males formulate an identity, through the behavioural prescriptions and proscriptions that society sets out.

Aims

- The purpose of this study is to explore how young men's responses to a situation of man-on-man aggression and dominance might be linked to how society encourages or expects a certain masculine performance from men in such situations.
- The study also aims to offer some insight into how young men might establish a masculine identity through aggression and dominance.

1.2. Research Questions

a. How might gender socialization influence how young men manage situations of personal man-on-man aggression?
b. To what extent do young men establish a masculine identity through aggression and dominance?

1.3. Rationale

Globally an estimate of 1.3 million people die each year as a consequence of violence in all its forms (self-directed, interpersonal and collective), which accounts for 2.5% of mortality worldwide (WHO, 2014). The most recent *Global Status Report on Violence and Prevention* revealed that since the year 2000, approximately 6 million people have been killed globally as a result of interpersonal violence (WHO, 2014). The degree of violence in South Africa, as indicated in South African studies investigating mortality trends from 1997 to 2012, positions interpersonal violence as the 8th leading cause of death (Pillay-van Wyk *et al.*, 2016; Matzopoulos *et al.*, 2015). In addition, South Africa's homicide rate of 38.4 per 100 000 population, which is inclusive of non-fatal interpersonal violence; that is much more common and under reported, continues to place it as one of the three most violent countries in the world (Matzopoulos *et al.*, 2015).

There is a considerable body of research placing young South African males at the core of interpersonal violence (Mahlangu, Gevers & De Lannoy, 2014; van Niekerk *et al.*, 2015). Moreover, men are frequently positioned as both perpetrators and victims of extreme and homicidal modes of aggression (Mahlangu *et al.*, 2014; van Niekerk *et al.*, 2015). The literature goes on to reveal that young males are predominantly affected by interpersonal violence (Mahlangu *et al.*, 2014; van Niekerk *et al.*, 2015). In 2012, interpersonal violence was included in the list of the top 10 leading causes of death for South African males, a factor which was not observed in the list of the top 10 leading causes of death for South African females (Pillay-van Wyk *et al.,* 2016). Additionally, data collected from the year 2000 reveals that interpersonal violence among young adult South African males, are nine times higher than the global average and that young South African males are five to six times more likely to display violent behaviour in comparison to females (Kheswa & Notole, 2014; Otwombe *et al.*, 2015).

The high rates of interpersonal violence amongst young adult males is also evidenced in a study conducted by the *MRC-UNISA Crime, Violence and Injury Lead Programme* (2008) which aimed to identify the risk and protective factors of male interpersonal violence. This study revealed that South African males were six times more likely to die as a result of homicide than females (Donson, 2009). Furthermore, recent studies show that this ratio remains unchanged and while female homicides have continued to decrease significantly over the years, male homicides have not kept up with the pace of this decline, despite the fact that male interpersonal violence has been recognized as a public health priority (Choe, Zimmerman & Devnarain, 2012; Matzopoulos *et al.*, 2015; van Niekerk *et al.,* 2015).

This gendered nature of interpersonal violence in early adulthood (as discussed above), coupled with the oscillating positions between victim and perpetrator, which males often hold in situations of interpersonal violence (Mahlangu *et al.*, 2014; van Niekerk *et al.*, 2015) is the reason for this study. Moreover, this study particularly draws its focus on males and their responses to situations of male aggression and dominance, rather than focusing on females and their responses to interpersonal aggression and dominance by male perpetrators. However, it does not intend to

minimise the magnitude and effects of interpersonal violence against females by male perpetrators. Rather, the aim of this study, through its specific focus on males between the ages 18-23 years and their responses to situations of male-on-male aggression and dominance, leans towards offering some ideas on the various kinds of social conditions which have been established and are continuously created to maintain the high rate of male-on-male interpersonal violence.

The study's focus on young males between the ages of 18-23 is partly influenced by research, both internationally and nationally, which has found that males between the ages of 15-29 years account for a large proportion of deaths linked to interpersonal violence (Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwian, & Lozano, 2002; Mahlangu *et al*., 2014; Matzopoulos *et al*., 2015). Additionally, this research is based partly on South African studies which implicate early adult males as the main perpetrators and victims of interpersonal violence (Mahlangu *et al*., 2014). Increasing mortality rates are not the only consequence of male interpersonal violence. Male interpersonal violence has long term negative psychological and health implications on both an individual and a societal level (Choe, Zimmerman & Devnarain, 2012; Mahlangu *et al*., 2014; Otwombe *et al*., 2014). As a public health priority, interventions aimed at reducing and preventing male interpersonal violence should aim to understand the conditions that allow for its preservation in society (Ahmed & Suffia, 2012).

A review of the literature purportedly indicates that interpersonal violence amongst young adult males have been attributed to a range of factors (Crespi, 2003; Vetten & Ratele, 2013). For instance, some studies lean towards biology as the basis of violence in young adult males, whilst other studies consider life experiences and other contributing social factors as the cause of violence amongst this population (Crespi, 2003; Vetten & Ratele, 2013). Various studies conducted on the South African young adult population reveals that interpersonal violence amongst this population is generally committed by young adults who come from lower-socioeconomic backgrounds (Jewkes, 2002; Otwombe *et al.,* 2014; Shields, Nadasen, & Pierce, 2008). Additionally, studies such as these do not show a causal link between poverty and the enactments of violence but indicate that it creates situations that make it more likely (Otwombe *et al*., 2014; Ouzgane & Morrell, 2005).

However, such studies do not adequately explain why males, as opposed to females of the same socio-economic group, are more likely to perpetrate and experience violence. These studies also fail to account for the occurrence of violence amongst young adult males across all socio-economic groups.

A great deal of research exploring issues relating to young adult males and the manner in which they are socialized to behave, in more violent ways (or perceived masculine ways), focuses on sexual and physical aggression against women and children (Matzopoulos *et al.*, 2015; Stevens, 2008). Such studies link political, familial and societal conditions as specific socialization agents on young adult males (Schwartz *et al.*, 2012). Differential socialization and the construction of masculinity can be seen as factors in young male's increased tendency for the enactment of violence (Crespi, 2003). A feature of interpersonal violence that is frequently ignored or less reflected upon is that of man-on-man aggression and dominance (Matzopoulos *et al.*, 2015; Stevens, 2008).

There appears to be limited research investigating how young adult males are socialized to manage conditions of interpersonal aggression and dominance, as well as issues related to the enactments of masculinity as it pertains to aggression. For this reason, research exploring how young adult males are socialized to deal with situations of aggression and dominance is necessary to add to the body of existing literature on males and masculinity. This reason constitutes an aspect of what this research aims to do. The secondary aim of this research study is to investigate the extent to which a masculine identity is established through dominance and aggression.

An understanding of how masculine identities are established through aggression and dominance can aid in the development of intervention programmes directed at reducing and preventing interpersonal violence, as it can explore the spaces in which the definition of masculinity is created, taught and assimilated (Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention, 2015; Mahlangu *et al*., 2014). As longitudinal studies on aggression have indicated, early patterns of aggressive behaviour are predictors of later violent behaviour, a trend that is often seen in males (Temcheff *et al.,* 2008).

2. Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This section will review the extant literature, discussing the link between masculine identity and aggression/violence. In particular, this chapter will delve into literature which examines the role of socialisation in encouraging aggression and dominance as a masculine trait. It is important to note that this research focuses specifically on men and that the researcher will make use of the words 'his', 'he' and 'him'. Therefore, it is important to be cognisant at times of the fact that the theory may also be applicable to women.

2.1.1. Identity Formation

In his seminal work Erikson (1968) wrote "In the social jungle of human existence there is no feeling of being alive without a sense of identity" (p.130). He uses this phrase to emphasize a period of time when a young person is faced with the psychosocial task of establishing a cohesive sense of identity. Erikson (1968) implicates identity development in the facilitation of individual well-being and adjustment, proposing the opposite should an individual fail to develop a coherent identity. The outcome of this psychosocial task is identity confusion (Erikson, 1968). Erikson (1968) further states that though identity is shaped throughout an individual's life, most of the work is done during the transition between childhood and adulthood.

Erikson continued to theorize that the beginning of puberty brings with it vast developmental changes in cognitive functioning and physical skills (Erikson, 1968). The theory goes on to state that the considerable development which takes place during adolescence is not limited to the advancement of one's cognitive ability and improved physical skill, but rather, it also extends to increase autonomy and independence (Erikson, 1968). According to Kroger (2004), these psychosocial developments that take place during adolescence allow for individuals to interact to a greater extent with the social world; signifying the shift from childhood to adulthood. Erikson (1959) believed that any attempt to understand an individual cannot be done outside the individual's social context. Further, he theorized that the individual and

society are intricately interconnected and dynamically related in perpetual change (Erikson, 1959; Erikson, 1968).

Erikson was the first to highlight that the social world exists within the psychological make-up of every individual (Sokol, 2009; Hoare, 2002). Erikson (1968) believed that the formation of an identity is dependent on the individual's interaction with the social world, outside their relationships with significant others making up their family. He proposed that society provides the individual with spaces where he can explore ideologies, as well as selectively repudiate and assimilate identifications that are formed in childhood (Erikson, 1968). These identifications inform that which a child understands about themselves, their capacities, their body parts and their roles (Erikson, 1968). The more contact an individual has with society, the more an individual configures additional identifications (Erikson, 1968).

Erikson (1950, 1968) posited that there are dangers to identity development in spaces where alternative ideologies were limited, such as a family setting where children establish their initial identifications, or a society that values and permits certain ideas whilst prohibiting and disregarding other forms of thought. He theorized that under such conditions the individual would, in his conformity, accept the only criterion of worthiness that has been offered to him (Erikson, 1968). In this process, Erikson (1968) believed that the individual not only sacrifices his imagination, but also readily abandons his capacity to engage in activity for enjoyment and recreation, submitting himself to what Marx called "craft idiocy". Building on these ideas, Erikson hypothesized that an individual's final identity is made up of all significant identifications that are shaped by a number of interactions which are altered to form a unique and reasonably cohesive whole (Erikson, 1968).

Even though he wrote at length about identity formation in adolescence and revolutionized developmental thought; Erikson has often been criticized for being vague in his definitions of identity and ambiguous in his explanations of identity development (Sokol, 2009; Beyers & Luyckx, 2015). In reviewing the literature, a number of theorists have attempted to conceptualize identity in efforts to expand on Erikson's work (Beyers & Luyckx, 2015; Kroger, 2004; Marcia, 1966; Marcia, 1980).

Marcia, a prominent identity theorist, contributed to Erikson's work on identity by making his theory explicit and testable. As a result, this offered a broader understanding of identity and its formation (Kroger & Marcia, 2011). Moving away from Erikson's ideas of a final identity as the outcome of identity formation, Marcia (1980) proposed that identity is not fixed and that throughout life, various elements are constantly being added to it and discarded from it. He further construed identity as an internal, self-constructed dynamic combination of abilities, beliefs, drives and individual history (Marcia, 1980). Marcia (1980), labelled this self-constructed dynamic organisation as a self-structure, other times he referred to it as an identity structure. From this perspective, the term identity is used to describe the makeup of values, principles and roles that an individual has adopted. Therefore, the period of identity formation, is when an individual explores these roles, values and principles without committing to them (Beyers & Luyckx, 2015; Marcia, 1966; Marcia, 1980).

The consequence of a poorly developed identity structure results in reduced insight into one's uniqueness and an increased reliance on external factors in the process of self-evaluation (Marcia, 1980). Conversely, a well-developed identity structure is one which is flexible in that it is open to changes in relationships and society (Marcia, 1980). An individual with a well-developed identity structure has a greater understanding of both his distinctiveness, as well as his similarity to others; in addition, the individual has an increased awareness of their capacities and uses this knowledge of the self to operate in the world (Marcia, 1980). According to Schwartz *et al.* (2013), the point in adolescence, at which there is an exponential increase in the amount of time individuals spend exploring who they are or what they want, is between 18 – 25 years of age. It should also be highlighted that various identity researchers come to the same conclusion (see for example Klimstra *et al,* 2010; Kroger, 2002; Luyckx, Gossans, Siemens & Beyers, 2006). This period is referred to as 'late adolescent', 'emerging adulthood', 'early adulthood' or 'young adulthood' (Klimstra *et al.*, 2010; Triple, 2013). The term that will be used in this study to refer to individuals of this age group, whom are in the process of formulating an identity is 'young adult'.

Though Marcia believed that the process of identity formation is not a static one and that identity is constantly being shaped throughout life; he posited that individuals have a period of moratorium whereby they consider a number of identity related choices and eventually gain a clear sense of self-definition or an overarching personal identity (Marcia, 1966; Marcia, 1980). Although Marcia acknowledges socio-cultural effects on identity formation, much of his work implies a passive surrounding (Yoder, 2000). More contemporary researchers believe however, that models that propose the process of identity formation as internalized and self-constructed, assume the identity exploration and commitment occur in fixed environments (Alarid & Vega, 2010; Cote & Levine, 2002; Steensma, Keukels, Vries & Cohen-Kettenis, 2013; Yoder, 2000). Contemporary researchers go on to argue that such models disregard the impact of socio-cultural factors, such as racism, poverty and gender bias, on internal psychological processes (Steensma *et al., 2013*; Verschuren, Rassaert, Claes, Moons & Luyckx, 2017; Yoder, 2000).

A number of studies point to how South Africa offers a unique set of circumstances to assess identity formation among the South African Youth (Alberts*,* 2000; Norris *et al.,* 2008). These studies highlight how social and political change such as the end of Apartheid can impact significantly on identity formation (Alberts, 2000; Norris *et al.,* 2008). A salient feature of this social and political change is that the mechanisms and institutionalized barriers that had historically hindered identity development were gradually dissipating (Mashegoane, 2012). For example, issues regarding gender equity, education and career opportunities and barriers to political participation were being addressed which subsequently influences identity development and self-perception (Mashegoane, 2012). Regardless of this political and societal transformation, it should be noted that South Africa remains a stratified society where the formation of an identity is unlikely to be homogenous (Norris *et al.,* 2000).

Verschueren *et al.* (2017) research on gender, age and contextual differences in identity formation highlighted the importance of including contextual variables into identity formation methodologies. Their research found that males and females do not manage the psychosocial task of developing an identity similarly, linking this differentiation in identity formation to the manner in which society is organised.

Verschueren *et al.* (2017) found that males were less inclined to explore identity related options than females and that some males even avoided doing so. In addition to this, their study found that males were more likely to commit to ideals and roles that society typically expects males to adopt (Verschueren *et al.*, 2017). Other studies exploring identity, gender differentiation in identity formation and gender constructions suggest that the difference in consolidation of identities between females and males lies in the developmental task of an evolving gender-role identity (Davies, 2007; Kroger, 2007). According to Davies (2007), young adulthood is a period whereby individuals define themselves on the basis of the characteristics that are closely related to each masculine or feminine gender-role. Though this process begins in childhood, the pressure to measure up to culturally sanctioned gender-roles is intensified during this period (Kroger, 2007; Sneetsma *et al.*, 2013).

Some writers, like Philaretou (2001) attribute the difficulties young adult males experience in consolidating their identities to the responses they receive from society. Philaretou (2001) suggests that the challenges males have in forming cohesive identities is due to the emphasis social institutions place on young adult males and their masculine identities. This means that a masculine identity needs to be achieved and judged to be achieved by individuals around them. Contemporary gender theories state that this input is often given to the individual through verbal and non-verbal communication which is performative (Litosseliti & Sunderland, 2002). These theories suggest that gender identities are processes that are constantly negotiated and modified in public spheres (Litosseliti & Sunderland, 2002). The following section of the literature review will discuss gender and gender identity as an enactment of beliefs about gender.

2.1.2. Socially Constructed Gender Identities

The world is organized around ideas that males and females are different in terms of needs, desires and capabilities (Holmes, 2007). It was historically assumed that these differences were the consequence of biology. In his book, *The Division of Labour in Society,* initially published in 1893, the social theorist Durrheim believed that the progressive differentiation of anatomy manifested in the differentiation of political and economic functions, including psychological differences (Durrheim,

1984). He argued that, as a consequence of an evolutionary process, males were biologically equipped to be more productive in society and were capable of advancing a society's economy, as well as ensuring its survival (Durrheim, 1984). He further argued that the subordinate positions held by females in society were organic and socially necessary; stating that only females in primitive societies desired to be equal to males (Durrheim, 1984). Weber, another social theorist, noted to have had some insights on inequalities between males and females, hypothesized that the domination and subordination of females were due to the natural superiority of the physical and intellectual capacities of males (Webber, 1947). Though Webber and Durrheim often stressed in their works the impact of social forces in a number of things; they failed to scrutinize 'sex' as a significant social division (Holmes, 2007).

Biological essentialist views of femaleness and maleness remain popular; they are reiterated in the media and shared in biology textbooks (Ratele, 2008). In more recent years, biological essentialism is further supplemented by the work done by the Human Genome Project which often suggests that baby boys are the result of a sex determining gene (Ratele, 2008). On the contrary, authors such as Kimmel (2011) argue that one's anatomical composition does not determine who one is, that is, biology does not determine whether one becomes masculine or feminine. Ratele (2008) found that biological researchers often confuse the presence of a Y chromosome or the possession of a penis with masculinity. There is a clear distinction between the two; the term 'sex' refers to the biological differences between males and females and 'gender' refers to the ideas about the differences between being masculine and being feminine, both of which are socially produced (Oakley, 2015). This then means that individuals are not born with gender identities. Rather, meanings and expectations about how they should exist in the world are created and attached to their bodies by society and this in turn is strongly implicated in gender identity development.

The most common usage of the term 'gender' refers to the socially constructed differences between women and men, notably based on divisions that are biological between males and females (Oakley, 2015; Connell, 2009). In this sense, gender is used to highlight both difference and dichotomy. Connell (2005) finds such definitions of gender problematic. Connell and Pearse (2014) state that human

character cannot simply be observed through the notion of gender as dichotomous because in reality it is not. They further state that using dichotomy as the core basis in defining gender would mean that the differences between women and the differences between men would be excluded from the concept of gender (Connell & Pearse, 2014). In addition to this, Connell and Pearse (2014) argue that a definition based on difference implies that where difference cannot be observed gender cannot be seen.

Kimmel (2011) proposes that gender be construed as socially constructed and multidimensional. It is plural in that there are no singular normative definitions of femininity and masculinity (Kimmel, 2011) and that gender differences are produced by the manner in which society is organized by social structures (Connell, 2009). Thus, meanings of femininity and masculinity can vary over historical time and fluctuate within any given culture as well as in different cultures (Kimmel, 2011). In addition to this, definitions of masculinity and femininity can vary over a period of an individual's life (Kimmel, 2011).

The idea that there is no universal lasting definition of gender and that meanings are produced by social structures is demonstrated in a study conducted by Hadebe (2013), where he interviewed 15 males between the ages of 21 and 50 years in peri-urban areas in KwaZulu Natal. The aim of this research was to explore how cultural and religious or faith practices impacted on Zulu men's understandings of their masculinity. The research goes on to investigate the degree to which political culture, shaped by the South African Constitution and which promotes gender equity is, if at all, changing their perceptions of masculinity (Hadebe, 2013).

Hadebe (2013) writes that during pre-colonial times Zulu boys were expected to be hunters and cowherds and eventually grow into men who grow the homestead economy. The activities they were involved in not only socialized them to behave aggressively and to contest respect amongst their male peers but they were also intended to prepare them for manhood (Hadebe, 2013). The homestead economy, which was once the core of male dominance, did not survive the introduction of colonialist capitalism and the influence of the missionary enterprise, which also brought with it a new set of standards of behaving, as well as a change in structural

patterns. As a result, Zulu masculine identity evolved (Hadebe, 2013). The Christian tradition aided by the introduction of Apartheid in South Africa, contributed negatively on the evolution of the Zulu masculinity, as it undermined the Zulu man's respect among his peers and authority (Hadebe, 2013).

According to Hadebe (2013), in response to policies set up by the apartheid government, Zulu nationalism steadily eclipsed in the early 1900's. Further, Zulu tradition and masculinity became politicized and was used to redefine what it meant for one to be a Zulu man (Hadebe, 2013). However, the militarised concept of manhood which rose through the influence of Zulu ethnic nationalism did not withstand the transition of democracy in South Africa because the democratic government promoted gender equality (Hadebe, 2013). Hadebe's (2013) study revealed that males use the combination of cultural and religious beliefs in their understandings of what it means to be a man. In addition to this, his study revealed that some males shaped their understandings of masculinity around the standards set by the current political culture (Hadebe, 2013). Studies like the one conducted by Hadebe partly serve to emphasize the impossibility of deploying a singular concept of gender in a highly divided country like South Africa which has been historically ruled by racialized power that still continues to exist (Hunter, 2005; Morrell *et al.*, 2013).

Along with demonstrating gender as plural, Hadebe's study signifies how gender is also relational. Gender is relational in that individuals construct their ideas about their gender identity in perpetual reference to what it means to be masculine or feminine because the individual relates to those around him (Kimmel, 2011). Males often construct their ideas about masculinity in relation to femininity as well as their ideas about other masculinities (Connell, 2009). Kimmel (2011) observed that a dominant universal component of masculinity is that of anti-femininity. Males construct their meanings of what it means to be men in juxtaposition to what is meant to be a woman (Kimmel, 2011).

In an explanation of gender as both plural and relational, Kimmel (2011) states that gender is therefore also situational; stating that meanings ascribed to masculinity and femininity varies from one context to the next. By situational, Kimmel (2011)

rationalises that gender is comprised of a particular set of behaviours which are produced in certain social situations; implying that as the situation changes, so does gender alter in the process of this change. Therefore, social institutions are responsible for creating what it means to be masculine or feminine through ideas and activities.

