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INVESTIGATING CONSTRUCTIONS OF MASCULINITY IN MEN'S TALK OF MALE RAPE

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A research report submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts in Community-Based Counselling in the Faculty of Humanities, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

April 2009

DECLARATION:

I declare that this thesis is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in Community-Based Counselling Psychology in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other university.

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Shelley Anne Field

28th day of April, 2009

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ABSTRACT:

The research investigated how men perceive constructions of masculinity in the talk of male rape. Research on gender relations and masculinities is a growing area of interest. The topic of male rape however, remains underrepresented within this. Male rape draws on discourses of gender, trauma, sex, sexuality and violence. It further offers a controversial topic that participants could engage in to further make sense of the multitude of masculine identities that exist, and how these directly influence responses to gendered phenomena. It is therefore likely to elicit significant constructions of masculinities and hence was used as a vehicle to further add insight into the constructed nature of masculinities. This was achieved through the use of a group of thirteen men who were divided into three focus groups. Each focus group made use of a vignette and a semi-structured interview schedule. Through this method the masculine identities that arose in their talk on male rape were examined. Data were analysed using thematic content analysis in which a social constructionist perspective was applied. It was found that participants strongly adhered to a hegemonic masculine point of reference in discussions. The patriarchal nature of this masculine identity that is subordinating of both women and other masculine identities was consistently used in discussions, thus representing the relatively stable influence of hegemony in gendered relations. Subordinated masculinities emerged more subtly, illustrating a growing acceptance of multiple forms of masculine identities. The results were understood as largely representative of broader society that still elevates the constructed standards of hegemony in conceptualising masculinities. This study thus sheds light on the social constructionist nature evident in society that continually influences the connotations attached to gendered identities within it. The significance in considering the masculine influences in responding to male rape lies in the multiplicity of factors that each involves as these collectively shape society's continued gendered understanding in shaping reality. A topic such as male rape, that directly threatens constructed notions of masculinities, thus allows for a new understanding to emerge in its consideration of the masculine identities that arise in responding to this traumatic experience.

Keywords: *male rape, trauma, gender, identities, masculinities, hegemony, subordination, patriarchy, social constructions*

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Gendered research is a popular area of study within psychology and the shifts in considering masculine identities within this represent a move away from previous gender research focused on women. Masculinity, although seen as a more recent focus in research when compared to feminist writings involving women, has continually been constructed and understood as superior to other gendered identities. Within this, the construction of men as separate from any form of vulnerability has become dominant. This is largely due to constructions of hegemony and the dictative nature of this in assigning gender appropriate behaviours to men. Although hegemony remains seemingly dominant, there further exists a multitude of other masculine identities receiving growing acceptance in broader society. Despite the accommodation of the diversity of masculine identities, hegemonic understandings of men continually result in certain masculine identities falling victim to the dominant discourses around broader societal constructions. The result is that such identities remain subordinated, continually attempting to gain greater acceptance in a continually shifting society.

Despite suggestions that have become and still are becoming increasingly acceptable, hegemonic standards continually reproduce a distinct categorisation of men that society expects all men to adopt and support. These hegemonic points of reference continually mould our responses to men. Furthermore, these shape how we position men within broader experiences in social context. This simultaneously results in experiences and attributes defined as exclusive to men and further, events and characteristics that fall outside expected masculine constructs and experiences.

Male rape[1] represents a controversial topic to consider, especially with reference to the above-mentioned hegemonic standards expected of men in broader society. This is assumed to be a direct result of the vulnerability associated with rape, a vulnerability that

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[1]This study refers to male rape and not the rape of men by other men so as not to isolate the definition to a male perpetrator, but rather to allow for clarification of this on the part of participants through their own understandings of this phenomenon.

society more easily transposes onto women. This study attempts to make sense of the gendered nature of this trauma, and furthermore why the traumatic event of rape has largely excluded men as falling victim to this. The research further uses male rape as a key issue in making sense of masculine identities that men adopt in broader South Africa through considering their responses to this event.

1.1. Research Rationale:

Masculinities research has become important because it helps us to understand men in the context of gender relations. This has resulted in a growing interest and expanding literature base that focuses on men and their identities in the context of these relations. It is for this reason that gender-focused research is a continually growing field of research, thus furthering our understandings of the gendered nature of broader society. Within this, emphasis has been increasingly placed on research into men. Furthermore, the focus has often been on understanding constructions of masculinities as these directly influence the experiences of men within society (Connell, 1995; Shefer, Ratele, Strebel, Shabalala & Buikema, 2007; Morrell, 2001). The importance of understanding masculinities lies in the fact that such gender relations largely determine the behaviour of men and such understandings have become quite dictative in what constitutes 'manly' behaviour. Such a singular way of describing men fails to account for the multiple masculinities that have been identified in society. It is for this reason that Hearn (2007) believes that the identities of men have been taken for granted for far too long, resulting in a poor understanding of men within their gender relations. This appears to have further impacted on their experiences of being men. Hearn (2007) further postulates that although there is growing awareness of masculinity, it is time that gender is considered as not simply an oppressive force against women, but rather a factor that similarly marginalises men in its failure to account for different forms of masculine identities.