In their seminal paper, West and Zimmerman (1987) describe gender as the property of an institution rather than the property of an individual. Holmes (2007) highlights that though social structures shape individuals into being feminine and masculine, individuals are not without their own sense of agency. This does not imply that individuals can do whatever they want or that everything depends on these differences within individuals because society is always structured to constrain individuals (Connell, 2009; Holmes, 2007). As a result, even though individuals have a sense of agency and act in accordance to their agency, society is organized in such a way that it impacts on the choices that individuals make and it has a major effect on the consequences of those choices (Holmes, 2007). The difficulty faced by individuals in exercising their agency is due to the belief that they are accountable to society and further, dependent on how their actions maybe characterized by others (West & Zimmerman, 1987). West and Zimmerman (1987) go as far as describing gender as an ideological device with as much power to produce, reproduce as well as legitimize both the choices and limits that are established on the sex category. Consequently, individuals may not always behave in stereotypically masculine or feminine ways. However, individuals are cognizant of the fact that engaging in behaviour that is specific to their sex maybe detrimental in an arena where they are being assessed (West & Zimmerman, 1987).

Literature exploring the social constructionist perspective of gender, describes the act of producing behaviours as either masculine or feminine. In thinking of gender as plural, relational and situational, West and Zimmerman (1987), state that gender needs to be thought of as something that individuals do repeatedly during interactions with others. Doing gender comprises of intricate socially directed continuous interactional and micro-political activities which classify particular pursuits as manifestations of femininity or masculinity (West & Zimmerman, 1987). The following section of the literature review will explore the manner in which individuals

display gendered behaviours and how culture instils the need for individuals, particularly males, to do gender. Furthermore, it will explore aggression and dominance as gendered behaviours.

2.1.2.1. Gender Socialization

Doing gender requires that individuals do things in interactions that are categorized as either being masculine or feminine. West and Zimmerman (1987) state that when individuals do gender, it is more of a situated doing, performed in either the actual or virtual presence of others who are believed to be oriented to its production. By this, West and Zimmerman (1987) contend that the performance of gender should not be construed as the property of individuals, but rather, that it be understood as an emergent feature of social institutions. West and Zimmerman (1987) further state that, even though one's masculinity or femininity is placed on them based on their biological sex from birth, it is through everyday life experiences where this categorization is determined and maintained. Further, these categorizations are also maintained by socially mandated identificatory displays which declare an individual's membership of either the masculine or feminine category (West and Zimmerman, 1987). As a social requirement, in producing gender individuals expect that others will judge them and respond to them in a particular manner (West & Zimmerman, 1987).

In working from a social constructionist perspective, individuals can do gender behaviourally through interactions as noted above, institutionally and through discourse (Burr, 1994; Goffman, 1977; West & Zimmerman, 1987). In one of Goffman's (1977) influential work, he demonstrates how gender is performed institutionally in his account of how physical aspects of social settings provide a resource for the expression of our difference. When gender is performed through discourse it is seen as being conveyed through a collection or arrangement of images, stories, statements or meanings that construct a particular understanding of events or certain versions of an object (Burr, 1994; Parker, 1992). Thus, discourses are also influential in determining how individuals structure identity of self and their personal experiences (Parker, 1992). According to Burr (1994), a key assumption

underpinning social constructionist theory is that knowledge is constructed by our daily interactions and maintained through social processes.

Social constructionist view language as an expression of thought that is constructed and determines the ways in which experience and conscious are structured. In addition to this, Burr (1994) states that people construct and reconstruct their identities through the use of language. From the moment a baby comes into the world it is flooded with symbols and language which affects its conception of gender (Carter, 2014). Language used in society to describe males often centre on their physical characters and themes such as agility and potency, whereas the language which is appropriated to females might address delicateness, fragility and sensitivity (Carter, 2014). These different approaches to males and females from birth are aimed at shaping behaviour patterns and delineating boundaries; these boundaries eventually become identity standards (Stets & Carter, 2011). Further, according to Carter (2014), identity standards are references on interactions and contexts that individuals draw on to evaluate the self in relation to others. Therefore, discourses on masculinity and what it is to be 'a real man' have implications on how males structure their identities.

According to Omar (2011), individuals will often behave in accordance to their ideas of masculinity in terms of what is expected from them by the environment. Omar (2011), states that different displays of ideas on masculine behaviour shape an individual's masculine gender identity. He further states that the more an individual does gender in his interactions with others the more the individual commits to a set gender identity and as a result the gender identity becomes pronounced within the self and evident through its expression (Omar, 2011). Individuals learn these displays through their interactions with others and in different contexts (Carter, 2014; Lorber, 1994; Omar, 2011). A number of South African studies on masculine identities suggest that there are various micro-cultural processes that influence the formation and expression of a masculine identity (Bhana, 2005; Mac an Ghail as cited in Blackbeard & Lindegger, 2007). Blackbeard and Lindegger (2007) describe micro-cultural processes as an intricate web of representations, interactions and cultural meanings. Within this complex web an individual's definition of identity is negotiated (Blackbeard & Lindegger, 2007). Crespi (2003); postulates that it is within

these spaces that individuals are socialized to behave in ways that are prescribed for specific genders. These spaces can include the family environment, peer groups, sports teams and information presented in the media (Crespi, 2003).

The term socialization is used to describe a process where individuals are pressured to become members of a society and members of certain groups that exist within society (Crespi, 2003; Elder, 1969). Socialization is a process that facilitates transitions from one status to another through respecting environmental norms, laws and customs (Crespi, 2003; Elder, 1969). Thus, socialization is a process where individuals learn what it means to exist as adults in society; from childhood individuals learn to see themselves and how they behave in relation to others (Holmes, 2007). With the knowledge of environmental norms, customs, laws, and how other individuals generally react to certain behaviours; individuals have internal conversations with themselves where they reflect on socially acceptable ways of being (Holmes, 2007). An aspect of socialization that is relevant to this study is gender socialization.

Gender socialization is a more focused form of socialization. Gender socialization is a process through which individuals of different sexes learn to behave in gender specific ways whilst simultaneously being pressured to conform to these gendered ways of being (Kimmel, 2011; Philaretou, 2001). Gender based values, beliefs, norms and attitudes that guide how individuals should behave have been developed, altered and passed on to individuals through social institutions (Philaretou, 2001; Davis, Thomas & Sewalish, 2006). It was initially believed that gender socialization ends in childhood, however the literature shows that gender socialization continues throughout life (Holmes, 2007; Kimmel, 2011). Kimmel (2011) states that the process of gender socialization is not effortless neither is it finite. He further states that it is continuous because meanings of gender are produced about gender through institutions over an individual's life course, within different contexts and from one culture to the next (Kimmel, 2011).

Lorber and Farrell (1991) offer heterosexuality as an example of institutional gender prescriptions that have been passed through time by means of socialization and social organization. Historically religions, families and laws that governed society

required that males who considered themselves men and females who considered themselves women, be sexually attracted to each other (Lorber & Farrell, 1991). Individuals are constantly being policed and encouraged to adhere to these prescriptions by society.

Similarly, ideas of masculinity are passed on and reinforced within micro-cultural contexts. Some studies on masculinity in the South African context show evidence of the continuous promotion of aggressive and misogynistic forms of masculinity regardless of the policies and laws which aim to enhance gender equity (Bhana, 2005; Langa & Eagle, 2008; Mahlangu et al., 2014). Langa and Eagle (2008), found that the South African military served as a micro-cultural context that enforces certain ideas of masculinity which are then assimilated by individuals within that community. According to Langa and Eagle (2008), masculinity in the military is understood as the collection of symbols, discourses, ideologies and practices that are linked with the category of being a man. The military community is one that socializes males to conform to hegemonic forms of masculinity (Langa & Eagle, 2008).

2.1.2.2. Masculinity and Hegemonic Masculinity

In the early 1980s Connell developed the term hegemonic masculinity as a form of masculinity to define the configuration of gender practices which guarantee the dominant positions that men hold in society and legitimizes the subordination of women (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Also included amongst those subordinated men in dominant positions, are marginalized men who do not meet the hegemonic ideal (Kahn, 2009).

According to Connell (2005), hegemony is associated with cultural dominance which is located within society and further located within this framework, are gender relations of subordination and dominance which exist between groups of men. Connell (2005) offers the European and American context as an example of gender relations of dominance and subordination among men. Cornell (2005),goes on to state that there are in these societies, heterosexual men who hold dominant positions and homosexual men who hold subordinated positions as a result of

personal boycotts, street violence, which includes being threatened and murder, in addition to cultural and political exclusion. Within the South African context hostility towards homosexual masculinities is considered as being fundamental to male heterosexuality, where homosexual men are feminized and often referred to as being abnormal and unAfrican (van der Walt, 2008).

Through this oppression homosexual masculinities are positioned at the lowest end of the hierarchy among men and from a hegemonic perspective, homosexual masculinity can easily be assimilated to femininity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Although homosexual masculinity is by far the most prominent example of subordinated masculinities, it should be noted that it is not the only subordinated masculinity. Heterosexual men can also be excluded from the group that holds the legitimate version of masculinity through a process that is marked by verbal abuse (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Those excluded from the circle of legitimacy are referred to as “sissies”, “wimps” or “pushovers” and within these descriptions the symbolic blurring with what is seen as feminine is clear (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Although men may be marginalized on the basis of behaviour, sexuality, race or class, they do benefit from the patriarchal dividend (Morrell *et al.,* 2012).

As noted above, although not all men scrupulously exercise the hegemonic form of masculinity (Morrell *et al.,* 2012), a number of men learn gender practices which is incorporated it into daily life experiences and interactions (Omar, 2011). In order for masculinity to be understood as being incorporated into daily interactions, males need to enact behaviours that are characterised as masculine or behaviours that they understand to be masculine (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Therefore, males are expected to perform behaviours that distinguish themselves from females across various situations (Omar, 2011). According to Brickell (2005), it is in the individual’s best interest to behave in a manner that guarantees a favourable impression by others, especially in situations where males have to enact behaviours that are characterised as masculine. In view of the fact that hegemonic masculinity is perceived to be the most ideal form of masculinity, males may attempt to perform behaviours that are characteristic of hegemonic masculinity (Brickell, 2005).

2.1.2.3. Masculine Interpersonal Aggression and Dominance

Historically and cross culturally there have been stereotypes that dictate what men ought to be (Moss-Racusin, Phelan & Rudman, 2010). These stereotypes function as a set of gender rules that shape expectations for how men should behave and are often in line with the tenets of hegemonic masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Moss *et al.*, 2010). These stereotypes are able to powerfully shape how men behave because they legitimize a man's masculine status in the event that he adheres to them (Bosson *et al.*, 2009; Moss-Racusin *et al.*, 2010). The literature reveals that these masculine stereotypes demand that men be dominant, stoic, self-reliant and aggressive (Bosson *et al.*, 2009; Kimmel, 2003).

The Blue Print Model for Manhood proposed by Brannon (1976), offers four main themes that summarize and demonstrate stereotypical behaviours that men produces to achieve hegemonic masculinity. These include 'No Sissy Stuff', 'Be the Big Wheel', 'The Sturdy Oak' and 'Give 'em Hell' (Brannon, 1976). The themes proposed by Brannon (1976) describe the standards to which men are judged. The inability to match up to these standards can result in some form of backlash such as future victimisation (Moss-Racusin *et al.*, 2010). According to Bosson, Prewitt and Vandello (2006), individuals who violate these gender norms are vulnerable to social punishments and risk being disliked, physically abused, ostracized, ridiculed and other times they are treated less than human.

Perceived to be the most influential of the themes (Noyes, 2007), the theme labelled 'No Sissy Stuff' describes the idea that men need to be knowledgeable about how women behave and that they should behave in ways that are not stereotypically feminine (Brannon, 1976). It is an idea that reinforces the separation of gender and rejects all things thought to be feminine which have the potential of threatening that which is masculine (Kimmel, 2003). Essentially, the theme labelled "No sissy stuff" is an expectation within society which requires men to behave in ways that are non-feminine (Noyes, 2007). According to Smith, Parrot, Swartout and Tharp (2014), men internalize these societal expectations and fear appearing as feminine through their actions or values, this phenomenon is referred to as anti-femininity (Zurbriggen, 2010). This fear drives men towards portraying a façade of toughness and masculine dominance in the effort to avoid appearing weak or docile particularly in interpersonal

interactions (Smith *et al.*, 2014). This anti-femininity explains why men and society marginalize homosexual men and why heterosexual men express a sense of discomfort about being around homosexual men (Kahn, 2009; Smith *et al.*, 2014; Zurbriggen, 2010).

The second major theme is called “Be the Big Wheel” (Brannon, 1976) and is a phrase used to underscore the extent to which masculine stereotypes call for men to take charge and be in control in most situations (Chrisler & McCreary, 2010; Kahn, 2009). Additionally, it refers to a man’s desire to assert his dominance over others with the goal of achieving a masculine status as perceived by oneself or according to society as a whole (Smith *et al.*, 2014). For Aboim (2010) hegemony and dominance are closely associated and cannot be pulled apart. According to Smith *et al.* (2014), in order to obtain and maintain dominance in interpersonal relationships an individual can either objectify or dehumanize the other. Men who internalize and adhere to this masculine norm are likely to use extreme measures to establish their dominance over others (Morrell *et al.*, 2012). A large body of literature reveals that men who embrace ‘the big wheel’ can be bullies, aggressive in interpersonal relationships or they can be leaders (Kahn, 2009; Moss-Racusin *et al.*, 2010; Smith *et al.*, 2014; Zurbriggen, 2010). The signifier of the power and dominance that they hold is often communicated to them through the respect they perceive to have been given within social interactions, the status they hold in society, the amount of wealth they may have and how they carry themselves in a physical space (Chrisler & McCreary, 2010; Noyes, 2007). Failure to conform to this dominant way of doing masculinity can result in men feeling powerless or being socially perceived as powerless (Kahn, 2009; Moss-Racusin *et al.*, 2010).

The third theme which makes up Brannon’s (1976) model is ‘the sturdy oak’. According to David and Brannon (1976), there is an expectation for men to be tough, confident, independent and reliable in a crisis. Society requires that men appear to be invulnerable (Chrisler & McCreary, 2010) and for them to have the capacity to control their emotions (Kahn, 2009). The need to adhere to masculine ideals such as stoicism and self-reliance increases men’s inclination to enact physical harm through demands for aggression (Moss-Racusin, Phelan & Rudman, 2010). However,

adhering to such ideals of masculinity can be damaging physically and mentally (Moss-Racusin, Phelan & Rudman, 2010). In addition, this affects men's ability to maintain relationships because they have difficulties regulating their emotions (Kahn, 2009).

'Give em hell' constitutes the fourth theme of masculinity. It involves the idea that men have to be both courageous and risk taking, even though such actions might not be in their best interest (Brannon, 1976; Chrisler & McCreary, 2010; Kimmel, 2003). Men who seek to align themselves with this aspect of masculinity do so in a number of ways (Kahn, 2009). In their subscription to this version of masculinity they seek both violence and adventure regardless of the threat that it may present to them (Kahn, 2009). In order to fulfil these requirements, men are expected to embody qualities such as perseverance, defensiveness, competitiveness and aggression (Bosson & Vandello, 2011).

Brannon (1976) acknowledges that no particular man can achieve a demonstration of all four themes, however, they contend that most men compare themselves both consciously and unconsciously to these benchmarks of masculinity. In addition, they posit that most men attempt to achieve in all four domains by exercising these themes (David & Brannon, 1976). Thus, a growing body of literature indicates that cross culturally men are often preoccupied with the active, public demonstration of manhood (Bosson & Vandello, 2011; Cohn & Zeichner, 2006; Smith *et al.*, 2014; Vandello *et al.*, 2008). A good deal of evidence suggests that this is because of the fact that in many cultures men are required to prove their masculinity (Saucier & McManus, 2014; Vandello *et al.*, 2008). This need to prove their masculinity is further intensified when a man's masculine status is challenged or questioned (Cohen, Nisbett, Bowdle & Schwaz, 1996; Saucier *et al.* , 2016).

A situation of man-on-man interpersonal aggression and dominance presents such a challenge for various reasons (Cohen *et al.*, 1996; Saucier *et al.*, 2016; Vandello *et al.*, 2008). Bourdieu (2002) contends that this is due to the belief that aggression and dominance between men forms part of various masculinity games where men can test and validate each other's masculinity. This is further evidenced by studies which state that man-on-man aggression and dominance provide men with opportunities to

display and prove their masculinity because in interpersonal interaction itself involves the acts of challenging dangerous adversaries, brutally testing physical stamina, risky public displays of toughness and asserting one's power over another (Bosson & Vandello, 2011; Gilmore, 1990; Saucier & McManus, 2014; Saucier *et al.*, 2016). Consequently, offering men the opportunity to prove their masculinity.

A series of studies demonstrate that men who do not respond with displays of aggression or dominance in interpersonal confrontations with other men face reputational damage and stigmatization (Prewitt-Freilino & Bosson, 2008; O'Dea, Castro Bueno, & Saucier, 2017).These studies indicate that in most cultures failing to defend oneself from threats to a masculine status is seen as dishonourable (Prewitt-Freilino & Bosson, 2008; O'Dea, Castro Bueno, & Saucier, 2017). Cultures of honour dictate that men demonstrate aggression and dominance in situations where their masculine status and reputation have been threatened and to never back down from a fight (Cohen *et al.*, 1996; Swart, 2006). In a seminal paper, Cohen *et al.* (1996) defines honour as the value an individual sees in himself and the value that society places on an individual based on his actions. Moreover, he argues that honour be construed as a form of collectivism that is based on social image and reputation (Cohen *et al.*, 1996). Additionally, the distinction between an individual's self-image and social reputation, in cultures with a high orientation towards honour, is often vague (Cohen *et al.*, 1996). Within these cultures it is assumed that an individual's behaviour is likely to be affected by communal codes (Cohen *et al.*, 1996). According to Saucier *et al.* (2016), cultures in which acts of honour, such as demonstrating aggression and dominance, is used in response to threats to a man's gender identity, is perceived as morally appropriate and men who hold onto these masculine codes of honour are likely to act accordingly.

The act of demonstrating aggression and dominance, in response to threats to one's masculine gender identity, is seen as an attempt to reassert one's standing in the broader hierarchy of masculine identities and it is perceived as an act of demonstrating one's manhood (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Ravn, 2017). Stevens (2008) reported similar findings in his study where he aimed to:

> ‘elicit and uncover discursive networks pertaining to power in the personal narratives of homicidal encounters of male participants who have been convicted and incarcerated for homicide in South Africa’ (p.51).

Stevens (2008) found that these participants engaged in discourses of honour preservation whereby their narrative indicated that demonstrations of violence was seen as an attempt to establish a reputation and a status in a public domain. Stevens (2008) attributes the use of violence as an attempt to maintain a sense of power in relation to others. Thus, the show of dominance and aggression over others serve as effective character establishing behaviours (Stevens, 2008).

Bosson (2009) points to how men who hold onto masculine honour beliefs can find challenges to their gender identity anxiety provoking. Prewitt-Freilino and Bosson (2008) posit that the fear of being classified as anything but a man plays a role in the rigid adherence to gender rules that are restrictive. Deviating from gender prescriptions, in situations of man-on-man aggression and dominance, is experienced as threatening to the self by men, because they anticipate being stigmatized (Prewitt-Freilino & Bosson, 2008; O’Dea, Castro Bueno, & Saucier, 2017). In efforts to protect their masculine identities and to prevent any discomfort which may be caused by stigmatization causes men to communicate in stereotypic masculine behaviours (Barnes *et al.*, 2017). Consequently, men use extreme forms of aggressive and domineering behaviours as a defence against these anxieties because these behaviours are socially perceived as masculine (Barnes *et al.*, 2017; Bosson, 2009; O’Dea *et al.*, 2017).

3. Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1. Research Design

The research design employed in this study was qualitative in nature as the research employs an in-depth inquiry into the subjective responses, perceptions and thoughts offered by young male participants about masculinity, aggression and dominance. A qualitative research design was appropriate for this study because it allows the researcher the opportunity to obtain a particular understanding of the 'hows and whys' of human experiences and behaviours along with the motivations which govern such behaviour (Blanche, Durrheim, & Kelly, 2006). In addition, a qualitative research design was considered relevant, as this study also attempts to analyse social representations rather than just explaining them (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). This was indicated because the research's secondary aim was to explore how young men establish a masculine identity through aggression and dominance.

According to Ritchie and Lewis (2003), one function of a qualitative research study is to explore, in an in-depth manner, the understanding of the social world of the research participants, through learning about their social circumstances and perspectives. The researcher used two qualitative data collection techniques, namely focus groups and semi-structured interviews, in order to yield information that would address the research aims. The following section will review the participant selection procedure, explain how the data was collected and thereafter explain how the data had been analysed. Furthermore, the following section will provide an overview of the ethical procedures carried out throughout and it will provide a reflexive analysis about the research process.

3.2. Description of Participants and Procedure

The sample consisted of 14 young adult males drawn from the University of the Witwatersrand (WITS) located in Johannesburg. In order to address the research aims, purposive sampling was used for the selection of the focus group participants. This was done with the aim of ensuring that sufficiently rich data was generated from the focus group's participants as it afforded the researcher the opportunity to select participants who meet the criteria of the study (Blanche *et al.,* 2006). In addition to

the purposive sampling the researcher used snowball sampling as it was difficult to find participants who would participate in the study; snowball sampling allowed the researcher to ask participants if they knew of someone who might be willing to participate in the study (Struwig & Stead, 2009).

The criteria for the selection of participants, for this research study were males between the ages of 18 – 23 years, attending WITS. When establishing the selection criteria, in particular the age criterion, Marcia's (1980) development theory was kept in mind. This theory, in particular postulates that, although identity formation is an ongoing process, young adults in tertiary institutions are offered a period of moratorium, during which they explore who they are, something which is often not afforded to young adults who are immediately forced into the world of work. The researcher assumed that rich data regarding how young adult males establish a masculine identity, particularly with regard to aggression and dominance, and how society influences the manner in which they behave, would be collected through employing these selection criteria.

The researcher approached The Department of Psychology at WITS in order to gain permission, to lectures, as a means of inviting male students to participate in the study. Once permission was obtained, the researcher briefed students at four lectures about the nature of the study and invited them to participate (Appendix D). In addition to this, the researcher also put up notices in The Psychology Department building inviting students to participate in the study (Appendix D).

Neither race nor culture were criteria in the selection however, in is interesting to note that only black men volunteered to participate. The racial and cultural composition of the individuals who participated in the study could be in part a reflection of the demographics of the University where just over 54% of the students are black (University of the Witwatersrand, 2018). It could also be in part a reflection of the researcher's decision to do snowball sampling and as such lead to participants inviting other males who they knew. Additionally, Participants who volunteered to participate in the study were contacted telephonically and dates for the focus groups were set based on availability. On the days when the focus groups were conducted; participants were once again informed of the purpose of the study (Appendix D). Two

focus groups were conducted, three weeks apart. Each group consisted of seven, randomly assigned participants. Upon completion of the focus groups, a sub-group of six participants were selected from the focus groups, three from each of the two focus groups to participate in individual interviews. The participants for the individual interviews were chosen in part through a purposive opportunistic sampling. This type of sampling method is often used once a study has commenced and certain individuals within the study exhibit characteristics that are in some way related to the topic of interest (Struwig & Stead, 2009). According to Struwig and Stead (2009) this method can be used once a group has been observed performing certain activities in which individuals within the group appear to be interested. In this particular research project, participants who appeared relatively reserved or quiet in the focus groups were approached as the researcher assumed that they would illustrate cases of different views to the ones being shared in different settings. The researcher decided on this sampling method on the basis that gender is situational (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005) and it was therefore assumed that the participants would perform gender differently in different contexts.

The researcher then contacted these participants telephonically and invited them to participate in a one-on-one interview. A meeting with the individual was set-up and participants who agreed to be interviewed individually were informed of the nature of their participation in the study (Appendix F).

3.3. Data Collection

Qualitative research data collection techniques include in-depth interviews, focus groups, direct observation, role play and simulation, diary methods and case studies (Mack *et al.,* 2005). Two types of techniques were used in the process of this research, namely focus groups and thereafter, semi-structured individual interviews.

3.3.1. Focus Groups

Focus groups as instruments of data collection were considered appropriate for this study because the responses within the discussions that are held in the groups are often less inhibited than those that are generated in individual interviews (Ritchie &

Lewis, 2003). Moreover, the idea that masculinity and hegemonic masculinity is produced and reproduced in social contexts (Kimmel, 2011; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005) meant that the focus groups in which the research was conducted could serve as a microcosm of the social context. Thus it allowed for the researcher to draw on information, both verbally and non-verbally, to wield in focus groups for analysis. In addition to this, Connell (2005) states that it is often through the socialization process that masculinity is negotiated and it is for this reason that the researcher anticipated the use of focus groups which would then generate information which may not have been produced in individual interviews alone.

Male students who willingly agreed to participate in the study were given information letters (Appendix D) detailing the nature of the study and they were given the relevant information consent (Appendix E). Both the information letters and the consent letter were read through with each participant and participants were then asked if they had any further questions regarding their participation. Once the consent forms were signed the researcher set up times to run the focus group that would be suitable for all participants.

A vignette relating to man-on man-aggression and dominance (Appendix A) was presented to the group and thereafter members were invited to share their responses to the vignette. A vignette was used in this study to create a space in which actions within context can be explored (Barter & Reynolds, 1995). Furthermore, vignettes offer the participants the opportunity to define the situation provided in the vignette on their own terms (Barter & Reynolds, 1995) and thus participants can share what they imagine they ought to do in such a situation of man-on-man aggression. The vignette presented to the group portrayed a scenario in which a man is confronted by another man in the presence of other men and women. The rationale was that, the manner in which young adult males portray masculinity in this situation would reflect how society expects them to behave as men. It would also reflect on the ideas that the participants hold about masculinity and how they incorporate these ideas into their sense of identity.

The vignette was used in conjunction with an interview schedule (Appendix B) consisting of open-ended questions designed by the researcher in order to obtain

information relevant to the study (Hancock, 2002). The questions were based on ideas from the literature review and were pertinent to the vignette and it aimed at eliciting the following information:

- Reactions to male interpersonal aggression and dominance.
- Constructions of Masculinity.
- Gender socialization strategies used by individual and groups.
- Participants' adherence to masculine stereotypes.
- Possible anxieties about violating masculine gender rules.

Additionally, depending on the participant's responses additional questions were asked (Hancock, 2002).

The focus groups ran for approximately 60 minutes each and were facilitated by the researcher with the help of a co-facilitator (a male psychology student also studying towards their MA (Clin Psych). Neither of the facilitators engaged directly in the discussion through sharing their own ideas on the topic. When the researcher and co-facilitator interjected it was solely with the intention to either insert a new prompt when a discussion had been exhausted, or to ask participants if they could expand on their thoughts. At other times the researcher and co-facilitator would engage in the discussion to clarify a statement which may have been interpreted as ambiguous. This was done in an effort to avoid misinterpreting the data during analysis as such misinterpretation would not accurately or fairly represent the participant's thoughts or feelings on the subject matter, although it is acknowledged that how material is heard and interpreted will not always represent what was intended by the speaker (Stephen, 2012)

The interviews were also audio recorded and the audio recordings (Appendix H) were used for transcribing and data-analysis. According to Blooms and Crabtree (2006), the advantage of using an audio recorder is that it provides the researcher with an opportunity to submerge herself in the experiences that take place during the interview.

3.3.2. Semi-structured Individual Interviews

The difficulty in relying on focus groups alone as a method of data collection, particularly in a study which aims to elicit information about how individuals construct an aspect of their identity, may result in some individuals who may feel uncomfortable with disclosing certain kinds of information within a group context (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Morrell *et al.*, 2013; Struwig & Stead, 2009). This may also be particular to perceptions of masculinity where the risk of backlash based on responses is possible (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Morrell *et al.*, 2013; Struwig & Stead, 2009). Therefore, semi-structured individual interviews were used to access material which individual participants may have been reluctant to share in the focus groups. Semi-structured interviews are considered as one of the most powerful ways for a researcher to obtain information that allows for the understanding of individual behaviour because they allow research participants to discuss issues beyond set questions and it also allows for participants to share more personal aspects (Hancock, 2002; Struwig & Stead, 2009).

The semi structured interview schedules were based on relevant literature, as well as including the observations and material from focus group discussions. An interview schedule (Appendix C) was designed to guide the interview and it consisted of open- ended questions which explored four broad areas:

- Definitions of masculinity
- How participants perform masculinity
    - Experience of participating in focus group with other male participants
    - Experience of individual interview with female interviewer
- Understandings about their own masculinity
- Beliefs about what shaped participant's masculine identity
- Behaviours participants expect from other men and themselves

These interviews ran for approximately 45 minutes and were audio recorded and later transcribed verbatim by the researcher.

3.4. Data Analysis

The method of analysis that was utilized in this study was a critical thematic content analysis as this method entertains both constructionist and interpretive perspectives (Lawless & Chen, 2019). Davies (2008) suggests that this straddling of dual perspectives simultaneously reflects an interest in both describing and interpreting characteristics of human behaviour along with understanding the implications of both social discourses and practices as it impacts on human behaviour. Lawless and Chen's (2019) analysis of critical approach to analysis found that it simultaneously highlights hegemony and envisions opportunities for social change. They further state that this kind allows us to move closer to challenging dominant social structures as well as creating spaces and avenues for social justice (Lawless & Chen, 2019).

The researcher decided to work within this framework because social constructionist research is interested in how individuals construct and reconstruct the self through their use of language (Burr, 1995) which will assist the researcher in addressing part of her research aims regarding how males establish a masculine identity. In addition to this, social constructionist research is interested in how knowledge is constantly being constructed in our daily interactions and sustained through social processes (Burr, 1995). This is also employed in understanding how the social context influences particular individual's accounts found within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). With regards to the topic, it can be argued that society encourages particular versions of masculinity through discourses and social arrangements and that these have an effect on how individual males understand the concept of masculinity and act in relation to it. As such, the researcher's analysis of the collected data was guided by the key assumptions underpinning the social constructionist theory. According to Braun & Clarke (2006) acknowledging the theoretical framework a researcher uses is important and should be stated as it does not present the data reflected upon in the paper as simply the 'voice' of the participants alone. They contend that the theoretical framework that the researcher uses, whether stated or unstated, in the methods is apparent in the narrative evidence the researcher selects, edits and deploys to frame their arguments (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The researcher used critical thematic analysis because it is a form of analysis that involves identifying, analysing and reporting on the themes that emerge within the collected data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A theme is described as a summary of the key aspects of the data collected in relation to the research question and that a theme represents, to some degree, the meanings which are shared or common within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Maguire and Delahunt (2017) argue that thematic content analysis goes beyond just summarizing the data but it also aims to interpret and make sense of it.

In a seminal paper on analysis, Boyatzis (1998) stated that, when beginning the process of thematic content analysis, it is important that the researcher is able to effectively pick up on the themes within the data. According to Braun & Clarke (2006), in order to efficiently develop themes, the researcher needs to be open to all forms of information. As such, two thematic approaches were employed in this study; namely the inductive approach and theoretical thematic approach in order to pull out as much information from the data. Theoretical thematic approach includes the use of pre-determined themes that are drawn from existing literature on the topic, whilst the inductive approach makes use of emergent themes which are newly generated from the data collected (Hayes, 2000; Struwig & Stead, 2009). The researcher utilized the inductive approach to offer a richer description of the general data collected and the theoretical thematic approach was used with the aim of providing a much-detailed analysis on some of the aspects of the data (Struwig & Stead, 2009).

The analysis of this research was based on the step by step process articulated by Braun and Clarke (2006). Although this process was not fixed, it assisted the researcher to submerge herself in the data and mull over it.

- Once the researcher had transcribed the collected data, she familiarized and immersed herself in it by reading and re-reading the transcribed data, making notes, and brainstorming. According to Blanche, Durrheim and Kelly (2006) this step is necessary in the process of data analysis because it ensures that the researcher is familiar with the data to the extent that she is knowledgeable on what information was found across participant transcripts and which data can be used to support certain interpretations.

- Initial codes were then produced and put in place. Codes identify an aspect of the transcribed data that appears to be interesting to the researcher and that can be assessed in a meaningful way (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thereafter the researcher searched for emerging themes. More specific themes were then developed in order to keep the research more manageable and focussed.
- Next, the researcher reviewed, modified and further developed the preliminary themes that were identified. This was done to ensure that they made sense, that they would be useful in addressing the research aims, that they were coherent and that they were distinct from each other. Much of this work was done on a Microsoft excel spreadsheet where the data associated to each of the developed themes was colour coded. The transcribed data was then re-read again to add data which was missed in the initial coding.
- The researcher then defined and refined the themes by indicating what the theme is about and what it is not about; in addition, determining what feature of the data is represented by each theme.
- Once the interpretation of the data was complete, the researcher proceeded to construct a report which detailed the findings of the study and the conclusions that were drawn on the analysed data.
- A research supervision process was also conducted in order to limit the personal views of the researcher in the analysis of the research (Davies, 2007).

For the reason that this study used a critical approach to thematic analysis in addition to systematically looking for shared phenomena amongst the participants, the researcher also looked for power-relations, status-based hierarchies and larger ideologies within the data (Lawless & Chen, 2019).

3.5. Ethical considerations

It should be noted that there are possible ethical implications with regards to the research study, which the researcher was extremely attentive to, owing to the fact that the researcher was working with human subjects (Blanche *et al.* 2006). After receiving ethical clearance from the University of the Witwatersrand Ethics Committee (Appendix I), the researcher proceeded with the research process. It should also be noted that maintaining anonymity of the research participants posed

an ethical issue because the researcher conducted focus groups with the assistance of a co-facilitator and because the groups were made up of more than just individual participants. Therefore, the researcher set rules from the onset with all participants regarding the sharing of personal details revealed in the group outside the group context (Smith, 2008). In addition, participants were required to sign a confidentiality agreement. Furthermore, participants were audio recorded in both the focus groups and individual interviews, recordings and transcriptions were kept safely on the researcher's computer which is password protected. The transcriptions were also emailed to the researcher's supervisor, where they were stored in a password protected file. Both the recordings and the transcriptions were only processed and analysed by the researcher (Zinhle Vilakazi) and her supervisor. The researcher also let the participants know about the extent of their confidentiality through informed consent (Blanche *et al*., 2011). While verbatim quotes were used, pseudonyms were also used in order for no identifying information to be present in the report or transcripts. In addition to this, informed consent also covered the factual information regarding the details of the study, the methods, the risks and the benefits (Blanche *et al.*, 2011).

Before going into the focus groups, the researcher took note of Smith's (2008) warning with regards to ethical issues that may arise due to the interactional nature of a group context. These ethical issues may include members of the focus group silencing or intimidating other members. Additionally, due to the nature of the data collection method (being a vignette where enactments of masculinity would be explored), the researcher was aware of the fact that individuals whose responses differed from what was constructed as acceptable responses within the focus group, could be humiliated, silenced or intimidated by other members (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Pascoe, 2007). Therefore, the researcher had discussed with her supervisor the proper manner in which a situation may be addressed as and if they occur. This would involve further addressing the situation after the group interview with the individuals involved in the interaction. Participants were also informed that in the event in which they should require debriefing as a result of their participation in the study, counselling and debriefing services would be made available to them. They were informed of this even though there were no perceived

risks of participating in the study. Participants were also informed that there would be no material rewards for participating in the project.

Along with the availability of counselling and debriefing services, the researcher informed the participants of their right to withdraw from the study at any moment should they wish to do so before the submission of the research report. Prospective participants were given information letters (See Appendix D and E) explaining the project and matters such as confidentiality and right to withdraw. They were also asked to sign a letter of consent (see Appendix F and G). Finally, participants were included in the study once they had signed a form indicating their voluntary participation and for their consent to be audio recorded.

Participants were also advised that transcripts of their interviews and focus groups may be used for further research and would not be kept for a period of longer than five years and that these transcripts and audio recordings would be destroyed at that point. Furthermore, the participants were informed that the documents would be stored on a password protected file and that only the researcher's supervisor as well as the researcher would have access to the transcripts.

3.6. Research Reflexivity and Researcher's Experience

Qualitative research cannot offer the same kind of distancing in the research process as seen with quantitative research particularly with regards to the findings being presented as objective truths. Evans *et al.* (2018) state that qualitative researchers need to adopt research methods that are rigorous enough to ensure that the findings presented in their studies are not simply the result of their own perspectives, prior knowledge or logic, but are appropriate and of sufficient quality to add to the body of existing literature. They state that the qualitative researcher can do this in a number of ways such as employing a robust social theory which helps the researcher distance themselves and think critically about their role in the research study (Evans *et al.*, 2018). Therefore, adopting the method of making the qualitative researchers' perspective explicit, through the practice of reflexivity, should be taken. (Evans *et al.*, 2018). Reflexivity in the research process means that the researcher needs to think both critically and analytically about their experiences, feelings, beliefs, counter-

transferences view-points and how they relate to the study (Cassidy, 2017; Paitnaik, 2013).

Notably, the current research is concerned with males and their responses to situations of personal man-on-man aggression, how males construct a sense of identity through these responses and how their responses could be influenced by a larger society and institutions within that society. As such, the researcher tried to be as mindful as possible with regards to how her gender, her experiences as a black female living in South Africa, as well as her underlying motivation to bring awareness to male-on-male interpersonal violence and the systems which produce and maintain these perceptions could affect the research process. The researcher also remained mindful to her beliefs about the need for structural reform at a societal level and how this could influence the research process.

During the research process, the researcher noted how her biases with regards to masculinity and sexuality influenced the data collection process. In designing vignette, the researcher presented the love interest as a woman instead of leaving the gender of the love interest indistinct. This could have influenced the ways in which the participants interacted in focus groups and individual interviews.

Therefore, without disregarding the above, the researcher seemed to establish a rapport with the participants and created a space in which the participants could reflect on their own personal experiences. This was evident in participants' sharing of painful childhood experiences of being socialized into adopting certain versions of masculinity. This was also noted to have taken place within the context of the focus groups, in individual interviews, as well as in their personal disclosures of having used physical aggression against other males and females to establish a sense of dominance and how this effected their emotions and self-esteem.

During the proposal phase, the researcher anticipated that the participants may find it difficult to talk to a female interviewer. Although some participants actively attempted to exclude or make known the differences in gender between the participants' themselves and the researcher when it was stated that *"I'm talking to males here, not you Zinhle. I don't think you would understand this but anyway".*

What became evident was that for some participants talking to a female interviewer was easier. They indicated that they did not have the need to make their *"presence felt"* as opposed to when they were in focus groups. This was perhaps due to males positioning masculinity as a socially dominant identity in relation to femininity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Messerschmidt, 2012). This could also be due to the social constructionist notion that gender is situational (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), whereas a one on one individual interview with a female researcher does not require the same masculine performance which is required in situation with a group of males in an interview. On the other hand, for some participants it did not matter whether the interviewer was female or male, not being in a space with competing voices was the comforting factor for these participants.

With regards to the researcher's emotional reactions within both the focus groups and in the individual interviews, her feelings fluctuated from interview to interview and within interviews. She experienced positive feelings towards the male participants when they demonstrated progressive thinking regarding issues of gender. The researcher was also emotionally impacted by some of the participants' disclosures of being shamed for acting in ways that were not characterised as masculine by those around them. These emotions were also present when participants noted some of their difficulties in constructing a masculine identity, particularly with those participants who felt pressured to act in aggressive and dominant ways even though they were afraid to do so. At the same time, the researcher experienced some disappointment in participants who had personally experienced being shamed in their childhood for failing to act in stereotypically masculine ways, perpetuating this kind of shaming in their adult lives. During these moments the researcher remained neutral and attempted to understand the reasoning behind this shaming. The researcher was also shocked at the number of participants who were encouraged, either through reward or punishment, to abandon being vulnerable and emotional and were encouraged instead, to adopt aggressiveness and dominant ways of being a man by maternal figures within the family. Everitt-Penn and Ratele (2015) explain male aggressiveness and the need for power as a result of the society rather than the result of the individual male alone.

4. Data Analysis and Discussion

4.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the themes which emerged from data collected from this study. This has been done by following a close reading of the transcripts, from both the focus groups, as well as individual interviews. In order to provide a rich account of the qualitative data collected, the findings and the discussion sections are combined. Additionally, this chapter has been organised in such a way as to present its findings in conjunction with existing literature on identity construction and hegemonic masculinity as it pertains to acts of aggression and dominance. Further, this literature is therefore provided with the purpose of offering greater insight into the emerged findings, which may, at times refute existing literature. It should also be noted that the discussion in this chapter will be informed by the research study objectives.

The qualitative data collected was predominantly analysed using steps of thematic content analysis working within a social constructionist framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As a result of the large data collected, the researcher selected sections of data considered to be most appropriate and that would significantly contribute to addressing the research aims. Direct quotes were taken from the data which was then transcribed. This has been presented with the purpose of substantiating and representing themes, as well as general findings from the emerged data analysis.

The discussion has been divided into two major sections which were done in order to make sense of the qualitative data collected. These are derived from prominent and encompassing themes which emerged in the process of thematic content analysis, namely; Manly Honour (Discourses around Establishing and Preserving a Masculine Identity) and Reactions to Gender Transgressions.

Under the dominant theme Manly Honour (Discourses around Establishing and Preserving a Masculine Identity) participants defined what it means to be a man, outlined the behaviours that are characteristic of being a man and shared their experiences of this characterization of manhood. Under this theme the subthemes

‘Building and Maintaining a Reputation as an Honourable Man’, ‘Managing Public Perception’ and ‘Responding to Provocation’ are discussed.

Under the major theme ‘Reactions to Gender Transgressions’, participants’ responses indicated the manner hegemonic masculine norms are encouraged, enforced and policed within society. The responses demonstrated how they personally contribute to the maintenance of hegemony in the social circles that they exist in and their interactions within the group demonstrated how men collectively maintain hegemony and suppress the expression of alternative performances of masculinity. Under this dominant theme the subthemes, ‘Active Silencing of Atypical Responses’, ‘Stripping of Masculinities’ and ‘Distancing of Non-Traditional Masculinities’ emerged from the data.