It is thus important that this research considers men and their own constructions of masculinities as well as the influence of broader society on these constructions. This was done in an attempt to understand the multitude of masculinities that are represented in

social context. In order to stimulate talk on masculinity, male rape as a psychosocial issue was used as it was believed that this phenomenon would evoke discussions of masculinity because of the stigma directly associated with it (Kimmel & Aronson, 2004). Additionally, male rape was chosen because this traumatic event represents a gendered form of trauma due to common responses that more easily associate rape with women. This is largely due to expectations of masculine identities and the dominant gender stereotypes that accompany this. Gender stereotypes result in an expectation of society placed on men to be independent, assertive and aggressive (Mendelsohn & Sewell, 2004). Furthermore, fear and vulnerability are also regarded as attributes of women only, and thus victimisation is associated with emotional distress that only women are expected to express. Responses such as this are therefore not considered congruent with the traditional gender role of men (Mendelsohn & Sewell, 2004). Such gender role expectations result in a socially constructed understanding of men that does easily allow or accept masculine identities to be associated with the constructed vulnerabilities placed on women. At a broader social level then, people do not react positively to individuals who do not conform to gender stereotypes and thus overall reaction to male victims of trauma is negative (Mendelsohn & Sewell, 2004).

The above thus argues that the conceptualisation of male rape is largely based on social components that result in a socially constructed definition of this phenomenon. The social influences are important in considering male rape, as a definition that simply includes the physical and emotional impacts of the individual, could be considered oversimplified. An inclusion of the social components shifts the focus away from the event of male rape specifically. Hence a gendered understanding of this phenomenon, and more specifically, one influenced by constructions of masculinities, begins to emerge. The purposes for including male rape as the vehicle through which masculine identities can emerge thus results from the understanding that the two are tightly linked as both represent constructs that are highly influenced by social descriptions and connotations.

It was thus expected that men would speak more viscerally about the topic of male rape which would then reflect their own masculine constructions. Within these discussions, the

research was focused on understandings of hegemonic and subordinated masculinities. These two constructs were central because they often reflect broader constructions of masculinities in a specific social context, and hence this research intended to gain further insight into such constructions within the context of South Africa.

Through focus groups, this research allowed participants to engage in the socially stigmatised topic of male rape. This assisted in bringing ideas around masculinities to attention due to the reactions in participants that strongly influenced their responses. This research thus used this topic as it served as a vehicle for engaging with the multiple forms of masculinities represented in broader society. More specifically, the researcher's interest further involved understanding which forms of masculinity were adopted in their explanations and responses. Through the use of focus groups, their interactions were further observed as these contributed to further understanding the emerging constructions of masculinities that were considered group dependent. Focus groups thus provided the researcher with the tool to observe and consider men, masculinities, and their practice as resulting from social constructions. This allowed for further consideration of these as not naturally displayed, but rather as constructed and continually reproduced, sometimes as a result of context (Hearn, 2007). Through the method of focus groups, detailed and rich qualitative data was yielded thus assisting the researcher in gaining further insight into the socially linked phenomenon of rape and the influence of masculinities in making sense of this (Powell & Single, 1996).

By understanding constructions of gender and how these emerge in discussions on male rape, as well as how they intersect in shaping experiences, clinical practice may be enriched (Mendelsohn & Sewell, 2004). This is due to the significance of this research in its contribution to the knowledge base on masculinities and the centrality of this in understanding male rape. Constructions of masculinity, such as those that emerged in the talk on male rape, further contribute to a greater understanding of men in the context of gender relations. This research can thus be seen as contributing to the expanding knowledge base of gender, men, and their experience of masculinity. This research also contributes to growing literature on social constructions and how society contributes to a

continual reproduction of behaviour. Through the above, this research sheds some light on masculinities and how these are negotiated, often as a result of the social context.

1.2. Structure of the Research Report:

The following provides an outline of the structure of this research report. Chapter two presents a summary of the literature reviewed. Within this, male rape is introduced as the vehicle through which talk on masculinities will be initiated. The literature further explains the objective, subjective and finally the socially constructed components of this phenomenon. Following this, the social construction of concepts such as gender more generally and then masculinity specifically, are introduced in an attempt to shed light on the constructed nature of these concepts in broader society. Further to this, literature on masculinities is reviewed in creating a greater understanding of the masculine identities that have so far been defined and constructed. This in no way attempts to define these as static because the socially constructed nature of such concepts results in an ever-evolving understanding of gender and masculinities. Hence a review of this serves to shed light on current understandings of the two and this will be further critiqued in an effort to shed light on the fluidity of such concepts. South African literature was further reviewed, and within this, the shifts in masculine responses in this context have also been noted. Finally the argument is grounded in both a feminist and profeminist consideration of both masculinities and male rape to further shed light on the gendered nature of both these concepts.

Chapter three presents the methodology of this research report. This chapter begins by addressing the aims of the research and the questions that arose in reviewing the literature. Following this, the research design is presented and discussions then move into a presentation of the rationale for using of and further details of the participants. The data collection strategy, procedure and analysis of this are then addressed. The chapter subsequently concludes in considering ethical guidelines and procedures that were adhered to during the research process.

Chapter four represents a combined discussion of both the findings and interpretations of the research presented in the form of a report. This chapter begins with an introduction followed by issues of reflexivity considered important by the researcher. The results are then presented using four broad themes: constructions of the rape encounter, hierarchical constructions of masculinities, accommodating responses to homosexual identities and finally the emergence of progressive masculine responses. Throughout the report, the participants' strong adherence to hegemony in their responses is emphasised. This is because participants, in their responses, continually afforded a higher degree of legitimacy to this identity in relation to both women and other masculine identities and thus discussion here centers on the elevation of this masculine identity.

Chapter five forms the concluding chapter of this report. Within this, the research questions are addressed through a presentation of both a summary of findings and the conclusions that were made from this. Moreover, a consideration of both the strengths and limitations of this study is presented to shed light on areas that were of value and issues that could be improved should future research be pursued in this area of study. Following this, the implications of the study are discussed and areas for future research are highlighted and suggested. This research report concludes with presenting final comments for consideration.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This research takes a gendered stance in its application of theory. Within this, gender is understood as a socially constructed concept due to the social influences that largely shape and hence determine broader understandings of gendered behaviours. Through a consideration of the socially prescribed nature of gender, further discussions specifically involving the implications of this on masculinities will then be addressed. This is because a similar standpoint is assumed in considering masculinities, and therefore masculine identities are seen as similarly influenced and shaped by social constructions of such identities. Lindegger and Maxwell (2007) support this understanding and believe that masculinity is not a property, but rather it is the result of social constructions that continually regulate what behaviour is appropriate of men. Within this, the context one finds oneself in, largely contributes to the acceptable behaviour and attitudes of men (Lindegger & Maxwell, 2007). An understanding of social expectations within contexts thus becomes central in considering behaviours of men and the identities they assume in response to this.

Although this research focuses on constructions of masculinities, male rape forms the basis from which discussions around masculinity will emerge. It is thus important that this phenomenon be reviewed to provide an understanding of the relationship between this traumatic event and the masculine identities that shape responses to this. It is for this reason that the literature takes as its starting point a discussion on trauma, but the importance lies in understanding trauma from both a masculine and feminine perspective. In order to do this, objective, subjective, as well as the socially constructed components within this, will be considered. This is because this allowed the researcher to conceptualise male rape as gendered, thus forming a framework on which to understand the link between this traumatic event and the influence of masculinities in understanding this. Because male rape is understood as drawing on the discourses of gender, trauma, sex and sexuality and finally violence, it represents a multi-faceted issue that can assist in drawing out the masculine influences that shape our interactions and responses.

2.1. The Central Components in Defining Male Rape as Traumatic:

Male rape is considered a traumatic event and, in order to understand this, a review of trauma needs to be attended to. One must however remain cognisant of the fact that trauma does not involve a singular definition, but rather there are many components that together contribute to the definition of an event as traumatic. It is thus further important to consider such components to better understand how an event such as male rape can have traumatic effects possibly considered different to another traumatic experience.

Events that suddenly arise, that are experienced negatively and perceived as occurring out of an individual's control, constitute a trauma (Carlson & Dalenberg, 2000; The American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2000). Trauma is further defined in two ways, as a physical or a psychological injury (Dirckx, 1997, as cited in Dulmus & Hilarski, 2003). An extreme stressor can lead to both psychological and biological malfunctioning. A physical trauma causes bodily damage, whereas psychological trauma is associated with a sudden experience of anxiety in reaction to an external event where the individual is unable to cope or defend himself (Dulmus & Hilarski, 2003).

Male rape involves both physical trauma in the bodily harm it may cause and in addition, psychological responses can arise in the feelings of fear and anxiety that this may provoke in a male victim. The above represents a more general description of trauma and, for the purposes of this research, other components that assist in its definition need to be considered. Such components are important as they are directly influenced by gender and the reactions society adopts as a result of gendered expectations. This involves considering both the objective and subjective components of trauma and, as will be argued, the latter becomes central for the purposes of this research. Within such discussions, the socially constructed nature of trauma will also be addressed. This is because a consideration of this contributes to an increased understanding of the gender appropriate behaviours that largely influence societal understandings of trauma.