4.2. Manly Honour (Discourses around Establishing and Preserving a Masculine Identity)

Hegemonic masculinity is frequently conceptualized as a combination of features, including amongst these features, and perhaps most pertinent for this discussion on this dominant meta-theme, the interplay between men’s ideals, identities, interactions, power and patriarchy (Jewkes *et al.*, 2015). In analysing the data, the researcher observed that much of the participants’ talk about masculine honour captured to an extent which Jewkes *et al.* (2015) conceptualized as hegemonic masculinity. Their statements reflected that honour as a principle is a key component in establishing a masculine identity. Participants constructed honour as being intimately linked to an individual’s masculine identity to the extent that the loss of honour was seen as being equivalent to the loss of a masculine identity as indicated by PB3 in the following extract:

PB3:	*Are you going to lose your dignity as a man?*

In accordance with the literature, masculine honour can be seen as a collection of socially constructed foundational values which dictate how males, who consider themselves as men should think, feel, and act (Saucier *et al.*, 2016). Further, the majority of the participants construed masculine honour as requiring a strict

adherence. Most of the participants implicated masculine honour as the driving force behind many of their enactments of aggression and dominance in settings where they had to prove their masculinity, as demonstrated by the following response:

PA1:	*Yes, if they defend their pride at all times, because in that situation your pride and your respect is being questioned, so to someone in the street culture that means a lot. Uhm, moving away from the situation with your face intact is not a win in the street culture. In the street culture, uhm, defending yourself and making sure that you are heard or seen is a victory in the street culture and that builds respect in the street culture. It makes people view you as uhm, having a high social status. So, it's about keeping that high social status high and maintaining it.*

The above also points to how participants' responses are indicative of honour and how it offers great rewards to those who act in accordance to its codes and carries out punishments to those who do not. This was illustrated in the reoccurring discussions around an avoidance of being a man without of honour, as well as the discussions cautioning other males of the personal and reputational dangers of doing so.

Additionally, these responses offer insight into how socially constructed masculine ideals, such as beliefs in honour can exert great influence on what is considered and accepted as masculine behaviours, how masculine behaviours are promoted at a societal level, along with how masculine identities are established. The manner in which enactments of aggression and dominance are used as instruments for establishing a socially idealized masculine identity will be explored in greater detail within the following subthemes:

- Building and Maintaining a Reputation as an Honourable Man
- Managing Public Perception
- Responding to Provocation

4.2.1. Building and Maintaining a Reputation as a Honourable Man

PA7:	*You build a reputation on what you`re doing, you know what you do*.

The above quotation captures one of the main topics highlighted by the participants which was the importance of building and managing one's reputation as an honourable man through set actions. This was a focal point for 13 of the 14 participants in the focus group discussions. Examples of these responses was evidenced in their use of the word honour. Much of the talk in the groups along with the responses provided in the individual interviews revealed that participants' use of the word honour was synonymous with their use of the words "image", "ego", "self-esteem", "self-worth", "street cred", "rep", "pride", "dignity" and "standards":

PB1:	*Obviously the music went off and everyone is looking. So now everyone is looking, and looking at me. So, what's gonna happen? They are waiting for me to do something. So, if I don't do that the image is gone.*
R1:	*So, an image, what is this image?*
PB1:	*Street cred*
R1:	*Okay street cred?*
PB1:	*Self-worth*

Within the larger body of literature on masculinity there is extensive evidence which indicates that the presence of others could influence an individual's performance of gender (Bosson & Vandello, 2011; Holmes, 2007; Saucier & McManus, 2014). Statements like "*They are waiting for me to do something"* and *"So if I don't do that the image is gone",* illustrates the motivation to present a concept of self to an audience which is approved of. Drawing from the participant's response, it seems that a man's image of himself and as portrayed to those around him can be threatened in the event where he fails to act in accordance with the standards of approved masculinity set out by society. Therefore, it can be assumed that when

young adult men negotiate a masculine identity, they have to be aware of what is socially expected from them in order to perform these expectations.

The image mentioned by PB1, in the aforementioned excerpt, is constructed as both the combination of and the interplay between one's perception of self ("self-worth"), how one is socially perceived and the degree to which one is accepted within society ("street cred"). All of which are dependent on the behaviours men choose to publicly demonstrate. Other participants in the study had similar ideas of the construction of an image:

PB7:	*I was going to say that, at the end of the day, it sounds like it's not about the girl. It sounds like it's about your ego hey.*
…	
PB4:	*It is about your ego.*
…	
PB4:	*What's the question about?*
PB1:	*Ego.*
R1:	*You said it's about the ego. Why do you think it's about the ego?*
PB4:	*It goes down to those human needs like acceptance and all those things. You don't want to seem like the weaker person. You never want to seem like a weaker person. So, you have to step up.*
PB1:	*Yes.*
PB6:	*Even though you might get a beat down.*
PB4:	*Now it's about fighting for honour.*
PB1:	*For Honour.*
Group:	*For Honour (they shout).*
R1:	*Okay, I hear people say that it's about fighting for honour.*
PB6:	*It's about your pride as a man.*

In the above extract, participants indicate that if a physical altercation were to occur between the two men, it would not be because of the female love interest, but rather it would be owed to the defence of one's *"ego".* As PB7 points out, it is about a sense

of *“honour”* which is seen and accepted by the group. This pattern of reasoning could also be traced in the responses provided by participants in the focus group. One participant, as indicated by PA2, remarks that, *“it’s not about the girl anymore”* and PA4 who seconded PA2’s viewpoint, *“listen bra, he wanted to fight with you. He just chose that scenario. He is using the girl as, you know, but yena (he), he is after you”.* These responses also suggest that participants interpret confrontations of this nature as deliberate attacks on their honour. As seen with*PA2, “his pride is being tested”.* The female love interest is but a mere front for this attack.

On a more critical note, by stating that the altercation would be in defence of their *‘pride’* as men, PB6 marks the association between a man’s sense of honour and a man’s sense of being masculine. This association exemplifies how masculine ideals are intricately linked to a man’s masculine identity and sense of worth (Saucier *&* McManus, 2014). As such, it can be assumed that, by defending their sense of honour, they are fundamentally defending what they understand to be their masculine identities and their sense of self-worth as men. These findings are in line with Marcia’s (1980) conceptualization of a self-structure in that ideals such as those adopted by these participants make up an individual’s identity.

Moreover, it is evident from participants’ responses that men rely heavily on gender specific behaviours to either establish or re-establish a sense of honour in situations where their honour has come under threat and needs to be defended. For example, by stating that *‘[E]ven though you might get a beat down’*, PB6 alludes to the use of physical aggression to defend his honour even if it is at the expense of his physical health and wellbeing. These findings are consistent with those of Langa and Eagle (2008), who established that men were likely to engage in aggression and other behaviours which signify fearlessness in efforts to prove their masculinity. This is further established by men who are able to demonstrate their masculinity through man-on-man violence.

In addition to establishing a masculine identity, through enactments of aggression, participants’ responses also indicate that their reactions to the scene in the vignette would be the consequence of needing to fit into the inner fabrics of society. This is evidenced by PB4’s remark that *‘[I]t goes down to those human needs like*

acceptance'. The acceptance is dependent on young adult men cultivating a reputation which is devoid of weakness. The participant's aversion to appearing weak is perhaps due to the universal belief that traits like weakness are antithetical to dominant constructions of masculinity (Bosson & Vandello, 2011; Kimmel, 2003). PB4's understanding of exhibiting behaviours that are devoid of weakness as a condition for social acceptance, along with PB1's agreement with PB4's sentiments, demonstrates how certain masculine performances are produced and sustained at a societal level (Connell, 2000). As their enactments are no longer about solely defending the self, but is rather motivated by a need to receive something that can only be provided by the other, which in this case it is acceptance. From this perspective it can therefore be hypothesized that desire for group acceptance can be used as an instrument which drives certain masculine performances.

Drawing from participants' responses, it seems that much of the discourse around honour pertains in some way to the construction of a specific identity through the use of certain behaviours, and the value that an individual attach to themselves. These behaviours and values along with the value society attaches to individuals, determine an individual's choice of action following a challenge or an insult of some sort. The language participants used further illustrate what was at stake for young adult men who failed to adequately manage their reputations as honourable men.

4.2.2. Managing Public Perception

Saucier and McManus (2014) contend that honour beliefs contribute immensely to the construction of a masculine identity and how males are perceived across various contexts. In an analogy this, one participant demonstrates this view point:

PB2:	*… I mean if a guy, if this guy is out drinking in Sandton and chilling and eating in Sandton. Okay, in a sense your image about him is that he is a very sophisticated guy; he is an elegant person because of the places he goes to. Let's say this guy, I caught him at a tavern and eating iota at the kais – nothing wrong with that, definitely nothing wrong with that but then at the same time you can tell a lot about the person that he is. I mean*

> *his that type of person that doesn't really give much that doesn't care much about his image and eating in those places as long as his eating, his alright. So in a sense to him, certain things don't faze him. So in a sense really his standards are really a bit compromised but then he doesn't really care. As long as his okay. So that I mean it's just common sense, logic…. Okay, fine a person can see that this guy walks away so those guys ALL walked away as a crowd. So, of the guy that walked away, these guys, kind of fall in the same category because if a fight breaks down and my friend says 'okay no its fine, I'm leaving' and we all leave, come on. If we all walked away those guys are standing there shouting "ya leave, leave, leave" because they can see that this group, they aren't really fighters…*

Within this analogy, PB2 outlines how a man's choice of action, in the event of being publicly challenged to engage in a fight, reflects on a man's masculine identity and further impacts on their social standing. In doing so, he attempts to establish a social order whereby individual men are grouped into sets based on perceived social status. This is evident in his reference to men who operate in spaces like Sandton as opposed to those who operate 'ekasi'. Sandton is an affluent area whilst the colloquial term 'kasi' is used to describe townships with a largely poor black population. Embedded within this comparison is the implicit assumption that men who publicly engage in aggressive behaviours, as opposed to those who prefer responses lacking in aggression are socially better off, in that they may not be publicly rejected or shamed for failing to fight. In addition, the comparison implies that men who respond with aggression within a given context have successfully managed to construct a masculine identity which is valued and celebrated, as opposed to those who are not *'fighters'*, who choose to resolve conflict by walking away. Moreover, PB2's reference to class can be seen as an attempt to establish a hierarchy which places traditional and aggressive versions of masculinity at its apex and alternative non-aggressive masculinities at its base. This comparison further illustrates the intersections between class and gender (Connell, 2000; Jewkes *et al.*, 2016).

The above statement also reflects on the idea that men have to consciously and actively enact aggression in order to establish reputations as honourable men. For example, by stating that men who are disinclined to aggressive reactions are in a sense *'unfazed'* by certain things, or that they have somehow compromised their standards. PB2 implies that walking away is seen as both a willingness to forgo one's status as an honourable man and as a show of indifference to abandoning one's values. The framing of a man's decision to fight or not to fight as an issue pertaining to principles in a country like South Africa, with a high prevalence of man-on-man interpersonal violence, has significant implications for gender reform. For the most obvious reasons, the use of aggression and the act of subjugating other men to establish a masculine identity is legitimized through this kind of framing. In addition, it means that such principles can be used to promote enactments of aggression and dominance in situations where men have experienced a threat to their gender identity. Furthermore, it can be assumed that if men are unwilling to abandon principles which require an engagement in a fight for fear of being compromised, reduces their capacity to access parts of themselves which would opt for healthier conflict resolution strategies. More so, in environments where others hold onto the same principles.

The notion that individuals would suffer personal and reputational damage if they chose to refrain from fighting was a dominant one within the participants' narratives;

PB1:	*… It's what they think of me literally. It's like falling somewhere like in public, you will be seen as the guy who fell in public.*

Here the participant likens not responding with aggression and dominance in a situation where one has been publicly provoked to falling in the presence of others. The comparison suggests that young adult men are likely to experience humiliation in the event where they choose not to respond with equally aggressive and domineering ways during such situations. From this perspective it can be assumed that aggression and domineering behaviours not only function as a means of defending or re-establishing one's sense of honour, but they are also aimed at avoiding emotions associated with the loss of one's sense of honour. According to

Bosson (2009), men who hold onto honour beliefs are likely to experience challenges to their masculinity as anxiety provoking and consequently revert to the use of aggression and behaviours which signal one's dominance in response to such challenges. Furthermore, by indicating that his image will be gone by choosing not to react in this situation, PB1 points to how one's social standing can be negatively affected by choosing not to retaliate. The consequences of not responding with aggression or with behaviour which demonstrates one's dominance in a situation, resembling the one presented in the vignette, have far reaching implications which extends beyond a moment in time where feelings of shame or embarrassment may have surfaced:

PB3:	*Okay let's say you come back to Stones in fifty years, time, you are 75 and there is this one guy, it's like the same moment as it was fifty years ago, what happens then?*
…	
PB3:	*Are you going to lose your dignity as a man? Because what?*
PB1:	*Imagine idignity yakho boet (your dignity brother).*

R1:	*Okay I'm interested in what you are saying right now. In that there are consequences for not responding in a certain way and one of those is losing your dignity as a man.*
PB3:	*Ya, ya, ya, that's worse than having a blue eye*
PB1:	*It's worse than having a blue eye*
PB3:	*The blue eye is going to go away but that*
PB1:	*Dignity, street cred*
PB3:	*It's lost. Like in a club space, if you lost it there, you will just always be known as that guy.*

PB2:	*No, no, no they would never. You would never hear the end of it, you are the loser even amongst your friends imagine, for the next 50 years of your life; that night you walked away, how? How? How?*

PB1:	*Nobody will ever view you the same. Even that girl she won't treat you the same.*
PB2:	*This thing filters down to your life boet. If you lose that night, you are done.*

There is a general consensus amongst the participants that walking away from a fight has lasting implications. Participants' responses indicate that the consequence of choosing to walk away is being the target of lifelong humiliation, to which there is no escape and little opportunity for redemption. This consensus is justified by PB3 when he states that *"as soon as you get walked over. You will always be that guy who got walked over*" even amongst one's friends. The reputational damage and the loss of one's dignity as a consequence of walking away was also seen as being immediate. The process described by participants as being mechanical nature, evidenced in PB2's response, "*If you turn your back automatically you are the weakest link. Every time you go to that club trust and believe that your win rate for the girls is zero".* The effect of walking away from such a situation is therefore seen as more damaging than a physical injury.

These responses from focus group two's participants indicate that for them, choice of action is largely the consequence of perceived outcome. Through discourse these participants have created a reality for themselves in which one's honour and masculinity is attached only through their actions and where society exacts punishment to those who are less inclined to aggression and dominance as responses to threats to honour. These findings were congruent with those of Saucier and McManus (2014), who found that honour requires strict adherence to socially established standards of conduct and it also exacts severe consequences to those who are unable to maintain or achieve those standards.

The researcher also observed a kind of rhetorical questioning from the participants on behaviours that may jeopardize one's masculine identity and reputation. For example, asking questions like "*that night you walked away, how? How? How?", "Are you going to lose your dignity as a man? Because what?*" or, when PA4 questions PA6 on his decision to walk away from fights in the nightclub and then further failing

to involve his friends in these fights by informing them of the altercation by stating, *“why would you do that?”*. In a seminal paper, Frank (1990) argued that rhetorical questions were effective persuasive devices, as they carry with them discrete messages that strengthen assertions and soften criticisms. Frank (1990) goes on to contend that this is where their effectiveness is rooted as they make it easier and likelier for the receiver to align himself with what is being communicated in the question. Participant responses confirmed this notion, as most participants tend to concede and take up opposing views as their own views. This is evidenced by PA6’s sudden taking up of aggression and domineering responses when he asserts, *“[O]k I'll report obviously because that guy, his eyeing me what’s his problem”*. Although PA6 reverts to his original position shortly afterwards, it can be hypothesized that continued exposure to these kinds of questioning may shift his viewpoint because masculinity is actively constructed, even where alternative versions of masculinity are subject to change (Connell, 2000).

The excerpts also indicate that their access to female mates would also be negatively affected if they chose to walk away from fights or utilize less aggressive and domineering behaviours. For example, PB1 states that, *“[E]ven that girl she won’t treat you the same”.* These findings were significant to this research, because as the literature reveals, the access to female mates within cultures of honour concretely demonstrates one’s masculine identity and social status (Bosson *et al.,* 2013; O’dea *et al*., 2018; Saucier *et al.*, 2016). This was further evidenced in the following responses:

PB3:	*You know what the girls are going to say "they will be like; you know him the one who got pushed over".*
PB2:	*"I wanted this guy, until friend this guy", now it moves on. Every time you mac.*
PB3	*You're a Barney, you're a Barney.*
PB2:	*Every time you mac, there’s a door.*
PB3	*You are a Pop eye, just a cartoon.*

PB2:	*Electric fence boet. Every time you jump- there's a fence. Every single girl in that club moves like that. When you mac "oh weren't you that guy, oh sorry".*

In her research on how South African adolescent boys construct masculinity, Smith (2008) points out how boy's perceptual accounts on females play significant roles in the manner in which they construct masculine identities. Smith (1997) goes on to state that boys perceive being with certain girls as part of proving their masculinity to other boys. These interactions with girls therefore affect how they are perceived by other boys (Smith, 1997). The findings of this study concur with Smith's findings, because as the discourse points out, rejection from potential female mates undermine a successful version of masculinity in the eyes of peers, as well as one's own perceptions of masculinity. Participants believed that a man's disinclination towards physical aggression and dominance made them somewhat less attractive to female mates and thus greatly affected how they were perceived by others. This is evidenced in their anticipation of being referred to as the children's cartoon characters "Barney" and "Popeye", perhaps alluding that they would not be taken seriously.

Further, walking away, or avoiding a fight, through other means was construed as having a damaging effect on a man's honour and masculine identity. In the view of men and women, public demonstrations of physical aggression and dominance were perceived by the young adult men in this study as being a legitimate vehicle for achieving a social status through a sanctioned version of masculinity (Stevens, 2008). The current study reflects this notion of public displays of physical aggression and dominance as effective behaviours for establishing an idealized version of masculinity. This is evidenced in the following set of excerpts:

PB4:	*That's how guys used to do things back in Rome. You fought and you got the wives.*

PB4:	*Know what girls say, they always look at the guy who won and think yho he is such a man, he's such a beast.*

Group:	*Laughs*
PB5:	*They start saying the guy is sexy even though he is ugly as fuck.*
PB4:	*They start calling him hot.*
PB3:	*Better ride or die.*
PB2:	*Now when you walk in the club, I'm the guy who won last week, now the girls are like "oh my friend him, him my friend, him, him, him". Listen you are not even buying alcohol for the girls you are just there.*

The aforementioned excerpts exemplify how aggression and dominance as masculine qualities are glorified in society. Participant responses indicate a belief that public demonstrations of both dominance and physical prowess not only grant young adult men access to female mates, but they validate their sense of masculinity. This notion of aggression and dominance, as being a part of a young adult male's cultural script for asserting a masculine gender status, is consistent with other research looking at issues of masculine identity statuses, aggression and dominance (Bosson *et al.,* 2009; Saucier *et al.,* 2016).

Unlike the findings of Eastman (2012), the participants in this study indicate that material resources would not suffice as a means of establishing and maintaining a masculine identity in a situation where a man's gender identity has been publicly contested. Instead, they revealed that participants believe that symbolic resources such as aggression and dominance would adequately demonstrate a man's masculinity.

On a more critical note, the aforementioned excerpts offered some insight into how participants are enculturated into acquiring these ideas of publicly managing their reputations using traditional masculine behaviours. This is evidenced when PB4 makes reference to roman masculinity as the standard and guide for establishing an idealized masculine identity. Roman masculinity has been commemorated and immortalized in literature and recounted in movies (Stewart, 2014). A widely portrayed version of Roman masculinity is one that exemplifies hegemonic masculinity. According to Stewart (2014) the hyper-masculine characteristics of a

Roman soldier, were the masculine standard to which Roman men measured their manliness, seems to be true for the participants in this current study, such as seen with PB4.In fact, when asked to reflect on where their beliefs about codes of honour and the behaviours that they characterized as masculine originated from, one participant responded by offering some insight into how men are socialized to enact certain masculine performances through ideas of honour:

PB1:	*Have you read Spam wars?*
R1:	*Sorry? Have I read what?*
PB1:	*Spam wars?*
R1:	*No. Tell me more about it.*
PB1:	*It's about being an alpha male.*
R1:	*Okay so what is an alpha male?*
PB1:	*It's the things that we do…Things that you are supposed to do in public; things that are not supposed to be done to you in public and the things that you allow to be done to you in public...It's about masculinity.*

Whilst other participants alluded to childhood play experiences ("*from the jungle gym" or "playing on the playground"*), sports ("*playing rugby"*), sports figures ("*the strongest guy, you know the rugby guy who is stepping over everybody"*), and experiences in school ("*it's boarding school stuff"*), as points at which their beliefs were formed. PB1 implicates a form of mass media as a gender socialization agent. In his narrative, PB1 points out how the literary text *Spam Wars* sets out a guideline dictating how a man should exist in the world. Drawing from his response, it seems that this literary text encourages men to be mindful of how they treat others in public spaces and points to how men should expect to be treated by others in public spaces. According to O'dea (2018) this is typical in contexts where honour beliefs are held. Honour based cultures dictate how men should interact with others in addition to what they should expect and tolerate from others. On a more critical note, PB1 points to how this text instructs men to assume dominant roles amongst a group of other men or within certain social settings when he establishes that "[*I]t's about*

being an alpha male". Furthermore, by stating that it is about masculinity, PB1 implies that those who act outside of what is permitted, by the honour beliefs which he adheres to, as behaving in ways that are inconsistent with masculinity.

Taking into account the participants' statements explored in the discussion of this theme along with those in aforementioned themes regarding the notion that honour requires for men to manage their reputations and safe-guard their masculine identities, the researcher was able to observe how participants felt pressured to adhere to these standards of honour only in the presence of an audience.

Although it was anticipated that men would choose aggressive and domineering behaviours in response to the confrontation set up in the vignette, the intense and excessive use of physical aggression to prove one's sense of masculinity particularly in the presence of an audience was unexpected. The interaction below takes place in focus group 2 once the participants have realized that the confrontation is taking place in full view of everyone in the club. Before this realization the participants understood that the confrontation between Thabo (character in the vignette) and the man confronting Thabo occurred in the presence of only the love interest.