Objective components are defined as when a person witnesses a threatening event to themselves or another individual that is considered as falling outside the range of normal experience (Bryant & Allison, 1999). This can result in a response of intense fear or horror or helplessness (Bryant & Allison, 1999). Rape is considered a traumatic event within this objective component of understanding. The problem is, that this is more commonly adopted in association with women, however the socially constructed idea that men should not be victims of rape does then objectively place this event as outside the range of normal experience. Hence the beginnings of a gendered understanding of rape begin to emerge.

The above can further be explained as simultaneously influencing how the event is further understood and defined subjectively. Subjective components involve individual perceptions which are further understood as of great importance in defining an event as traumatic. Individual components are better explained as the level of distress felt during the event, as it is partly an individual's subjective perception that contributes to whether or not the event is defined as traumatic (Dulmus & Hilarski, 2003). Within this research, the importance of considering masculine influences on one's subjective perception is central. This is because the masculine influences that will be further discussed largely contribute to understandings of gender appropriate behaviours. The vulnerability associated with rape is less often associated with masculine identities. Hence a societal preference of men as immune to traumas such as male rape becomes important if we are to consider the influence that this might have on the individual's subjective perception of falling victim to male rape.

It thus becomes apparent that masculinity, and the identities we attach to this, can be seen as largely influencing the level of trauma that a male victim might experience. This is due to the added stressor if the trauma is considered gender inappropriate, as in the case of male rape. Thus it is through the contributing variable of gender in relation to societal expectations, and constructions that define it, that this research adopts its understanding of male rape as a traumatic event. In this light, the focus of trauma within this research is centered on gender and the social prescriptions that contribute to traumatic responses to

male rape. This is seen as directly associated with the social constructions attached to masculinities and the difficulties within this in understanding rape, as not a limited and traumatic experience to women, but as an issue that similarly threatens men.

2.2. Shifting the Focus to the Rape of Men:

In their daily lives individuals determine their own physical boundaries and this may differ from person to person. When concerned with sexual relations however, physical boundaries are almost universal. Thus the experience of unwanted sexual acts or assault is described as particularly negative and traumatic as it is a direct invasion of an individual's sexual or physical boundaries (Vrana & Lauterbach, 1994). Sexual trauma however, can be interpreted as too general as it includes rape, sexual assault, childhood sexual abuse and incest (Roth & Lebowitz, 1988). Therefore it is important to distinguish these from one another before continuing. This research uses male rape as a vehicle for understanding constructions of masculinity and thus female rape as well as all other forms of sexual trauma will be discarded at this point as it is important that a gendered understanding of rape in relation to men be established.

2.2.1. The Rape of Men:

The idea that male rape is not considered a frequently occurring event has largely resulted in this phenomenon being overlooked and often ignored. The following thus serves to shift understandings of rape away from one that involves women, to definitions and understandings of rape that are exclusive to men.

South African definitions of rape include Jewkes, Levin, Mbananga and Bradshaw (2002) who define rape as using force or persuasion to have intercourse against the individual's will. Rape is further described as one of the most traumatic events a person can experience (Jewkes *et al.*, 2002). The shortcoming in such definitions is that they are often aimed at describing female rape and although gendered, the point here is to shift the focus of gender from that of women to a consideration of men.

Male rape is thus a more appropriate definition to consider and this phenomenon is defined as “the forceful or coercive involvement of men in sexual activities” (Kimmel & Aronson, 2004, p. 490). If it were not for the use of the word men in this definition, it could be easily altered to explain the rape of women. Mitchell, Hirschman and Hall (1999) more appropriately define male rape as a man being sodomised or forced to perform sexual acts on the attacker. Further descriptions explain male rape as “an assertion of power or aggression” or “an expression of sexual need” (Hillman, O'Mara, Taylor-Robinson & Harris, 1990, p. 503). The focus on gender here is more prominent as the words used such as power or aggression represent descriptions we often attribute to men.

In a recent study conducted at an Honours level investigating men's perceptions of male rape (Field, 2007), it was found that that participants' responses indicated a reluctance to accept male rape as a prevalent phenomenon in society. Rape statistics in South Africa are believed to be elusive (Jewkes & Abrahams, 2002), and because precise statistics on male rape are not available, such responses continue to dominate in the understandings of this crime. Hearn (2007) places masculinity as a central term in understanding this, as it is his belief that constructions of gender have often resulted in the denial of violence against men and he uses sexual violence as an example. This raises the question of whether male rape is a limited crime or if in fact it is a reality that has been avoided due to expectations of gender.

Further supporting the above, until December of 2007, male rape remained unrecognised within the South African constitution. The new Act however recognises same sex rape as well as rape across gender lines and thus includes male rape in its definition. The Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act 32 (2007) thus repealed “the common law offence of rape” and replaced it “with a new expanded statutory offence of rape, applicable to all forms of sexual penetration without consent, irrespective of gender” (p. 3). This represents an important political shift as it recognises that male rape is a growing reality in South Africa. In including such amendments, it further provides such victims with the legal assistance in it now being considered a

punishable crime. Additionally, growing recognition in the constitution could prove highly influential in broader society in individuals realising the increasing possibility of male rape occurring.

2.2.2. The Impacts of Male Rape:

Having defined male rape, the literature now considers the impacts this phenomenon can have on men. In continuing with building an argument that focuses on men as victims of rape, the following will be focused on the impacts that are considered as directly related to gender.

Male rape induces trauma that has long lasting effects because what follows trauma often includes many serious mental health problems, and furthermore an increased likelihood of developing psychopathologies (Elliott, Mok & Briere, 2004; Roth & Lebowitz, 1988; Thompson *et al.*, 2003). Research that has focused on male rape has explained the effects of rape as leaving men feeling embarrassed, shocked, angry and irritable (Rogers, 1997). Furthermore men are understood as presenting with more denial and hostility (Gold, Marx & Lexington, 2007). It has also been found that men who experience rape are also more likely to turn to the use of drugs and increased alcohol consumption than women (Kalichman, Sikkema, DiFonzo, Luke, & Austin, 2002). In addition, male victims of rape are understood as experiencing higher levels of depression and hostility (Gold *et al.*, 2007). Elliott *et al*. (2004) conclude that male rape victims are more symptomatic than women with a similar experience, showing greater levels of specific self-related dysphoric symptoms.

The experience alone is not the only factor that contributes to a man's suffering, but in addition, male rape is associated with severe psychological impairment that lasts for long periods of time because of the effect it has on their sense of being 'real' men (Maker, Kemmelmeier & Peterson, 2001). The clinical presentations that such victims present with are therefore often worsened by the very fact that the trauma itself and its effects do not align themselves well with the constructions of masculinities and more specifically

accepted masculine behaviours. Victims thus face the added impact of trying to cope with this trauma in a gender appropriate fashion, thus further adding to their experiences of trauma. The literature now shifts its focus from a clinical one to one more focused on gender.

Male rape is described as traumatic, dehumanising, degrading and life-threatening (Doherty & Anderson, 2004; Mezey & King, 2000). Further descriptions relate male rape to "an aggressive attack on their sexuality and a violation of their physical and psychological boundaries" (Mezey & King, 2000, p. 141). Kimmel and Aronson (2004) state that, although the harm brought on by male rape is similar to female rape, they further suggest that male victims may experience a greater intensity. This is because research has shown male rape to be more violent than female rape, which is further worsened when coupled with the stigmatisation associated with this phenomenon (Kimmel & Aronson, 2004). Such stigma can be seen as directly related to the gender appropriate behaviours society assigns to men.

In a society where constructions of masculinities create a norm, or rather expectation of men to be strong and aggressive, sexual contact between men is expected to be avoided. This sort of sexual victimisation thus violates sex-roles accepted by society (Elliott *et al*., 2004). It is because of this that male rape is explained as exceptionally distressing and destabilising to both a man's sense of self and identity (Doherty & Anderson, 2004). This is supported by data that showed that male victims of rape report "great difficulty in the self and sexual domains" (Elliott *et al*., 2004, p. 209). Moreover, the humiliation associated with rape often leads a man to question his sexuality following this trauma, which can lead to sexual dysfunction in other relationships (Rogers, 1997). Male rape is thus extremely traumatic, carrying with it both initial effects coupled with the longer lasting impacts that are often worsened as a direct result of gender and its influential nature in conceptualising the experiences of men.

The above review results in a reconsideration of rape when viewing it in relation to men. This is because the description shifted from a clinical description to an understanding of

what rape does to a man's sense of being a man, and how it directly violates and hence impacts on the accepted constructions of masculinities. Again the emphasis is on the fact that these constructed notions do not allow space for men to feel vulnerable and display the symptoms associated with this vulnerability. The question to ask then is whether this is an accurate description of this trauma or rather, whether it reflects how society has constructed their understandings of men within a socially specific context that does not allow for men to be in a position of vulnerability or weakness.

2.2.3. Gendered Responses to Male Rape:

It was mentioned that the above impacts are worsened when coupled with the stigmatisation that male rape receives. The importance of considering the gendered aspect of rape therefore also lies in considering the responses this phenomenon stirs up. This involves a consideration of both responses to men and those by men. This is because it is such responses that continually construct and reproduce men as falling outside this experience. These result in consistently denying men the space to acknowledge the reality of male rape.