PB2:	*People are watching.*
PB1:	*And thinking you're weak chap.*
R1:	*The Dj has stopped playing his music and everyone is watching you.*
PB6:	*We have derailed from the question itself.*
Group:	*Laughs.*
PB6:	*You see now if everyone is watching, screw that...We fight.*
Group:	*Laughs and claps*
PB3:	*Bring it on. Bring it on.*
PB2:	*Screw the [phone] number, I want you. Screw the number chief, everyone is watching.*
Group:	*Yeah (Cheers)*

It should be noted that before they realized that the confrontation was taking place in the presence of a much larger audience, the participants were less inclined to

demonstrate aggression and dominance. Six of the eight participants initially opted to continue to pursue the female character; their primary concern at the time was to appear as gentlemen. This is indicated by PB3 who stated:

> *"No, it's fine you can push me; I'm still going to go the girl… I'm just going to go and chat to the girl, and if she says "no that's my boyfriend" I'm going to go back to the gents and say "you see guys everything is sea blue".*

One other participant (PB5) preferred to apologize to the other male character and walk away from the confrontational situation completely:

> *"I was going to apologise and move away that's it, it's done. Even if the music stopped after I was pushed its okay, I would go, I disrespected a man… yeah*".

The reintroduction of a larger audience to the context seemed to create a shift in priorities for all the participants in the focus group. What became important, in this context, was responding in a manner they believed would be approved of by the audience. The language the participants used to express their motivation for fighting further demonstrated this point; as it reflected an anxiety about being perceived as weak by the audience ("*and thinking you're weak chap"*), a factor that did not feature when they were not being watched. The avoidance of weakness perhaps owed to the universal belief that weakness is not a trait that men can utilize to publicly prove their masculinity (Bosson *et al.,* 2013; Kimmel, 2011). The anxiety of not being publicly acknowledged as an honourable man was well articulated by this participant in the following extract.

PA1:	*um, a lot of times um, the point that was tried to be proven was that they can also be as aggressive as the next person so, and also bearing in mind that there is a crowd around so people were trying to prove a point to people, that they don't know who they may meet later. That they can actually stand up for themselves. They can fight so. So, I feel like this situation would be a different ball game if it were just two men in the street with*

> *no on lookers. So, the fact that there was a crowd around changed the whole situation and hence, it became about proving a point because naturally your whole mantra in such situations is to leave with you face intact and your body intact. You want to survive the situation but with, with a crowd being involved you actually move from surviving the situation to actually showing who will leave on top or who would leave the situation as the victorious person in that situation; even if it meant later suffering the consequences for that. So, in that sense it became a point of proving to the crowd instead of making the right decision for yourself at the time.*

In the above excerpt, PA1 clearly outlines the rationale behind shifting priorities within different contexts. For PA1, where one situation requires physical survival, the other needs more of a reputational survival. The evaluation of risk is easily overlooked in the presence of an audience that approves of stereotypical displays of masculinity and more so, when one's goal is to prove to this audience that they adhere to a specific form of masculinity. In his narrative, PA1 alludes to it as being a form of masculinity which requires of males to aspire to be men who strive for power and status. Drawing from his response, it can be assumed that aggression and dominance function as a means of performing a version of gender that is socially approved of as it aids in the construction of a socially idealized masculine identity. From a social constructionist perspective, the shift in priorities can be attributed to the belief that gender is situational (Kimmel, 2011; West & Zimmerman, 1987),

The motivation for this situational way of doing gender was also evident in the manner in which PA1 participated in the focus groups and individual interviews. When analysing the focus group one transcript, the researcher observed that within the group context, PA1 endorsed traditional enactments of masculinity and even shamed participants who preferred non-hegemonic responses. For example, when one participant opted to walk away from a fight, PA1's response was *"that's being a pussy".* However, during the individual interview PA1 distanced himself from traditional versions of masculinity and aligned himself with a more progressive

version of masculinity which was committed to gender reform and even acknowledged the dangers of traditional masculine practices. These findings were similar to those of Smith (2008), who found that in individual settings young adolescent boys could easily distance themselves from macho-stereotypes, however within a group context, most of her participants were complicit and other times active engagers of a hegemonic pattern of masculinity. She attributed this situational way of doing gender to pressure they may experience in group settings in order to conform to socially established standards of conduct (Smith, 2008). Participant's accounts in the current study confirmed Smith's findings:

PA1:	*He'll be like yho I don't wanna get myself into this, so. But I think he might be tempted to just fight because everybody is now focused on the situation.*

PA3:	*Well there is potential conflict, they might… a fight might go down because now everybody is focussing on them.*
…	
PA4:	*and Thabo's pride is being…*
PA1:	*Being tested yeah.*

The above responses highlight the degree to which society is structured to constrain the individual's sense of agency (Connell, 2009) by labelling interactions, such as the one presented in the vignette, in the presence of an audience, as tests to one's pride. Although these participants may have a sense of agency, it is difficult for them to act in accordance to their sense of agency and refrain from fighting. West and Zimmerman (1987) argue that where issues of gender are concerned, an individual's accountability to society often makes it difficult for him to act on his principles. Based on the participants' accounts. There is a link between being accountable to society and using aggressive and dominant behaviours as masculine performances, in that the participants construct their behaviours on the basis of how they will be perceived by others in a given context. The fact that they choose aggression and domineering behaviours suggests that these behaviours are frequently associated with masculinity.

4.2.3. What it Means to be a Man (The Function of Aggression and Dominance in Fulfilling Gender Roles)

When analysing the data, it became evident that participants had definite ideas of what it means to be a man. These ideas reflected how culturally established gender stereotypes powerfully shape participants understanding of what constitutes being masculine (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Bosson & Vandello, 2011). The desire for power, anti-femininity and shows of stoicism, reliability and valour were some of the masculine gender stereotypes which participants aligned themselves with. Brannon (1976) highlights these conceptualizations of masculine identity with his *Blueprint Model for Manhood.* Participants in the current study demonstrate how aggression and/or dominance function as a means of fulfilling these socially constructed gender ideals. In the sub-themes below the researcher will draw on illustrative material to demonstrate this argument.

4.2.3.1. The Big Wheel

Brannon's (1976) succinct phrase 'Be the Big Wheel' refers to the social power men who are attempting to achieve a hegemonic form of masculinity endeavour to gain. Within the context of this research study, a man's sense of power in society was demonstrated in his response to provocation through the use aggression and dominance as indicated below:

PA1:	*Yes, if they defend their pride at all times because in that situation your pride and your respect is being questioned. So, to someone in the street culture that means a lot. Uhm, moving away from the situation with your face intact is not a win in the street culture. In the street culture uhm defending yourself and making sure that you are heard or seen is a victory in the street culture and that builds respect in the street culture. It makes people view you as uhm, having a high social status. So, it's about keeping that high social status high and maintaining it.*

In keeping with the literature, participant's response indicates that on an interpersonal level this power is signified through the respect that individuals are shown in interactions with others and the status they hold in society (Chrisler & McCreary, 2010; Noyes, 2007). Within the context of this study, being shoved in public by another man is perceived as an act of disrespect by participants which was evident in PA3's initial response to the vignette *"see now that guy is disrespecting you. He is disrespecting you"*. While one participant in focus group one believed that there were a number of ways to earn respect in a situation resembling the one presented in the vignette, like walking away and apologizing, most of the participants believed that there were only two methods which would aid in successfully earning their respect, which is engaging in physical aggression or displaying dominance.

There is a large body of literature confirming the use of aggression and dominance as a means of regaining respect (Cohen *et al.*, 1996; Saucier & McManus, 2014; Weaver *et al.,* 2010). According to Weaver (2014) such behaviours partly function to compensate for a diminished sense of masculinity that comes with being disrespected by another

PA1:	*…the street culture says you should never allow someone else to disrespect you and because being in the club and in the party, the dominant culture there is the street culture and not church and not family, that influences guys to be more aggressive in that situation.*

The above quotation illustrates how young adult men are socialized to disallow any forms of disrespect through the use of aggression. In addition, it illustrates how micro-cultural processes like institutional values and cultural meanings inform the manner in which young adult men negotiate gender identities. These findings are in line with those of Saucier and McManus (2014) who found that men are socialized into believing that men should exhibit an unwillingness to accept threats or insults to one's manhood through the use of aggression. Under this belief system, a man is only a man if he publicly and aggressively defends his masculine identity. This belief system is evident in the interaction below:

PB2:	*You're going to let him shove you? No ways!*
PB7:	*You're just going to let him push you?*
PB1:	*As a man! As a man!*
PB7:	*Because that is provoking hey as a man.*
PB1:	*As a grown ass man!?*
PB5:	*If I was winning initially then I was going to let him…*
PB1:	*Ah oh no, no, no, no boet!*
PB5:	*But if I wasn't winning, then I still have that anger in me that I was losing there and now I'm losing this one as well*
PB1:	*I don't care hey! No, no, no, ntwana don't push me hey!*

The discussion above takes place following PB5's admission to the group that his immediate response to a situation would be much like the one presented in the vignette. PB5's admission that he would not respond by fighting, but would rather assess the situation to determine whether or not he is "winning" over the love interest. Based on the participants' responses to PB5, it is evident that where issues of masculinity are concerned, young adult men find it difficult to grapple with the idea of walking away from perceived challenges to one's gender identity, or to excusing these challenges in some way. Their responses to PB5 indicate that doing so would be inconsistent with being a masculine.

It was also clear in the focus groups and individual interviews that contesting disrespect, through the use of aggression to re-establish a sense of power in interpersonal relationships was culturally sanctioned and endorsed by friends;

PB2:	*You know as the Xhosa culture, like really, they always repeat and repeat, and repeat those things. So now that situation… You walking away from it, literally would be you also figuratively walking away from all those teachings you were taught culturally. You know literally just walking away from those things and then obviously friends influence those type of things.*

PB2:	*… So, like a situation like that day, you're pushed you walk away. You know that's what you are building within you, that's what. Or maybe that's how you were raised. If a situation approaches you, you must walk away. No, no, no that is not how I was raised. If a situation approaches you then you must attend to the situation, but then to hear the guys saying that, "aha I would turn my back". Then you're like 'ok fine'. It shows that even through life itself or from previously, where they are now, growing up they'd walk away from certain things. So, I mean come on, where is the respect in that for yourself?*

PB2:	*… I actually thought that every single gent has a lot of pride, you know. I mean you're a guy you are a male and I mean I thought that we are people with pride. That's how… that's the idea that I had. That every single guy has pride and therefore aim to stand your ground and protect your territory and who you are. Everywhere amongst crowds and then some guys were willing to throw it all away. You know they were like, 'no man I'll just leave it'. I was like 'oh ok, so for you it's okay. I mean a guy pushes you and its fine and you walk away its okay. I mean it doesn't work like that. I mean you are a guy with pride. I mean you even gave a scenario as to that the entire attention is now drawn to you guys and still you would never respond because?*

The participant states that his motivation is based on maintaining some form of self-respect, placing much of his identity formation on himself. However, his statements provide a critical view of how his surroundings throughout life have significantly influenced the constructs of his identity which concurs with Yoder's (2000) view on identity formation. In addition to this, PB2's statements reflect how socio-cultural effects play a role on what individuals perceive as principled behaviour and how they apply meanings to situations (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Yoder, 2000). Moreover, PB2's statements reflect once more that the reluctance to let go, or to be flexible with both these socially constructed ideals on masculinity and definitions of

what it means to be a man, makes it difficult to destabilize gender norms and allow for an environment where the expression of alternative masculinities is not prohibited or looked down upon.

The researcher also noted that PB2 perceived other men as being socialized to value and believe in the same viewpoints on masculinity as he did as a Xhosa man. This was evidenced in his belief that all men derived their sense of self-respect from the same source and in the belief that all men had the same cultural teachings. Therefore, it can be assumed that he may unconsciously impose these beliefs about masculinity and masculine ideals on others.

4.2.3.2. The Reliable Oak

Saucier and McManus (2014) marked the ability and willingness to protect one's family and community from threats or insult as a component of masculinity. Brannon (1976) refers to a similar injunction to men, which is embodied in his conceptualization of "The Sturdy Oak", where he contends that a man's masculinity is measured and defined by his ability to protect those around him and to prove himself as reliable to others. This study reflects similar imperatives towards the performance of masculinity as noted in the discussions below:

PA4:	*Taking it back to ancient ways, in ancient times, when you got a castle and I want to take over your castle. If you're not going to fight me, I'm going to take it from you. That's what I'm saying; other guys are there to fight you. He's looking for a fight.*
PA6:	*But this scenario is very different.*
R1:	*Okay.*
PA6:	*A castle and a girl.*
PA7:	*In the animal kingdom when another male comes into your territory you need to deal with that male.*
PA4:	*That is what I'm saying.*

PA7:	*Ok you see in the animal kingdom, in the male species, I'm talking to males here, not you R1. I don't think you would understand this but anyway.*
Group:	*Laughs.*
PA7:	*As a man, you have your own property, what's it called again?*
PA5:	*Territory.*
PA7:	*You need to guard that territory, with your piss and whatever. This is what it means to be a male... This is what males do. Even in your house, you make sure that there is your scent of you in the house. I mean you take care of your shoes. As a guy it depends on what kind of guy you are you know what I'm saying? So, this is my territory and somebody comes and steps into my territory. I need to have something to say to them. I need to respond to that. I need to respond because it's my territory. You know what I'm saying? I marked this. This belongs to me and if push comes to shove, I need to fight for my territory. Okay that's what I'm saying.*

The illustrations above reflect a resistance to redefining and reconstructing masculinity. This is evidenced in their strategic comparison of men to animals. Additionally, when questioned about their hegemonic practices and preference the participants draw on archaic methods to defend women which the participants also perceive as being their property. Therefore, it should be noted that the manner in which participants speak of women suggests that women are merely objects presented as material resources and equated as possessions in need of safe-guarding. Again, it is apparent that participants construct hegemonic masculine identities through the use of heterosexual discourses. However, on a more critical note, the comparisons to animals as well references to how things were done historically, not only normalizes aggression and acts of dominance over other masculine performances, but it also naturalizes these behaviours.

Furthermore, participants' tendency towards aggression and dominance is motivated by more than just biological impulses and standardized ways of responding to

situations. Further, participants believed that women in their immediate environments preferred for men to demonstrate these behaviours in order to show an ability to protect them rather than walking away.

PB1:	*So, what do girls want in life?*
PB7:	*Protection.*
PB1:	*Yeah protection boet.*
PB5:	*Survival.*
PB1:	*So obviously you can't protect her.*
PB3:	*It doesn't mean that.*
PB1:	*No, no, no, no! You couldn't. The guy pushed you so what did you do about it? You kept quiet.*
PB3:	*I got composed then I went to her.*
PB1:	*No, obviously the guy pushes you, you're walking away.*

PA1:	*He is actually saying that standing up for yourself. If you can't stand up for yourself what are you going to do when another guys taps her behind? You are going to be afraid.*

For these participants, being able to demonstrate aggression and assert their dominance over other males, would be interpreted by the women in their immediate environment as them being reliable in a crisis. This would also mean being able to provide security and being courageous.

Discussions in the focus group and individual interviews not only demonstrate that young adult men enact aggression and dominance to protect any woman they are interested in, but they also reveal that these behaviours were equally effective in defending their friends. When asked *"If you were in a similar situation and saw this happening to your friend, what response would you expect from your friend, and what would you think of him, if he did not respond in this way?"* (Appendix B); most participants expected and encouraged their friends to fight and indicated that they believed that their friends were demonstrating their masculinity as indicated by PA3 who responded in the following way*:*

PA3:	*If he decided to fight. He's manning up. It's good his pride. His adding points to himself he is getting more respect amongst the gents and the ladies.*
R2:	*So, you're saying you would respect him more?*
PA3:	*Yes, I will respect him more. So now I know if I go with him if anything goes down his going to man up.*

However, what was not anticipated was the aforementioned question and the ways in which it would elicit a response which highlighted a drive within the participants not only to defend their friends but fight alongside them.

PB1:	*I'm sorry but can I just make a simple scenario, if I'm clubbing with PB2 right, and oke pushes PB2. Before PB2 responds I'm sorry boet but I'll be there like "yela PB2 le kaka ikhupushelantoni?" (Hey PB2 why is this shit pushing you) and I'm there.*
R1:	*So, you would, already on his behalf.*
PB1:	*Yes, as a friend, this is like the sort of friendship we have but literally…*
PB2:	*It's like automatic triggers, like if, if, if he gets pushed, I look at him like "chief, what do we do from here". I can't strike first because he pushed him.*

PA1:	*Retaliation I wouldn't support it but if push comes to shove I'm going there I'm fighting.*

PB2:	*He knows I would respond; I know he would respond; he would respond, he would respond everyone will respond. So, if he doesn't - boet - we're waiting*
Group:	*Laughs.*
PB2:	*We are all in fight mode, we are waiting.*
R1:	*So, if he doesn't respond in this way.*
PB3:	*We will talk about it after let's fight now.*

PB2:	*Then I would respond for him because obviously.*

It was interesting to note how friendship circles between men serve as an arena for both individual and collective performances of traditional masculinity. They offer a space in which men can prove their masculinity within interactions to each other (Migliaccio, 2010). This is evident in situations of man-on-man aggression and dominance. Men use aggression and exercise their dominance to illustrate what is expected from them as men, which is to demonstrate their reliability in a crisis. This is expected to be done in a manner which is somewhat different from the way they would in relation to a love interest who is a woman. Here, their actions would not necessarily be in efforts to protect someone whom they perceive to be vulnerable but instead perceived as an act of mutual assistance (Maqubela, 2013), as indicated in the illustrations above.

In his study, Maqubela (2013) found that man to man friendships were characterized by this way of relating, where intimacy in friendships is partly established through mutual assistance. Langa and Eagle (2007) noted in their study that bonding between men was developed through shared activity, such as fighting a common enemy. They also observed that stronger bonds were cemented and solidified between men through a loyalty which is demonstrated under duress (Langa & Eagle, 2007). Although their study was conducted on former male combatants, their findings on bonding between men were reflected in the present study as evidenced by the participants' statements below:

PA2:	*It's about loyalty. You must be loyal to your friend, he's your friend. We are friends come on we die for… me I'd die for my friends like now.*

PA6:	*I will watch him get beaten up and then tomorrow I'll be like bowuyenzani (what were you doing).*
PA4:	*If he gets hurt and dies you might regret it.*
PA6:	*I might regret it?*

PA4:	*That you could've have done something but you didn't, I'm just saying.*

The notion of mutual assistance is once again made apparent in these responses. Here friendships are marked by the ability to mutually assist each other even at the expense of one's own body. This is simultaneously seen as a display of reliability, heroism and risk taking. Additionally, these grant males access to manhood and therefore demonstrate a sense of masculinity to the self as well as to others (Bosson & Vandello, 2011; Brannon, 1976; Kimmel, 2011).

In analysing participants' talk about friendship, the researcher also noted how these friendships prevented the expression of vulnerability. In the extract below, PB2 outlines how conflict within his friendships are resolved.

PB2:	*So he goes back outside to me to talk about it like 'no man ekse don't do these things, if you're gonna argue just do it in a civil manner don't' and his like 'no, no, no why are you getting involved' and I'm like 'oh no I'm your mate I'm not getting involved I'm just saying, I mean we grew up together we give each other advice' and his like 'no, no, no I don't like this lets go the streets' and I'm like 'its fine, the road is right there let's do it, let's go' because we were a bit tipsy. We go there we have a young brawl there was four of us so these two guys are really small. They can't, they are in no form or shape whatsoever, they are really scared to stop the fight. So, we fight, we beat the shit out of each other. I've got scars in my back to even prove that. so we beat each other up we beat each other up we beat each other up, whatever my back is bleeding because he was dragging me on the tar road, I was dragging him on the tar road so now, my back is bleeding I've got scars and everything and then I'm like 'okay listen now I'm tired, let's go back inside and have some beer'. We went back inside and had some beer. We had a boerewors roll. The night commenced we went out. We went to go chill with other people but that problem was solved*

because we got it out of our systems and this is how life worked. Life progressed

PB2 reported that this altercation took place following his attempt to intervene in an argument between his friend and his friend's girlfriend. In his account, PB2 points to how he was able to outline the process whereby he and his friend identify the source of their conflict, but are unable to speak about the emotions which he identifies as anger. This is not to say that speaking about the emotions could have prevented conflict, but being able to occupy a position of vulnerability through self-disclosure may have made it less likely for them to act on their need for conflict (Migliaccio, 2010). Although PB2 states that the problem was solved, his narrative does not provide details to the manner in which the problem was solved. This is because he has only provided evidence of how the conflict ended but provided very little detail as to how they decided to address such issues in the future. Regardless; through his personal anecdotes, in which there is a clear aversion of expressing emotional vulnerability, PB2 endorses the use of aggression and dominance in situations of male on male conflict, as he presents these behaviours as those that would likely result in a positive outcome.

These findings are important to this study because, within these participants' responses about the manner in which they relate within friendships, lies knowledge concerning how the patriarchal nature of society influences male friendships. By aligning themselves with a certain version of masculinity, they are inevitably setting the framework to which they engage within their friendships, in that their friendships require traditional displays of masculinity such as aggression and dominance for a number of reasons.