It has been noted that men in their responses to male rape strongly deny its occurrence (Field, 2007). It has also been found that men perceive the prevalence of male rape to be strongly associated with context and, more specifically, that male rape is a context specific phenomenon (Field, 2007). Supporting this, it is commonly believed that male rape only occurs in prisons or other male institutions (King, Coxell & Mezey, 2000). Others believe it to occur in the context of the military, and it is usually these contexts that society uses when admitting to the occurrence of male rape (O'Hara, 1998). Rape as occurring only in these contexts is a myth that needs attention. It is postulated that this represents a way that men can distance themselves from this crime because it contradicts the expectations that constructions of masculinity place on men. It is because of limited reporting and minimal literature available on male rape that one cannot determine actual contexts. This argument relates to previous discussions on gender because again, it is how society has constructed men in social contexts that has led to decreased reporting of this.

Society's constructions of men and masculinities are thus important and can further be considered highly influential in understanding the phenomenon of male rape. This is because society's reactions directly influence and further add to the impact of male rape on the victim. Men are thus discouraged from reporting rape because of the social norms that lead society to perceive such victims as weak or inadequate. Society believes that men should be strong enough to fight off or escape from such an experience, and thus men are often blamed for the event and perceived as failures (Kimmel & Aronson, 2004). This failure is directly related to a failure in their gender and therefore a gendered understanding continues to dominate in making sense of male rape. This relates to the ideas around strength and dominance that are more easily associated with men being the perpetrator. Such beliefs continually lead to ignoring the vulnerabilities of men as possible victims of traumatic experiences such as male rape (Shefer *et al.*, 2007).

Doherty and Anderson (2004) did find however, that individuals respond more sympathetically to heterosexual men who are raped than homosexual men, because for the latter, this sexual act is considered to be the norm. This shows that responses are largely based on constructions of masculinities, and something as simple as sexual orientation can increase one's potential support system. This reflects a continual undermining of masculinities that differs from dominant forms. This point also emphasises how subordinated masculinities may be further oppressed if one is a victim of this crime.

Many men further fear reporting rape because they are afraid of being termed homosexual themselves (Hillman, O'Mara, Taylor-Robinson & Harris, 1990). This is a common response to male rape victims because it is simply more acceptable to perceive this as an act of homosexuality, falling outside the realm of hegemonic masculinity, than to acknowledge it as a potential threat in society today. Alternatively, if a man is raped by a woman, society rates such victims as not deserving of sympathy (Doherty & Anderson, 2004) because traditionally a man should not be overpowered by a woman, again emphasising hegemonic ideals. These hegemonic ideals override the idea of trauma and

continually shift society's perceptions of male rape to gendered explanations of this phenomenon.

Explanations so far point towards the influence of gender stereotypes in understanding common responses to male rape (Rogers, 1997). Gender stereotypes are defined as “the structured set of socially defined beliefs about the personal attributes of men and women” (Mendelsohn & Sewell, 2004, p. 104). Society places an expectation on men to be independent and assertive whereas women are simply expected to be passive and emotionally expressive. Because of such expectations, men who show their emotions following trauma are looked upon as deviating from the norm (Mendelsohn & Sewell, 2004). In addition, fear and vulnerability are also regarded as attributes of women only and thus victimisation is associated with emotional distress that only women are expected to express. This fear and vulnerability is not congruent with the traditional gender role of men (Mendelsohn & Sewell, 2004).

The above represents the pressure placed on men in society to live up to the norms and expectations associated with masculinity. Society does not react positively to individuals who fail to conform to gender stereotypes (Mendelsohn & Sewell, 2004), and thus overall reaction to male victims of trauma is unwelcoming and negative. The gendered nature of defining trauma thus becomes increasingly evident. The argument suggests that male victims of trauma receive less support than females. Men are thus continually discouraged from reporting the incident of rape or even acknowledging the suffering it brings upon them (Mendelsohn & Sewell, 2004). Again the argument falls on the importance of gender in social constructions of trauma.

Because of the myths, gender stereotypes and ideals around masculinity that cause such negative responses, men are believed to delay reporting incidents for fear of further shame and humiliation (Anderson, 1997). This is largely because victims who are men do not receive the same compassion that women, who experienced similar events, would (Anderson, 1997). Makepeace (1986) noted that males rarely admit the occurrence of rape because of fear of such ridicule in others' responses. The above highlights the fact

that the experience of male rape is worsened because of the responses such victims receive (Kimmel & Aronson, 2004). If society continues to adopt myths in their responses to male victims, such victims will continue to be isolated which only worsens their suffering (Kimmel & Aronson, 2004). It is thus important to consider how such constructions of gender and masculinity intersect with trauma so that such victims can instead be met with greater levels of support.

The perceived shame that directly relates to gender expectations of this trauma causes such victims to stay silent, hiding their experiences and feeling isolated, facing the experience and impacts with no counselling, medical or social support (Doherty & Anderson, 2004). Hillman *et al*. (1990) suggest that male victims of rape need to be presented with more medical and psychological opportunities to gain the level of support needed in coping with rape. Such a point becomes important as the gendered notion of rape becomes a continual point of reference in making sense of male rape.

In describing male rape from a gendered perspective, it became apparent that such understandings and definitions are largely influenced by societal constructions of men in social context. In doing so, the idea of trauma was less congruent with clinical implications, and instead the impacts of and responses by men and to male victims of rape were best described in terms of gender stereotypes. It is because of the above that it is postulated that the talk on male rape is likely to elicit significant constructions of masculinities because it draws on discourses of gender, trauma, sex and sexuality and violence. It thus represents a controversial topic for male participants to speak openly about the multiplicity of influential factors that contribute to a more thorough understanding of this phenomenon.

2.3. The Social Construction of Gender:

Throughout discussions the idea of male rape as highly gendered was emphasised. This leads one to believe that understanding this phenomenon requires a closer analysis of gender and how it is constructed in social context. Smiler (2004) states that "humans are

gendered beings whose lives and experiences are (most likely) influenced by their gender" (p. 15). This statement will now be further addressed and more specifically, the constructed nature of gender in influencing men's behaviours will also be considered.

Arguments so far have continually emphasised the importance of gender and how society has continually constructed men in their understandings. It is largely through gender that society understands acceptable behaviour pertaining to men and women. By considering this concept, one can gain a greater understanding of why responses to violence against men are directly linked to masculinities and how society constructs these. Simply put, constructions of gender involve the understandings within a society of the meanings associated with being a man or a woman (Lindegger & Maxwell, 2007). This however, is not as simple as one would think and in fact involves a process that individuals are exposed to from the beginning of life.

Gender results from cultural constructions and thus it is not dependant on biological sex (Butler, 1990). This seems relatively straightforward, however the terms gender and sex are often confused with one another (Lindsey, 1990). Before discussing how the former has been constructed, it is important to define both sex and gender to distinguish the two from one another. The term sex is associated with the biological aspects which differentiate men from women physiologically whereas gender involves the social, psychological and cultural characteristics associated with males and females (Lindsey, 1990). Lindsey (1990) further posits that sex is "less likely to be altered" (p. 2) whereas gender is learned, changes with time and varies dependent on one's social context. This indicates that constructions of gender do not automatically result from biological sex. Butler (1990) notes that gender only stems from sex in the cultural meanings that society adopts in accordance with one's sex.

As an important theorist in the writings on gender, Butler (1990) has rejected the notion of gendered understandings of binary opposition. In critiquing the idea of two separate and independent genders, Butler's (1990) rejection of this implies that one cannot consider gender to involve only two distinctly different identities directly related to one's biological sex. This idea therefore emphasises the distance between sex and gender and

hence one can no longer view the one as mirroring the other. One cannot continue to view the relationship between the two as dependant but rather, to understand that sex continually reproduces gender because of cultural influences and societal constructions (Butler, 1990). In this light, it becomes clear that although related, one should not be determined by the other. Rather, the construction of gender is continuously recreated through interactions and social life and thus Lorber (1994) similarly views gender as a human production.

Both culture and one's subjective meanings shape the construct of gender and such meanings are continually changing (Courtenay, 2000). This could mean that how society understands maleness and femaleness may be strongly located in time. A complete understanding of this largely depends on considering a number of factors, such as context and personal understandings, to name a couple. Although such constructions are believed to be continually shifting, these changing ideas remain constant in the idea that gender denotes the behaviour that society describes as typical of either men or women (Courtenay, 2000). If one is to understand such prescribed behaviours, the socialisation process that determines this needs to be addressed. This will be reviewed in order to gain insight into how human production results in two genders that display such distinct characteristics, a process often referred to as gendering.

Constructions of gender begin at birth when an individual is assigned to a sex category based on their genitalia and this is immediately followed by clothing the child in the appropriate attire (Lorber, 1994). The process of gendering hence begins with the simple act of clothing a newborn and although sex and gender were defined as separate entities, the beginnings of the gendering process take an infant's sex as the starting point. From the basic act of clothing an infant in what is considered gender-appropriate clothing individuals are treated differently on the basis of this process of gendering (Lorber, 1994). The gendering process is continually emphasised throughout childhood. A simple example may be the sports and activities society allows boys and girls to participate in as these largely contribute to the process of gendering. Connell (2000) agrees that schools

play a large role in the gendering process as it is through this that society emphasises expected behaviours in relation to one's sex.

Not only do we construct the concept of gender, but in addition, our daily interactions continue to reify the process of gendering through ascribing gender roles. The expectations society places on male and female behaviours are termed gender roles. Traditionally boys are expected to behave in a masculine way and conversely girls are reared towards being feminine. As mentioned, the basic act of child-rearing begins this process and similar social experiences continue to shape behaviour throughout life. Because gender roles often shape experiences, gender, coupled with these experiences results in different feelings and consciousness. This way of being is what we term masculine and feminine (Lorber, 1994). Thus through this process of gendering, two separate genders, displaying difference in their behaviours and thoughts, are continually reproduced.