4.2.3.3. Give em Hell: "The Story of Goliath"

The idea that men should be daring and that they should take enormous risks, particularly when their sense of masculinity had been challenged, is a well-documented phenomenon (Bosson & Vandello, 2011; Brannon, 1976; Chrisler & McCreary, 2010; Kimmel, 2003). This kind of talk and thinking featured as a topic in both the individual interviews and focus groups with most participants championing

for and celebrating responses which demonstrated an inclination towards these stereotypical masculine performances. For many of the participants, these qualities were demonstrated either through the use of aggression or dominance. For example, when reflecting on responses given by other focus group participant, PB1 expressed that responses indicating that an individual would be *"fighting back and dying in honour"* were impressive *"[T]hose were actually great responses"*.

Discussions held in both focus groups also indicate that refraining from aggression, or establishing one's dominance over the perceived challenger, may lead to stigmatization, a concept conceptualized through the use of animals;

PB3:	*For me like ay, human society and uhm living in the wild is kind of similar because in the wild you never want to be the weakest whatever animal you are because you are going to get eaten. It's the same thing now, the music has stopped everything is on you now after this guy pushed you. Now you still want to be like "ay can I have your number"…Na it doesn't work like that. Now all eyes are on you, you are a wounded buck. And you're that wounded buck that everyone by the river can see.*
Group:	*Laughs*
PB3:	*The alligators can see, the crocks can see, the lions can see and you're just going to be like "ya guys as you were, as you were". Oh No, no, no, no because now you're that elephant in the room, you are going to get eaten alive. For you to survive, you need to kill someone before you get killed. Survival of the fittest, Darwin's*

Participants viewed men who preferred to walk away as vulnerable and aligned them with wounded prey. Their challengers on the other hand, were compared to lions, crocodiles and alligators which are all animals symbolically known for strength and dominance. Such comparisons point out how young adult men may interpret public confrontations as battles for power. In the case above, the one who is able to respond violently and establish his dominance when provoked, is presented as a winner of such confrontations.

The social value of aggression and dominance is further demonstrated by PB3's use of the phrase 'survival of the fittest', which originates from Darwin's theory of evolution. The use of this phrase suggests that those who are able to display stereotypically masculine qualities, such as risk taking and toughness, by utilizing aggression and dominance, preserve their reputations as men. Such responses indicate how aggressive retaliation to provocation is perceived by young adult men to be an essential act for protecting or establishing a masculine identity. This is also an example of how socially constructed masculine ideals inform these perceptions of what it means to be a man.

Although the preservation of a young adult man's reputation was deemed as an important element of a masculine identity. It was interesting to note the extent to which participants would go to preserve it. As noted in the extracts above, participants were willing to kill or face being killed in efforts to safeguard their masculine identity, whilst others were willing to demonstrate extreme forms of aggression to defend their masculine identity no matter what the risk as demonstrated in the following set of excerpts.

PB5:	*I won't be mounted on the floor by gigantic guy. No, I don't want to lose the fight?*
PB2:	*Can I respond?*
R1:	*Okay.*
PB2:	*What you are saying to me now is that if you had a test an assignment, and you know that before you go to the test you just might pass 40%, so now what you are saying to me is that you'd rather not even go and write because you, there's a possibility that you might fail the test. No, no, no my boet, if the guy is huge, it's fine, we will come back tomorrow but that, that, that, those 10 seconds, that split second. No boet! You must prove a point. You'd rather lose10- 1 rather than 10 - nil.*

PB2:	*Well that's why in life there is something called gambling hey. Sometimes you must just play the chips that you have dude, the*

	guy is huge but at this moment, you understand that in terms of my life, this moment. There are bottles in the club, there is something. I'm mean his human, I'm human. Yes, his bigger but we are both human beings so his going to feel something I'm going to feel something it's fine but I must react.

It is evident from these excerpts that young adult men are willing to jeopardize their physical wellbeing on a game of probability in efforts of preserving and demonstrating a masculine identity. Additionally, the excerpts above demonstrate that for these participants, the preservation and demonstration of one's masculinity far outweighs the need for the preservation of self and those of others. These findings were echoed in several other studies both internationally and within the South African context. Matzopoulos *et al.* (2015), Seedat *et al.* (2009) and Vandello and Bosson (2013) notes in their studies, that masculine gender stereotypes such as the need for men to demonstrate qualities such as courage, bravery and risk taking, are contributing factors to the high mortality rate amongst young adult men. This is due to the fact that they are likely to display these qualities in interpersonal settings.

During discussions in the focus groups, several participants alluded to how risk taking and fearlessness, through the use of aggression, is encouraged and legitimated through various social institutions. For example, one participant drew upon religious teachings to explain his demonstration of bravery through aggression;

PB1:	*Me and my boys, the music goes off, as small as I am, I don't care how big you are. Who is this guy the Goliath story? I will take you on. I don't care and trust me half the time if you are the problem 'cause I will sort you out trust me. Go call your boys and it's about me now. Smack me first and I will smack you and then after that let's settle the rest, as gents.*
PB2:	*Because the question here is how are you going to respond within that split second that you received the opportunity?*
PB1:	*Reaction if you slap me, I'll slap him.*
PB5:	*If I have a bottle in my hand.*

PB1:	*If there is a bottle in my hand, I'll throw the bottle.*

By positioning himself as the Biblical character David facing his Goliath in the above illustration (Clines, 1995), PB1 marks the moral appropriateness of demonstrating extreme forms of physical aggression to defend a sense of masculinity. The story PB1 draws on exemplifies masculine courage as described in the literature (Brannon. 1976; Saucier & McManus, 2014). David is presented as a shepherd going into battle with a very tall, well equipped and experience warrior, with nothing but a sling in his arsenal and proceeds to win (Clines, 1995). Such stories demonstrate how institutions shape gender scripts of courage and risk taking through subtle communications.

4.2.3.4. Manly Business (Discourses Around the Function of Aggression and Dominance in Avoiding Femininity)

PA7:	*I want to be a man, I don`t want to say I`m a man, then I`ll be acting like a woman at the same time*

The above quotation marks the need to avoid femininity, which is much of the content featured in discussions. This pattern of thought emerged during an individual interview where a participant expressed the desire to be recognized man;

PA7:	*A proper man handles situations like a man. I mean as a man you enter situations trying to deal with it. You need to see that a man is in this situation not a woman.*

This finding was in line with those of Smith *et al.* (2014) and Zurbriggen (2010), who noted in their studies that, in their performance of masculinity, men believe that non-femininity was demonstrated through their actions which were socially constructed as being masculine. Within the context of this research, constructing an identity lacking in femininity required that men demonstrate aggression and dominance in response to provocation. For example, when PA1 was asked what reaction his family would expect from in a situation of man-on-man aggression and dominance, he responded in the following manner:

PA1:	*uhm… At this point, I think the guys would be expecting aggression but with the female cousins I feel like they wouldn't be expecting aggression and they would encourage diffusing the situation. So, I think with the men even it's a sense, it's a street culture of defending pride which is a young man's culture of doing such.*

His response suggests an expected contradictory reaction from his family members. He states that the male figures in his family would expect him to respond aggressively to a situation resembling the one presented in the vignette, whilst the female figures would encourage him to resolve the conflict without the use of aggression. It should be noted that within the context of the focus group, PA1 made it a point of expressing a version of masculinity which the male figures in his family would approve of. This then leads to associating responses lacking in aggression and domineering behaviours as feminine.

PA1 does not naturalize aggression as he attributes the tendency for aggression to being *"a young man's culture"*. Instead he attempts to make sense of the different expectations by normalising the tendency towards aggression in young adult men.PB1 on the other hand, naturalized aggression and domineering behaviours as masculine attributes, by responding to provocation with these behaviours as a masculine enterprise:

PB1:	*…if they wanted to talk, they would have spoken about it. So obviously when he pushes you. He doesn't want to talk, he means business and 80% of the time, its business.*
R1:	*Okay.*
PB1:	*It's manly business.*
R1:	*Okay, so it's manly business. So, being aggressive is manly?*
PB1:	*You could say that. Well it doesn't have to be literally uhm physically aggressive, it can be verbally aggressive. If someone says "F you", say "F you" back. Don't say "why are you swearing at me dude?".*

In his account PB1 attributes his inclination for aggression to his gender by labelling this behaviour as "*just boys playing"* and *"manly business"*. These kinds of metaphors not only reinforce rigid gender stereotypes, but they also explain away aggression by naturalizing it. According to Kimmel (2011), this kind of discourse prevents males from exercising their sense of agency, in that it reduces these behaviours to human nature. Drawing from this perspective, it can be assumed that engaging in the kind of discourse that PB1 engages in at a societal level reduces the opportunity for joint reflection on the systemic and structural reasons behind these behaviours. It also brings to the fore how society collectively endorses the production of violent and oppressive masculinities through this kind of discourse.

The researcher also observed that even participants who were less inclined to aggression and domineering behaviours found it difficult to sustain their commitment to alternative gender performances if they faced being identified as feminine.

PB5:	*And he must respect you as well for him to respect you, you must talk in mind because you know with respect if you are too aggressive it's not respect we either fear you or we hate you or it's not respect. If you respond to weak either ah you're a sissy we can't respect a sissy like what? But if you are in the middle they know ukhuti (that) you can stand for whatever you say, you can fight for it, you will go away if needs be but you are choosing not to, you are choosing to be a human being not an animal. So you deserve respect or a shot or something.*

Although PB5 offered a critical view of the consequences of aggression and dominance which most participants were not able offer, noting that these behaviours are likely to result in creating fear in the other rather than respect. He too found it difficult to navigate his way around this knowledge in a social context where non-traditional masculine responses would be considered weak and labelled as feminine. In a country with a high prevalence of male-interpersonal violence, which is often attributed to a man's attempt to establish a sense of power through respect (Stevens, 2008), PB5's response presents a hopeful picture. His comment shows evidence of a willingness to reflect on the negative effects of aggression and dominance on

others. He portrays taking these into consideration when responding to situations which have the potential of escalating into a fight. In addition, it demonstrates an openness to thinking about alternative ways of being a man. Furthermore, PB5's narrative reflects a resistance to legitimizing aggressive and domineering behaviours as masculine performances.

4.3. Reaction to Transgressors

When analysing the participants' responses, it was evident that there was a shared expectation amongst several of the participants, in both focus groups and individual interviews, for other members to react in a stereotypically masculine way. This is seen specifically in a situation of man-on-man aggression and dominance. When this expectation was not met by some of the participants, individuals then demanded that men respond to such a situation by using aggression or displaying acts of dominance.

Participants in the discussions who opt for less aggressive responses or enactments of dominance were ostracized and ridiculed. At other times they were encouraged by the group to act in more aggressive and overtly dominant ways. These reactions to participants who offered non-traditional responses may speak to the manner in which hegemonic masculine norms are encouraged, enforced and policed within society. The reactions to non-conforming participants will be discussed in the following subthemes:

- Active Silencing of Atypical Responses
- Stripping of Masculinities
- Distancing of Non-Traditional Masculinities

4.3.1. Active Silencing of Atypical Responses

Additionally, there was a collected effort in the discussion with both focus groups to silence non-hegemonic masculine responses. At times there was evidence of overt stifling of responses from participants who preferred walking away, or talking about the confrontational situation as presented in the vignette. At other times the strategies employed by some group members to silence others were not as obvious. The discussion below from focus group one displays a silencing tactic which is overt in nature. The discussion takes place immediately after participants were asked to reflect on the vignette that was read to them.

PA7:	*I think it depends on the kind of person you are. First of all if you are a person who engages in such situations being allowed to be pushed and you know having to deal with people around you looking at you, I mean be a gent… be a cool guy, just call him on the side and be like no dude we both want this girl, how do we work this out.*
PA5:	*Nah bra.*
Group:	*Hayi, hayi, hayi (no, no, no and laugh)*
PA7:	*Okay guys think about it.*
PA2:	*Cabanga (Imagine)*
Group:	*Laughs*
PA4:	*Please no one will ever do that.*

The timing of the laughter within this interaction, in conjunction with the group's disagreement is derisive. When PA7 appeals to the group to think about his suggestion, PA2 responds by saying "Cabanga (imagine)". The use of the term "Cabanga" implies that this participant finds it inconceivable for conflict of this nature to be resolved through an engagement in a conversation. PA2's response is then further endorsed by PA4 who states that "no one will ever do that".

Although the group does not suggest how he should respond to the information, PA7 and the group as a whole, are not expected to talk to each other as means of resolving conflict in such a situation. In addition to this, the group communicates that other men do not tolerate anything else besides those which involve enactments of aggression and dominance. This is further demonstrated in the continued discussion below when the researcher appeals to the group to give PA7 an opportunity to respond:

R1:	*Okay guys let's give him a chance to respond.*
Group:	*No, no, no, no.*
R1:	*Guys let's give him a chance to respond.*
PA5:	*PA7 will never do that*
R1:	*Guys let's give him a chance to respond.*
PA2:	*You would collapse in two minutes*

PA7:	*What?*
R1:	*Okay let's give him a chance to respond*
PA4:	*Ok guys let's give him a chance to respond. Khuluma (Talk).*
PA7:	*First of all, I even forgot about what I was about to say.*
Group:	*Laughs.*
PA6:	*You were about to have a gentle man's agreement with him.*
Group:	*Laughs.*

Requests by the researcher for PA7 to be given a chance to respond were flat out rejected by the group and at other times, went unheard. However, when PA4 intervenes the group gives him a chance to respond. It should be noted here that perhaps the researcher was ignored because of the fact that she is a woman and may have been pushing for an alternative response, or to be heard in a group composed of men. The group as a microcosm of a patriarchal society, may be enacting what typically happens in such societies, where feminine voices are silenced.

On a more critical note, the discussion above demonstrates how verbal manipulation through teasing and shaming are used as tools to silence unconventional versions of masculinity. In a seminal paper, Keltner, Young, Heerey, Oemig, and Monarch (1998), argue that teasing and shaming are methods used to achieve social control, as they allow individuals to draw attention to other's non-conformity to social standards. They argue that teasing and shaming allows individuals with the opportunity of learning, negotiating and assuming social identities (Keltner, Young, Heerey, Oemig& Monarch, 1998). The participants shaming guide and direct PA7 to a more socially appropriate display of masculinity. This was evident in their continued discussion below:

PA7:	*Like I said it depends on what kind of person you are, if you are easily persuaded like that.*
PA6:	*Exactly.*

PA7:	*If a crowd can "woo" you into a fight then ah for me you are not a man, you proving that you are a man is you being a boy. So you need to divert.*
Group:	*Ah come on (shouts).*
PA7:	*However, however neh like PA1 said, say for instance the guy shoves me and I feel like the shove wasn't strong enough, I feel like I can take this guy on…*
Group:	*Laughs.*
PA7:	*You know what I'm saying, you know to impress the girl I would beat the guy's ass.*

In the above extract PA7 orients himself towards a different type of masculinity. In stating that "*you proving that you are a man is you being a boy".* It can be assumed that in positioning men who are easily persuaded into engaging in fights as subordinate to those who do not, PA7 is attempting to present a different version of a masculinity that other participants can aspire to. He then aligns himself with this dominant masculinity, suggesting to the group that a man in this situation would find a way to draw himself away from or prevent a situation in which he is pressured to fight. However, it is interesting to note how quickly he takes up a contradictory version of masculinity that is offered and approved of by the group as a result of the groups continued efforts to shame him.

The interaction also serves as an indicator of how difficult it is for some men to deflect such a situation and inhabit alternate masculinities in the face of peer pressure to adopt hegemonic norms. It can be said that PA7's wish to be seen as a man by his peers in this context outweighs his desire to avoid fighting. Furthermore, the interaction between PA7 and the group points to how non-traditional masculinities in society often fail to effect structural gender re-organization because their expression is silenced.

The past two examples illustrated how men make it difficult for other men to occupy alternative positions of masculinity. However, literature suggests that even those who may not benefit in hegemony are likely to participate in the maintenance of it

(Everitt-Penn & Ratele, 2015). Women also play a role in maintaining hegemonic masculine norms. It is seen in the focus groups that participants' experiences with female figures in their lives were implicated as motivators for their decision to enact aggression and dominance.

During an individual interview, the following participant indicated that in his life, women did not create a space for men to comfortably exhibit signs of fragility and vulnerability and in a sense occupy alternative softer masculinities.

PB1:	*(raises voice) Cry? No, no, no, no, there's no way of crying. You can't cry because obviously you are going to cry. They are gonna swear at you, or even the woman that you are going to report to are going to say "hey, go back to whoever you were doing that with, that person". They are going to send you back … You were playing, go back, so the best thing to do, just don't cry take it as a man, get angry and move forward. Try get there.*

Here PB1 expresses that not only would he suffer a verbal assault from his older cousins and uncles, but if he were to remove himself from the situation by seeking the assistance of a female figure in his family, they would send him back into a situation of aggression. It is not clear if the female figures would be sending him to resolve the conflict on his own, by either talking about it, or fighting it out. It is however clear that for this participant, men do not walk away from a fight crying. Once again, this example serves to demonstrate that when alternative masculine voices are silenced, hegemonic masculinity is reinforced. PB1 explains that 'the best thing to do' in a situation of man-on-man aggression is to avoid the fragility that is demonstrated by crying and instead opt for taking up an emotion that is considered as masculine such as anger.

There was an abundance of material which illustrate how non-hegemonic masculine responses are prohibited by female figures known to the participants. This was done in order to allow for the expression of hegemonic masculine performances. The following conversation articulates this clearly:

PB4:	*The men I grew up with and the women*
…	
PB4:	*Even the woman even the adults I grew up with.*
R1:	*Can you please expand on that*
…	
PB4:	*It's not media, it was mostly kids' I grew up with, on the streets and messages that I was getting from adults. My grandmother would tell you "oh you're the only one who is always coming back telling me that -oh bakhushayile (oh they hit you) - when do you beat up other kids?"*
PB6:	*"What's your problem?"*
PB4:	*Yeah "what's your problem?"*

In his reflection, participant PB4 shares a memory with the group in which he implicates his grandmother as someone who influenced the manner in which he would respond. In his recollection, he gives an idea of how through socialization, men from a young age are encouraged to avoid traits that are stereotypically associated to femininity such as fragility and vulnerability.

Following the sharing of his memory, PB6 takes up the role of PB4's grandmother and asks "[*W]hat is your problem?"* to which PB4 replies *"[Y]eah, what is your problem?".* This line of questioning not only implies that PB4 is acting of out the norm, but that there is also something problematic about the way in which he is acting. Constructing men's preference not to fight as a problem, naturalizes the belief that men are fighters. In addition, his shared memory points to how young adult men are expected to avoid appearing feminine through displays of toughness by mechanical use of their bodies by stating that *"when do you beat up the other kids?",* restricting of emotionality and keeping away from any help seeking behaviour (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Seedat *et al.,* 2009).

Though these participants pointed to multiple sources of socialization, they have also held in mind the reactions that they received from the female figures in their lives. Whether they were being turned away or questioned for their behaviour during

periods where vulnerability and fragility were displayed, these experiences have clearly created the impression that masculinity cannot be constructed around fragile character traits. As a result, from a young age, men believe that they have only one course of action available to them in situations of man-on-man aggression and dominance. This is not to say that women are responsible for displays of traditional masculinity, but that men do not exist in isolation of women and women do not exist in isolation of men. Therefore, it can be assumed that the ideas of masculinity which are communicated by the women the participants refer to, emanate from an already existing culture that facilitates the preservation of hegemonic masculine norms.

Drawing on literature this kind of silencing has huge implications for gender identity formation (Erikson, 1968; Holmes, 2007; Marcia, 1988). For example, Erikson (1968), argued that in societies which permit and value certain ideas whilst prohibiting others, result in individuals that are unable to make additional identifications. Therefore, in spaces where the expressions of non-hegemonic masculinities are continuously forbidden and suppressed, individuals are more likely to perpetually construct their identities around what is allowed by the society. Erikson (1968) warned that the dangers of creating spaces whereby the exploration of alternative ideologies are prohibited, individuals are more likely to accept the only criterion of worthiness that is offered to them. Consequently, men continuously receive information which implies that in situations of man-on-man aggression and dominance men, they should demonstrate traditional displays of masculinity. The result thereof is that they are more likely to assimilate these ideas of masculinity and construct their identities around them.

4.3.2. Emasculating Men to Reinforce Traditional Masculine Performance

It was clear from the focus groups and individual interviews that a socially idealized masculine status was elusive. The elusiveness of a socially idealized masculine status was demonstrated in the participants' responses as being situated in its performative nature (Bosson *et al.*, 2014; Kimmel, 2011). According to Connell (2005) men can be excluded from the circle of legitimacy should they fail to act in accordance with contextual expectations of masculinity, a phenomenon that was unmistakably apparent within the data. Failure to demonstrate one's dominance,

physical aggression or capacity for aggression in a situation of man-on-man aggression and dominance was frowned upon by most of the participants and resulted in exclusionary rituals that were aimed at invalidating the transgressor's sense of masculinity. This disapproval was shown in the form of negative criticisms, warnings and verbal attacks.

The two conversations below occurred in focus group two and illustrates how easily a man's masculinity can be invalidated for transgressing gender norms:

PB5:	*I don't want to fight and lose; I don't want to go into a fight and lose.*
PB1:	*Why not? No, no, no, no, no.*
PB5:	*I will not*
PB1:	*Awuyondoda (you're not a man)*

PB6:	*Here's the thing, here's the thing. You didn't hear what I said - I don't wanna be the first irrational guy. I will react if you act according to…*
PB3:	*We just said, someone got pushed.*
PB1:	*You got pushed you.*
PB6:	*That's fair.*
PB3:	*So, what is your reaction?*
PB6:	*Obviously I'm going to ask him.*
PB1:	*You're going to ask him instead of pushing him back Hayi Ndoda (No man)?*
PB3:	*You see when you ask him, his going to knock you out.*
PB1:	*You are not a man. You are not a man.*
...	
PB3:	*He will knock you out for that answer bro.*
PB2:	*Uweak (you're weak).*
PB1:	*His going to see your weakness you are not a fighter so he'll just clap.*

PB2:	*And let's say that girl waits for you. She will always have the thought that this oak here, is weak. Like this gent here "whenever I'm in a situation with him" he will always ask questions in a fight.*

The two extracts above highlight the manner in which those who are inclined to enactments of aggression and dominance position themselves as the holders of a more legitimate version of masculinity. This should be understood within the context presented in the vignette which is in line with the literature (Bosson & Vandello, 2011; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Kimmel, 2011). The participants do this by assuming authority in order to invalidate a sense of masculinity based on his chosen performance of masculinity. This is evident in the second extract when the group begins a process of revoking PB6's masculine status. PB1 clearly disagrees with PB6 and states that PB6 is *"Hayi ndoda (no man)"*, declaring that he is not a man. These conversations reflect how the demonstration of aggression, even when one's body is in physical danger, act as a symbolic representation of man's masculinity. Therefore, the participants discourse might partly explain the high mortality rates of young adult men in South Africa.

It is interesting to note that within the context of this research, the method of gender emasculation of non-conforming participants was in some way effective. The researcher also noted a distinct change in PB6's and PB5's performance of masculinity and their participation following this emasculation. This is evidenced in their behaviour which assumed more of an aggressive and dominant role, seeking instead options to resolving the problem in the vignette:

PB5:	Then I will throw a bottle if he is too huge but ya.

PB6:	*In a club scenario, everyone now is intoxicated they want a good time they want a brawl. They want everything to happen it must be exciting for the night. So definitely now it's gonna now trigger something in my mind to be like I can't be the weaker guy they can see me.*

Erikson (1968) postulates that during the stage of identity formation versus identity confusion, young adults are preoccupied with how they are perceived by others when compared with who they feel they are. He further hypothesizes that a crisis in identity formation arises when the idea of who one is and who others believe him to be are incongruent because the young adult has a need to trust in oneself and in others. They are also more inclined to prove a sense of trustworthiness to others (Erikson, 1968). Drawing from this postulation, it can be assumed that men do not often walk away unfazed from situations where their masculinity has been invalidated. There is a possibility that through the process of invalidating an individual's sense of masculinity, they not only begin to question their masculine identity, but they also develop the need to prove their masculinity to onlookers through the use of aggression and behaviours that signal their dominance.

The use of aggression and dominance is perhaps seen in the group as an authentic display of masculinity. Therefore, like in many cultures, young adult men in this study resort to these physically risky and dangerous options to earn social recognition as real men (Bosson & Vandello, 2011; Kahn, 2009). Consequently, they feel like they are real men.

The cost of violating masculine cultural stereotypes and expectations in situations of man-on-man aggression and dominance go beyond public declarations. Discussions in groups and individual interviews indicate that there are far more insidious ways of invalidating a man's sense of masculinity. The methods used by participants were rooted in exhibiting homophobia and avoiding femininity, as demonstrated in the conversation below:

PA4:	*You don't have to fight that's what I'm saying but don't call the guy aside I mean that's just gay…*
PA1:	*That's being a pussy.*
PA4:	*Ya it's gay.*
PA2:	*Exactly!*

The example above demonstrates the manner in which the construction of homophobia in society is directly connected with the construction of hegemonic

masculinity (Kimmel, 2003). Embedded in PA4's statement is both an unspoken intolerance of homosexuality as well as the production of a boundary between what is masculine and what is not. The manner in which participants use the term *"gay"* during this conversation serves multiple functions which signify this intolerance and boundary.

Within the context of the group the term *"gay"* becomes an adjective used to describe behaviour characterised as non-masculine. In this case, pulling an aggressor to the side and talking about the situation as a means of conflict resolution. This kind of response to the vignette communicates that there are a few ways of responding to a situation of man-on-man aggression and dominance which will result in the maintenance of one's status as a man. PA4's responses throughout the group discussion suggest that a man can preserve his status and is capable of exerting his dominance in the presence of an audience should he prefer not to fight. This is evident when PA4 states, *"[Y]eah after shoving you, he starts calling you names, you're just walking away and everyone is going oh, oh, oh, you know. You have to turn around and give him at least one line".*

The support PA4 receives from PA2 and PA1 along with the silence from the group regarding his use of the word *"gay",* illustrates the perpetuation of homophobic discourses as well as aggressive and dominant displays of masculinity in society. Explicit or implicit acceptance for the use of homophobic discourses leads to individuals believing that others approve of such discourses and expect behaviours that are associated with these discourses Kimmel, 2003). Therefore, it can be assumed that if men perceive the reluctance to fight or to demonstrate their dominance as gay, they may construct their masculine identity in opposition of this belief.

According to Kimmel (2003), heterosexuality is commonly considered as a component of hegemonic masculinity and consequently, used in the construction of the definition of masculinity. This was evident in the group as homosexual masculinities fell out of the standard of what it means to be a real man. The term *"gay"* within the group context not only functioned as a means of controlling how other men do gender, but it also served as condemnation of homosexual masculine

identities. The word gay being equated with a derogatory term such as *"pussy"* which is often used to describe weakness or female genitalia, (James, 1998) suggests that it was simultaneously aimed at demeaning the individual it was directed at. Here the insult is aimed at a demotion in masculine status aimed at feminizing him. These findings are consistent with those of van der Walt (2008), who states that hostility towards homosexual masculinities lies at the core of what it means to be a man in South Africa.

The comparison implies that homosexual men represent what Pascoe (2007) describes as penetrated masculinities. He construes that penetrated men are symbolic signifiers of masculinities that are lacking in power or voluntarily cease claim to it (Pascoe, 2007).Judging from participants' responses, it can be assumed that those who are not willing to demonstrate a readiness to respond with aggression or dominance to a situation, much like the one presented in the vignette, are perceived as positioning themselves with this penetrated undesirable masculinity.

Penetrated masculinities are in direct contradiction of what is idealized in most cultures and what is encouraged by some participants within the context of the group. This may explain why some participants use homophobic discourse to steer their male peers away from aligning themselves with this type of masculinity. The researcher observed that the consequences of using homophobic discourses extend beyond men policing their peers, but also extend to participants who used it to police their actions as a result reaffirming their sense of masculinity. This is demonstrated in the following extract:

PA4:	*Yeah man if you back down, they'll be like yeah you were a P,*
…	
PA4:	*They'll be like yeah walk away you P.*
…	
R1:	*What's a P?*
PA4:	*Well while you're walking away someone calls you a pussy ass nigga/er*.

This participant highlights the importance of a young male's actions when constructing or negotiating a masculine identity. His response illustrates the thoughtfulness which a young adult may give to his every action lest he be misidentified as anything but a man as a consequence of his actions. He makes sure that he does not *'back down'* or *'walk away'* in efforts to avoid appearing as a *'pussy ass nigga/er'*. According to Kimmel (2003), young men are constantly examining the gender boundaries which they have constructed for themselves in efforts to ensure that nothing remotely feminine is revealed through their behaviours.

PA4's determination to avoid being branded as a *'pussy ass nigga/er'* may lie with what it would mean for his masculine identity. The label *'pussy ass nigga/er'* epitomizes a masculinity that is devoid of power because of the meaning that lie within the words used to configure this label. The colloquial term 'pussy' as mentioned describes female genitalia, thus symbolizing penetrated masculinities and femininity (James, 1998). The second word making up the label is 'ass', it is a derogatory term often used to refer to males that mistreat others, or males who are physically weak (James, 1998).The manner in which it is used by the participant suggests that he implies the latter.

The word that makes up this label 'nigga/er' has further implications on his identity as a black male because of the negative cultural and historical association to it in addition to its literal meaning. The word *'nigga/er'* is described as a racial slur in the English language which is typically directed at black people (Rahman, 2012). It is argued that the most apparent purpose of a slur is either to injure or to insult. However, at an unconscious level a slur is an attempt to manipulate the behaviour of the denigrated group by means of imposing a negative identity on them (Rahman, 2012). The earliest use of the term nigger ascribed intellectual, cultural and moral inferiority to black people in America (Rahman, 2012). Overtime stereotypes which carried negative social meanings were then attached to the term (Rahman, 2012). More contemporary uses of the term 'nigga/er' often carry benign meanings, such as brother, when used by black people (Rahman, 2012). However, the manner in which PA4 uses it by, combining it with other denigrating terms, as well as by representing it with subordinated genders, removes any positive meanings which can be attached

to it. It can be assumed that within the context of this interaction, PA4 aligns black masculinities with subordinated masculinities. This may be because black masculinities have historically been positioned as non-hegemonic masculinities in relation to white masculinities (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

The fear and avoidance of being stigmatized in such a manner for transgressing gender norms is further evidenced in the following excerpt:

PA1:	*Um, I would feel emasculated and I would feel the desire to go back and prove myself uhm would be there. What I am not sure about is if the impulse would be strong enough for me to aggravate the situation again after that but I know that if they reacted negatively it would affect me and I would feel bad for not asserting myself in that situation.*

During the individual interview PA1 stated that he leaned towards avoiding violent confrontations because he was of the view that his friend would support his decision. However, he also indicated that if he were feminized for behaving in a manner which is uncharacteristic of manhood, then he would adopt a more aggressive and dominant stance to assert himself in the situation. He further states that it would affect his self-esteem negatively if he were to receive such a response. According to Prewitt-Freilino and Bosson (2008), the process of being stigmatized poses a threat to one's identity. Therefore it can be assumed that being a target of this kind a stigmatization in a society which values hegemonic masculine ideals, creates a threat to a man's masculine identity. Consequently, stigmatization becomes a tool which society uses to enforce and encourage a certain masculine performance.

Participants' reflection on their personal experiences of being labelled by similarly disparaging terms demonstrate that PA4's beliefs about what is expected from him by society, does not originate from nothing. Rather, they are cultivated over time by society.

R1:	*… What has influenced or who has influenced how you would respond?*

PA1:	*Our parent (silence) and I think the people around us, the older people around us actually, they are the ones that actually teach us how to react. If you're always going to be a sissy then ah. I mean as a child if you're always crying and you came back crying, your granny gets angry and she'll be like "hayi (no)! You must fight him back, you must hit him again and also you mustn't just be a little pussy over there". So, I think that also teaches you to just fight…*
…	
PA5:	*I think that his grandmother, he came home crying a lot and she was like "dude, nah I'm tired of this thing. You need to stand up for yourself". You know that might be a factor because when you come back crying (makes crying sounds), she is going to say "ah sorry, sorry, sorry, sorry". Tomorrow, he comes back it's a different guy who beat him up and his crying again. Now she's like "na, na, na, it's been four times, five times and his still crying" and she is like…*
PA7:	*Have some balls.*
PA5:	*Yeah have some balls.*

Once again participants allude to exclusionary rituals in the form of verbal taunts aimed at their gender identity, used by their family members as a means of enforcing a particular gender performance. The aversion of femininity is clearly situated at the core of this type of socialization, whereby men are taught to avoid appearing feminine in fear of being shamed in situations where they displayed stereotypically feminine behaviour. Furthermore, the researcher was aware of participants' acknowledgement of their family member's anger and frustration towards their non-macho behaviours in situations where they were meant to prove their masculinity. This is evidenced by PA7's and PA5's responses to PA1's contribution. Castrating statements such as "*have some balls", "you mustn't just be a little pussy over there",* drive men into acting out aggressively and demonstrating their dominance in efforts to prove that they do have balls or that they are not *"a little pussy".*

Hence, a number of participants demonstrated that in constructing their masculine identities, they engaged with their families input on gender:

PB1:	*So obviously you know when your uncle comes back and you have one of those, boxing ring games, yeah? That's it. He'll smack you here and there and obviously his like hey what are you going to do about it? As a young kid, obviously you have to. Obviously as the uncles or the cousins and all of them will just hold you by your head. Obviously, you're furious and you just wanna get there.*
…	
PB1:	*… when you start crying you going to go and cry to your grandma or your aunt and then they are going to be like "hey nimuyenzantoniumntwana?" (What are you doing to the child?).*
…	
PB1:	*Ya. They are going to slap you around and if you're going to cry about it then go to them and they will be like "hayi (no). They are just playing with you stop being a sissy".*

This participant's recollection of the childhood experiences that have shaped his identity as man indicate that from a young age, men are taught to equate practices such as walking away, not fighting back, crying or seeking help or comfort when one has been physically injured as feminine. The demand for young males to assert their dominance and display aggression in a number of interactions which they have within the confines of their families. Therefore, these are spaces where childhood identifications, which later shape one's identity are made (Marcia, 1980).

PB1's response offers two examples in which these identifications can be made. One with his uncle and the other with the female figures in his family. In the first example, PB1 engages in a not so benign boxing game with his uncle. During these games he recalls being physically attacked and expected to respond in a certain way which was *"obviously his like hey what are you going to do about it?"*. It can therefore be assumed that he is expected to punch his uncle back since boxing is a combat

sport which requires two people to punch each other. This kind of play fighting can have significant implications on one's identity development and it also conveys a particular message about what is expected from men in situations of man-on-man aggression and dominance.

In constructing boxing as a method of play also means that the intent to do harm is absent regardless of any harm that may come as a result of it. This offers some ideas as to why its effects are minimized within a family setting. The casual violence displayed in boxing is often socially accepted because boxing, as a combat sport, is in itself a performance of masculinity, requiring a demonstration of strength, risk taking, prowess and other traits which encapsulate an idealized version of masculinity (Scott, 2017). This, in addition, explains why it is approved of and encouraged in a patriarchal society like South Africa. Furthermore, failure to demonstrate these traits may also be seen as an absence of masculinity, thus warranting a reprimand such as the statement to *"stop being a sissy"*.

Statements like *"stop being a sissy"*, are in their essence, a demand for males to prove their manliness by discarding their feminine traits and adopting more masculine ones. The dangers of these kinds of sentiments are great in a South African context, where males are more likely than females to die, suffer physically or psychologically from male perpetrated aggression (Ratele, 2006). In that they allow for continued construction of females as victims of violence and male as perpetrators (Clowes *et al.*, 2010). In construing victimhood as something that belongs exclusively to females, males in their aversion of that which is feminine may construct their identities in avoidance of this victimhood regardless of their status as victims. This is not to say that by constructing their identities in avoidance of victimhood, males are automatically more likely to perpetuate violence by adopting aggression and dominance as attributes in establishing their masculine identity. Rather, it makes it increasingly challenging for males who are victims to occupy this role and seek help accordingly.

In analysing PB1's aunts' and grandmother's response, it can be hypothesized that had he responded appropriately in this play, he would have received a more positive reaction resulting in the creation or reinforcement in his desire to seek power

interpersonally. This power is achieved through displays of aggression and dominance which is demanded by play fighting. However, drawing from the participant's response, it seems that responding inappropriately by crying results in being reprimanded for displaying behaviours that are typically associated with femininity which again warrants one to *"stop being a sissy"*. Having his emotions and experiences invalidated with statements such as, *"hayi (no) they are just playing with you"*, creates equally lasting identifications. PB1's tendency for aggressiveness and need to establish his dominance in encounters with other men, as well as his incessant need to avoid appearing feminine, in both the focus group and individual interview, illustrate the impact of the lessons learnt from displaying stereotypically feminine attributes in childhood. These findings correspond with those of Langa and Eagle (2008), who found that male ex-combatants who were unable to overcome or repress all feminine attributes were referred to as sissies. According to Langa and Eagle (2008), this was used as a means of socializing men through enactments of violence which were deemed as a particular conception of masculinity. Consequently, men who conformed to this version of masculinity were positioned at a higher social status than those who do not.

Prohibiting particular masculine performances from boys through homophobic and anti-feminine discourses seems to be an operational socialization tool because of the meaning's men take away from them. This is demonstrated in the discussion below when a participant conceptualizes his childhood behaviours.

PA2:	*I don't know… uhm when I was a child I was a pussy.*
Group:	*Laughs*
PA5:	*(laughs) I'm sorry (laughs)*
PA2:	*When I was a child I didn't fight that much… uhm… I don't know. Okay when I was growing up, in preschool I was sweet.*
Group:	*Laughs*
PA1:	*(laughs) Uhm okay.*
PA2:	*I was sweet, ya guys I was sweet.*
Group:	*Laughs*

PA2:	*Like I was sweet, people would actually beat me up and I wouldn't do anything. I wouldn't fight at all and then as I was growing up, I started fighting…*
R2:	*Why? Why did you start fighting? What changed?*
PA2:	*Because people used to take advantage of me. So, I think from primary school I started developing a very bad short temper. Then ah, my dad taught me some moves. Some defence because where he grew up, he grew up in a very dangerous area. So, he really had to be able to defend himself. So, I started having my short temper and then he had to deal with that as well. So he taught me the bible about not being short tempered and then ya. I started calming down and then I just knew how to defend myself. That's the only thing that I can do to fight.*

The researcher was aware of PA2's difficulty in disclosing this information in the presence of other group members. Once again pointing to the difficulty young adult males experience in aligning themselves with alternative masculinities and negotiating softer masculinities in spaces that value hegemonic standards of masculinity. The researcher observed that the threat of facing ridicule is real which is evidenced in the laughter that takes place within the group following his sharing. However, on a more critical note, the participant's narrative indicates that it is far easier and socially less costly for men to be perpetrators of violence than for them to be victims of it. This is illustrated by PA2, who goes from being a victim of someone else's aggression, to being a male aggressor.

It is clear from his reflection that PA2 constructs males who are disinclined to fight as victims of bullying and those who do act to defend themselves as feminized. This once more bring to the fore the difficulties in occupying vulnerable and fragile positions, such as those held by victims of bullying. It seems that, in order for him to move away from occupying a position that is uncharacteristic of hegemonic masculinity, PA2 had to grow up and become a fighter. He does not do this on his own accord, indicating that his father had to teach him how to fight. There is a large body of literature which testifies to the fact that learning aggressive behaviour within

a family setting is a significant risk factor to man-on-man aggression and interpersonal violence (Clowes *et al.*, 2010; Kimmel, 2003).

The participant's response further indicates that without a protective factor, such as a religious base (Clowes *et al.*, 2010), he would more likely operate on his aggression and need for dominance in interpersonal relationships. Thus, it can be inferred that endorsing constructive, non-aggressive, non-dominant views of masculinity, as suggested by Lazarus *et al.* (2009) can lead to violence prevention.

The aforementioned extract also provides an example of the negative self-perception males have of themselves, should they occupy vulnerable and fragile positions. He likens being bullied and not defending oneself as being *'sweet'*, a trait which is valued in women but disapproved of in men. Therefore, it can be argued that men would enact aggression and dominance with the aim of preventing or reducing feelings associated to a negative self-image.

4.3.3. Distancing Gender Non-Conforming Men

Another theme which emerged from participants' accounts with regards to issues pertaining to gender transgressions, was the dominant view that males had to distance themselves from other men who had transgressed gender norms. For example, during the focus group, participants were asked 'how they would respond, if a male friend had reacted to the scenario in a manner which they had not anticipated. Participants who were more inclined to react in more aggressive and dominant displays of masculinity, stated that they would distance themselves from such a friend:

PB1:	*Uweakawuyochomieyami (you are weak; you are no friend of mine).*

Like a number of the participants in the study, PB1 viewed the failure to demonstrate aggression and dominance as a show of weakness. He also perceived it as sufficient basis to end friendships with male friends who have demonstrated such weakness. The quote above illustrates the difficulties men face when they subscribe to

hegemonic standards of masculinity and the difficulties to affiliate themselves with those who do not. Other participants indicate that they expect their friends to respond in similarly aggressive and dominant ways:

R1:	*So, if you. Let's say you weren't the one that was fighting, who wasn't in this situation. Rather; if your friend was in this situation. How would you expect him to respond?*
PB7:	*The same way.*
PB4:	*Obviously.*

The extract above illustrates a clear need for their friends to respond in a manner in which the participants would have responded. It can be hypothesised, based on participants' responses in both focus groups and individual interviews that this need originates from their personal experiences on masculine identities and social standing. It is evidenced in the following narratives how participants would respond if their friends opt instead to respond in a manner which lacked aggression:

PB2:	*Because now if we walk on campus all those people will see us walking with him.*
Group:	*Laughs*
PB2:	*Oh so you guys are mates, I see.*
PB7:	*The whole group's rep. He destroyed the team.*

The participants' responses indicate that they are subject to the same public backlash as their friends in the event that their friends fail to demonstrate behaviours that signal masculinity. The reference made about reputation and being seen with a friend who has not conformed to gender norms, suggests that within male friendship circles, individual masculine identities are direct reflections of the masculine identities of those who make up the friendship circle. This joint relationship between masculinities within friendships, is further reiterated by PB7's use of the term *'team'*, which suggests that they are not only a group, but that there is something shared amongst this group. The excerpt below indicates the degree to which individual actions impact on the identities of members within a friendship circle:

R1:	*So, you are expecting him to respond?*
PB2:	*Obviously, because we are mates and we are the same people.*
PB3:	*We know the exact same thing.*

Statement's such as *'we are mates and we are the same people'* and *'we know the exact same thing',* suggests that participants believe that individuals who make up a friendship circle not only share the same characteristics, but also share the same ideals and motivations. Migliaccio's (2014) work on men's friendships, offers an explanation for this phenomenon. He states that same sex male friendships are instrumental in nature. In addition to this, they are often centred on shared activities and interests (Migliaccio, 2014). According to Migliaccio (2014) male friendships are often characterized with bonding through engagement, rather than through intimacy, because society is set up in such a way where males are not encouraged to be emotionally expressive.

Drawing from this perspective and linking it with participants' reflections, the individual man, like most men strives to do hegemonic masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Kimmel, 2011). It can be assumed that a man enters into friendships with others whom he assumes are working towards the same thing. It can also be assumed that within such friendships, an individual who strives to achieve this version of masculinity believes that others within his friendship circle expect him to behave and relate in a manner which is prescribed by. Therefore, the continued association, in same-gender friendship circles, where men strive to achieve the hegemonic masculine ideal, is contingent on all individuals within this circle. This also includes relating in a manner which demonstrates behaviours that are characteristic of hegemonic masculinity.

According to Migliaccio (2014), friendships amongst males is in part a gender performance for an individual male. This is also seen in performance of shared activities and the manner in which friends interact with one another. Drawing from Migliaccio's (2014) concept of male friendships, it can be assumed that if one member amongst a group of friends violates gender norms, it can consequently

hinder the group's masculine performance, impacting on the individual group member's masculine identity.

This pattern of thought was traced in an individual interview with a participant who was reflecting on other participants' responses within the focus group. In the extract below he indicates that he could not befriend participants who were less inclined to enactments of aggression or dominance in physical confrontations with other men.

PB2:	*Ya definitely, I mean at the same time like I said you are what you eat – you are your friends. Your friends define you because you choose those surroundings. You choose those surroundings so your friends are who you are as well because of what you say. Chances are that you guys speak the same language, your gestures are the same, what you guys do will be the same… you become friends unintentionally because you attract that crowd because you can see that they've got the same the same characteristics and mentality that you share. So, if a guy says to me, I'll walk away – OKAY! – its fine definitely I can see that you and I will never be in the same circle because you walk away from things and that's the person that you are and I'm not that person.*

The phrase *'you are what you eat'* is often intended as shorthand for stating that if a person eats healthy food, they will be healthy and the same would apply should they eat unhealthy food. Combining the phrase *'you are what you eat'* with the statement *'you are your friends'* is indicative of the participant's construction of friendships. This narrative indicates that the distinction between what one's friend is and what one is, is almost absent within this construction. It is also unclear whether his use of the expression *'speak the same language'* is intended to describe a system of communication often used by a particular group of people. Or, if it is used as an idiom to describe that he and his friend not only have to agree upon the same things but that they are expected to share a common belief system and opinions. In which ever manner it is intended, it communicates the degree of sameness required for men to establish a friendship with another man. Therefore, if he associates himself

with men who exhibit behaviours that are stereotypically masculine, then he is a man. Similarly, if he associates himself with men who fail to demonstrate such behaviours, then he is not a man. This implies that what he knows himself to be, his identity, is partly dependent on the actions of his friends. Furthermore, by stating that he will never have someone who walks away from fights within his friendship circle, PB2 provides an idea of how men manage gender non-conformity within same-gender friendships. His response indicates that male friendships, with other males, have little room for gender transgressions and that they rarely survive these transgressions.

These findings are in keeping with the literature which posits that those with a poor understanding of the distinctiveness and similarities which exist between themselves and others, heavily rely on external factors in the process of self-evaluation (Marcia, 1980). Additionally, they will also find it difficult to adapt to changes in relationships (Marcia, 1980). These findings also point to the pressure males put on themselves to be the friends which they wish their friends are.

The findings of this study also present difficulties for future work which may be done on changing gender relations. These difficulties are highlighted within the section of PB2's narrative where he states that *"[Y]our friends define you because … as well"*. Though earlier in his narrative PB2 alludes to the process of establishing a friendship as unintentional, this statement contradicts this because it introduces the element of choice within the equation. Therefore, though PB2 can have friends which align themselves with alternative masculinities, he prefers not to. According to Morrell *et al.* (2013), in order to inform change in gender relations when working with men on an individual level, the most crucial task is to initiate a process in which men can reflect on the repercussions of their ways of living, further exposing the alternatives. This may prove difficult if men, regardless of being exposed to other men who may align themselves with alternative versions of masculinity, continue to actively seek and befriend men that are more inclined to more dominant aggressive expressions of masculinity, whilst distancing themselves from those that do not. PB2's response also points to the likelihood of males demonstrating a willingness to engage in such work, as it may hinder on their masculine performance. In order to effect such change, alternative ideals have to be shared at a societal level (Morrell *et al.*, 2013).

5. Chapter 5: Conclusion

This study sought to explore how young men's responses to a situation of man-on-man aggression and dominance might be influenced by how society encourages or expects a certain masculine performance from men in such situations. The study was also interested in offering some ideas about how young men might establish a masculine identity through aggression and dominance.

5.1. Central Findings

The findings presented in this study were generally in line with other research studies within the field of masculinity, particularly with regards to man-on-man interpersonal violence. Like many studies, this study found that hegemonic discourses shaped men's understandings of what it means to be a man in a situation of man-on-man aggression and dominance and these understandings influenced their behaviours (Langa & Eagle, 2007; Smith, 2008). In addition, in line with other studies, this study found that ideas of manhood were indeed tenuous and elusive, needing and socially encouraged, to be earned and repeatedly demonstrated either through physical aggression and dominance (Bosson & Vandello, 2011; Saucier & McManus, 2014).

The vignette that participants were tasked with reflecting upon elicited responses in the focus groups and individual interviews that highlighted the continuous pressure that young adult men are under within society to somehow fit into traditional or hegemonic versions of masculinity. Within the context of this study, the proximal cause of aggression and dominance was attributed to broader concerns regarding presentation of a masculine self, self-worth and social status. This was evident in the discussions that arose around issues of reputation, honour and dignity which speak to the participants' perceptions of socially valued responses to situations of personal man-on-man aggression and dominance and what they understand is expected of them in such situations.

The themes identified and discussed in this study provide evidence that aggressive and domineering behaviours form part of sociocultural scripts for establishing,

demonstrating and maintaining a socially idealized masculine identity. This was more so under conditions where participants experienced that their masculinity was publicly challenged or when they perceived a threat to their masculine identity. It seemed that the anxiety around not being perceived as masculine heightened the participants' need to display aggressive and domineering behaviours.

The findings suggested that aggression and dominance as performances of masculinity functioned not only to regulate negative emotional reactions linked to threats against masculine identity but they were used to demonstrate an identity lacking in feminine qualities and values. In addition to this, the findings suggested that aggression and dominance served to demonstrate, in the eyes of the participants, invulnerability, courage, stoicism, the ability to take control in a situation and other traits that are stereotypically associated with masculinity.

A noteworthy finding in this study relates to how, in a situation of man-on-man aggression and dominance most participants preferred traditional and hegemonic positioning over alternative masculinities regardless of their ability to critically engage with the dangers of conforming to traditional and hegemonic ideals of masculinity. In many instances, participants' responses indicated that they demanded and expected this kind of positioning from other men as well, with many participants preferring to dissociate themselves from men who were unable to demonstrate aggressive and domineering behaviours in a situation of man-on-man aggression and dominance. Pejorative labelling, shaming, emasculation and silencing of alternative softer voices were some of the strategies employed to police masculinity in this situation. Interestingly, when reflecting on their childhood experiences, participants pointed to how these methods of policing were used on them by family members, highlighting the idea that certain masculine constructions are generationally reproduced and encouraged over generations. In observing the group dynamics, it was also interesting to note how participants who were more inclined to peacefully resolving the situation of man-on-man aggression and dominance exhibited heightened aggressive and domineering posturing following backlash from other participants in the focus group.

5.2. Limitations of the Study

A benefit of working with a small sample when conducting qualitative research is the in-depth data that it provides (Blanche, Durrheim, & Kelly, 2006), however, the limitation of this method is the generalizability of the findings (Blanche, Durrheim, & Kelly, 2006). Due to the research only being conducted on 14 participants, who are all black, the findings presented in this study cannot be taken as a general representation of all young adult South African men's experiences and realities. Indeed, there is a large body of literature which suggests that men of the same age group from different races and ethnicities could have exhibited different masculine performances in comparison to this study's participants (Bosson & Vandello, 2011; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Kimmel, 2011). Notwithstanding this, the focus groups served as a particular microcosm of the South African context, and as such, the masculine performances enacted by participants in this study, which had been encouraged outside the context of this study, shed some light on what is typically "out there".

Another limitation of this study, lies in the sampling method that was used in this study. That is, due to the difficulty of finding participants to take part in the study, additional participants were obtained through a snowball sampling method. The implication of this sampling method is that it presents with bias because participants may have referred individuals who possibly shared the same views as them (Struwig & Stead, 2009).

Qualitative research also presents with limitations around the subjectivity of the researcher (Braun & Clark, 2006). Even though critically reading the transcripts and findings as well as working with a supervisor served to limit the influence of subjective views and personal discourse in the analysis stage of the research. Both the analysis and organization of the results presented in this study cannot be regarded as objectively definitive. As such, the discussion is acknowledged as offering only one of a multiplicity of interpretations.

It is also important to note that even though the researcher drew on semi-structured interview guides for the focus group discussions (Appendix B) and individual

interviews (Appendix C), spontaneous probing along with the use of different wording of the part of the researcher and co-facilitator could have impacted on the consistency of the findings. In addition to this, it could have elicited information in such a way that confirmed the researcher's or the co-facilitator's preconceived assumptions on the topics related to masculinity. Furthermore, there was a possibility that the participants may not have understood the questions posed to them by the researcher or the co-facilitator. Finally, the researcher was also aware of the fact that her gender as a woman could have impacted on how participants performed masculinity through their participation particularly in the individual interviews and that they could have exhibited a different performance of masculinity if they were interviewed by a man (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Messerschmidt, 2012).

5.3. Directions for Future Research

In writing up the findings of this study and reflecting on the possible limitations of this study it is suggested that further research be conducted on this topic with a more diverse demographic. Secondly, it is recommended that future research within the South African context examine how men through interaction collaboratively construct what is deemed as masculine. Additionally, in observing participants' reactions to alternative expressions of masculinity, it is suggested that future research examine how men understand their use of policing strategies.

A need for further conceptualization of social status, dignity and respect among young adult men within the South African context may also prove beneficial in understanding how aggression and dominance are used to construct masculine identities.

Finally, in observing how participants actively distanced themselves from individuals who expressed non-traditional versions of masculinity, it is recommended that future research examine how stereotypically masculine behaviours are used by South African men as a basis of networking.

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Appendix A: Vignette

Psychology

School of Human & Community Development

University of the Witwatersrand Johannesburg

Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa.

Telephone: 011-717-4500/2/3/4.
Fax: 011-717-4559

Vignette

Thabo, a university student, decides to go clubbing with his friends one Saturday night. At the club he and his male friends (some are his age others are a bit older) are having a good time. During the course of the evening they meet up with some girls from the same university and decide to hang out with them.

Thabo is particularly interested in one of the girls and decides to ask her out that night. The girl does not give him a definite response at that moment. Later on in the evening a guy around Thabo's age, who is also interested in the same girl, roughly pushes Thabo aside wagging his finger at Thabo as he does so whispering loudly "she's mine!"

In close view of this situation are Thabo's friends, the girl he is interested in and her friends. In addition to this, some of the other club goers have stopped partying and are now focused on Thabo and the guy.

Appendix B: Focus Group Interview Schedule

Psychology

School of Human & Community Development

University of the Witwatersrand Johannesburg

Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa.

Telephone: 011-717-4500/2/3/4.
Fax: 011-717-4559

Focus Group Questions

- What are your thoughts about this scene?
- If you were Thabo, how would you respond in this situation?
- Why would you respond in this manner?
- What do you imagine the consequences of not responding in this way might be?
- If you were in a similar situation and saw this happening to your friend, what response would you expect from your friend, and what would you think of him, if he did not respond in this way?
- Consider comments such as “be a man about it” and “take it like a man”, in this situation, how do you think you are expected behave?

Appendix C: Individual Interview Schedule

Psychology

School of Human & Community Development

University of the Witwatersrand Johannesburg

Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa.

Telephone: 011-717-4500/2/3/4.
Fax: 011-717-4559

Interview Schedule

A. How was it being in the focus group?
B. What are some of the thoughts that you had after participating in the group?
C. How did it feel interacting in a group?
D. Thinking about the vignette that was presented, do you have anything else to add that you couldn't on the day?
E. What prevented you from sharing this in the group?
F. What did you think about the responses some of the other participants gave in the group?
G. Looking back at your own responses to the vignette:
    i. What was your response?
    ii. Why do you think you would have responded in this way?
    iii. How would your friends view you, if you respond in this manner?
    iv. What do you think your response would say about your masculinity?
    v. What would you think of another man who responded differently to the way in which you responded?
    vi. Would you respond in the same if people were not around to witness your response?

Appendix D: Focus Group Information Letter

Psychology

School of Human & Community Development

University of the Witwatersrand Johannesburg

Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa.

Telephone: 011-717-4500/2/3/4.
Fax: 011-717-4559

To whom it may concern

My name is Zinhle Vilakazi, and I am conducting research for the purposes of obtaining a Master's degree in Clinical Psychology from the University of Witwatersrand. The focus of the study is to explore how young men are socialized to deal with situations of threat and aggression. I would like to invite you to participate in this study.

By participating in this study, you will be part of a focus group that will be facilitated by the researcher and a colleague. After participating in the focus group there is a possibility that you may be selected to participate in a one on one interview with the researcher. The focus group will be conducted on a day that is convenient for all the participants and will last for 60 minutes. No person taking part in the study will be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way by choosing to participate in the study and participation in the study is voluntary.

The focus group will consist of six participants from the University of Witwatersrand. A scenario will be presented to the group and the participants will be asked a series of questions that they will discuss in the group. The questions will be based on various issues the researcher seeks to explore. There are no wrong or right answers in the discussion; the researcher is purely interested in your opinions and you may refuse to answer questions should you prefer to do so. In order to ensure accuracy of information given during the discussion, the discussion will be audio recorded. All

responses by you and other participants will be kept confidential and information that could identify you will be excluded from the research report. You and other members participating in the focus group will be asked to maintain confidentiality (to not discuss the information outside the group context). The interview material (audio recordings and transcripts) will not be heard or seen by any other person, at any time, and will only be processed by myself and my supervisor. Whilst the research is still in progress the interview materials will be kept in a secure place by the researcher. When the research is completed and the data has been transcribed and analysed, the interview materials will be destroyed.

There shall be no negative consequences should you wish not to participate in the study or choose to withdraw from it. Should you wish to receive feedback from the research; the findings will be written up in the research report and will be made available to you. If at any point, you reveal information that is upsetting or troubling, contact numbers of counselling and debriefing services will be made available. If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign the consent form attached to this information letter. Should you have any queries regarding your participation, you can contact me (zie.vilak@gmail.com) or my supervisor Dr Nick Davies (Nick.Davies@wits.ac.za).

Your participation in this study would be greatly appreciated

Kind regards

_____

Zinhle Vilakazi

Appendix E: Focus Group Consent Form

Psychology

School of Human & Community Development

University of the Witwatersrand Johannesburg

Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa.

Telephone: 011-717-4500/2/3/4.
Fax: 011-717-4559

Informed Consent of Focus Group Participant

I have read and understood the information sheet, and I am aware of what this research involves and what is expected of me.

I understand that:

- Participation in the focus group is entirely voluntary.
- I may refuse to answer any questions I would prefer not to or that I feel uncomfortable answering.
- I may withdraw from the study at any time and it will not be held against me in any way.
- No information that will identify me will be included in the research report.
- I will not discuss information shared within the group outside of the group context.
- The discussion in the focus group will be audio recorded and transcribed.
- These audio recordings and transcripts will be kept in a safe place at all times and can only be accessed by the researcher and her supervisor.
- The audio recordings will be destroyed after the research is complete.
- Benefits will not be provided by participating in the study.
- I understand that I could be asked to participate in another one on one interviews and that I can decline.

- If I should experience any emotional distress, contact numbers of counselling and debriefing services will be made available.

I hereby consent to participate in this research project. I give Zinhle Vilakazi permission for my results to be used in the write up of this study.

Name:_____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Appendix F: Individual Interview Information Letter

Psychology

School of Human & Community Development

University of the Witwatersrand Johannesburg

Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa.

Telephone: 011-717-4500/2/3/4.
Fax: 011-717-4559

To whom it may concern

My name is Zinhle Vilakazi, and I am conducting a research study for the purposes of obtaining a Master's degree in Clinical Psychology from the University of Witwatersrand. The focus of the study is to explore how young men are socialized to deal with situations of threat and aggression. You were selected from the focus group that you participated in and I would like to invite you to participate further in this study.

By agreeing to participate further in this study, you do so voluntarily and you may withdraw from the study should you wish to do so. Participation in this study will involve being part of a one on one interview with the researcher on a day that is convenient for you. No person participating in this study will be advantaged or disadvantaged by choosing to participate or not to participate in this study. The researcher will ask you a series of questions and there is no wrong or right answer; the researcher is only interested in your opinion. The interview will last for approximately 45 minutes and with your permission the interview will be audio recorded and transcribed for the purposes of ensuring accuracy of information. All of your responses will be kept confidential and no information that could identify you will be included in the research report. Whilst the research is still in progress, the interview material (audio recordings and transcripts) will be stored in a secure place and only the researcher and her supervisor will have access to it. After the research is complete and the data has been transcribed and analysed, both the audio recordings and transcripts will be destroyed.

There shall be no negative consequences should you wish not to participate in the study or choose to withdraw from it. Should you wish to receive feedback from the research; the findings will be written up in the research report and will be made

available to you. If at any point, you reveal information that is upsetting or troubling, contact numbers of counselling and debriefing services will be made available. If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign the consent form attached to this information letter. Should you have any queries regarding your participation, you can contact me (zie.vilak@gmail.com) or my supervisor Dr Nick Davies (Nick.Davies@wits.ac.za).

Your participation in this study would be greatly appreciated

Kind regards

Appendix G: Participant Informed Consent

Psychology

School of Human & Community Development

University of the Witwatersrand Johannesburg

Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa.

Telephone: 011-717-4500/2/3/4.
Fax: 011-717-4559

Participant Informed Consent

I have read and understood the information sheet, and I am aware of what this research involves and what is expected of me.

I understand that:

- Participation in the interview is entirely voluntary.
- I may refuse to answer any questions I would prefer not to or that I feel uncomfortable answering.
- I may withdraw from the study at any time and it will not be held against me in any way.
- No information that will identify me will be included in the research report.
- The interview will be audio recorded and transcribed.
- These audio recordings and transcripts will be kept in a safe place at all times and can only be accessed by the researcher and her supervisor.
- The audio recordings will be destroyed after the research is complete.
- Benefits will not be provided by participating in the study.
- If I should experience any emotional distress, contact numbers of counselling and debriefing services will be made available.

I hereby consent to participate in this research project. I give Zinhle Vilakazi permission for my results to be used in the write up of this study.

Name:_____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Appendix H: Informed Consent for Audio Recording

Psychology

School of Human & Community Development

University of the Witwatersrand Johannesburg

Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa.

Telephone: 011-717-4500/2/3/4.
Fax: 011-717-4559

Informed Consent for Audio Recording Participant

I consent to the focus group discussion and any one-on-one interview with Zinhle Vilakazi, for her study that focuses on how young men are socialized to deal with situations of threat and aggression, to be audio recorded.

I understand that:

- The interview materials (audio recordings and transcripts) will only be processed by the researcher and her supervisor.
- Whilst the research is in progress the interview materials will be stored in a secure place and only the researcher and her supervisor will have access to it.
- Interview materials will be destroyed when the research is complete.
- No identifying information will be used in the transcripts or the research report that will identify me as a participant of this study.
- Direct quotations may be included in the research report but no identifying information of the source will be given – confidentiality will always be ensured.

Name:_____

Date: _____

Signature:_____

Appendix I: Ethics Approval Letter

University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

Faculty of Humanities – Postgraduate Office

Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa • **Tel:** +27 11 717 4602 • **Fax:** +27 11 717 4077 • **Email:** Sarah.Mfupa@wits.ac.za

Student Number: 1143808

Ms Zinhle Vilakazi
24 Canary Street
Villa Lisa
Boksburg
Johannesburg 1459
Gauteng South Africa

14 July 2016

Dear Ms Vilakazi

APPROVAL OF PROPOSAL FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

I am pleased to be able to advise you that the readers of the Graduate Studies Committee have approved your proposal entitled "*Men, masculinity and aggression: An exploration of how young men are socialized to deal with situations of threat and man-on-man aggression*". I confirm that Dr Nicholas Davies has been appointed as your supervisor in the School of Human and Community Development.

The research report is normally submitted to the Faculty Office by 15 February, if you have started the beginning of the year, and for mid-year the deadline is 31 July. All students are required to RE-REGISTER at the beginning of each year.

You are required to submit 2 bound copies and one unbound copy plus 1 CD in pdf (Adobe) format of your research report to the Faculty Office. The 2 bound copies go to the examiners and are retained by them and the unbound copy is retained by the Faculty Office as back up.

Please note that should you miss the deadline of 15 February or 31 July you will be required to submit an application for extension of time and register for the research report extension. Any candidate who misses the deadline of 15 February will be charged fees for the research report extension.

Kindly keep us informed of any changes of address during the year.

Note: All MA and PhD candidates who intend graduating shortly must meet your ETD requirements at least 6 weeks after your supervisor has received the examiners reports. **A student must remain registered at the Faculty Office until graduation.**

Yours Sincerely

SD Mfupa

Sarah Mfupa
Postgraduate Division
Faculty of Humanities
Private Bag X 3
Wits, 2050