Lorber (1994) assumes gender to be a social institution because it is also through gender that human beings organise their lives. It is through this that one's gender relates to one's values and responsibilities and through this process of gendering, the two different groups are socialised to become different people (Lorber, 1994). It becomes apparent that simple processes enacted in everyday situations contribute to social constructions of gender.

Once gendered, individuals conform to the gendered norms or expectations held by the social order because, as a process, gender creates differences for men and women (Lorber, 1994). This is better explained using the term gender appropriate behaviour. Gender appropriate behaviour sustains and reproduces constructions of gender and in doing so dictates the behaviour of men and women (Lorber, 1994). What is considered appropriate gender behaviour is often rewarded whereas gender inappropriate behaviour is often punished. This implies that through reward and punishment, human beings are in a process of gendering throughout their lives. What becomes interesting is that research suggests that girls adopting masculine traits are perceived as more acceptable than boys who adopt feminine characteristics, and thus gender roles and gender-appropriate

behaviours of men are understood as less flexible than those of women (Courtenay, 2000). Human beings continually reproduce gender through this gender appropriate behaviour or conversely by resisting and subsequently displaying gender inappropriate behavior (Lorber, 1994). This implies that even if one does not conform, one is still reproducing constructions of gender by simply opposing dominant ideals instead of changing such constructions.

Constructions of gender also serve as part of a stratification system in which men are ranked above women. Through this, men define women as lacking the qualities they portray (Lorber, 1994). Such a system of stratification continues to maintain the idea of gender as a social construction brought forth by the social order. This implies that the social construction of gender produces the term not only as a category of understanding and knowledge, but also as a process of discrimination (Hook, 2006).

Having considered the above, the literature now turns its focus back to Butler (1990) who strongly believes that gender is a performance of sex that individuals adopt in efforts to do gender correctly. The problem is that this continues to encourage and justify the societal belief in two completely separate and naturally occurring genders (Butler, 1990). A further problem is that this does not allow for slight deviations from these socially constructed norms. Butler (1990) thus critiques this system of binary oppositions when viewing gender.

The above has shown that gender is something that is ascribed rather than prescribed and this is a direct result of a socialisation process termed the gendering process. Through this process gender has been continually reproduced and sustained by social processes. Therefore gender can be considered a socially constructed concept that continues to restrict social identities such as what it is to be masculine.

It can be argued then that a continual reliance on essentialist ways of describing gender has resulted in explanations and behaviours related to gender that almost seem natural. The field of psychology specifically, can be regarded as involved in a continual process

of creating and performing gender in its continued production of gendered discourses. Mainstream psychology is thus guilty of an essentialist process of knowledge production that in turn is consistently relied on in explaining gender. The reason this is important to consider is because the researcher argues that gender is not fixed and rather that society constructs gender out of context. In doing so, these constructed differences have perpetuated dominant constructions that further produce asymmetrical relations of power. This largely results in fixed ways of explaining gender. Hence it becomes increasingly important that the social nature of knowledge production as a practice be considered in order to alter the continued and fixed ways that people ascribe to in defining gender.

The above is largely concerned with gender relations and more specifically, the need to change such social relations. The importance of this is due to the very fact that the socialisation and gendering process spoken of has resulted in a particular way that men and women relate to one another. These ways of relating have reinforced the idea that gender is a fixed concept. It is only through a reconsideration of this, and further shifts in behaviours, that a true understanding of gender as not stable and fixed, will be gained. This is central if we are to ever understand the multiplicity of factors that the concept of gender speaks to. Furthermore, the importance of considering this lies in the idea that a reconsideration of gender will similarly allow for a reconsideration of masculinities, as these too largely result from the social practice of constructing gendered identities.

2.4. The Social Construction of Masculinities:

Anaya (1996, p. 63 as cited in Courtenay, 2000, p. 1390) states:

> A macho man doesn't show weakness. Grit your teeth, take the pain, bear it alone. Be tough. You feel like letting it out? Well, then let's get drunk with our *compadres*… Drinking buddies who have a contest to see who can consume the most beer, or the most shots of tequila, are trying to prove their maleness.

Such a quote seems to encapsulate the expectations placed on men in terms of coping with adversities. This is largely a result of constructed notions of masculinities and the resultant behaviours that society then considers as appropriate to this gender. Gender, as discussed, is not present at birth and it is through the process of gendering that a similar construct, masculinity, is created (Lorber, 1994). Masculinity is therefore not an inherent property of an individual, but rather Davies (2002) sees it as a result of constructions society imposes on us. These constructions have resulted in the ideology of masculinity which organises the characteristics, attributes and traits that society considers to be masculine (Smiler, 2004).

Lorber (1994) believes that there exists no essential femininity or masculinity, however, once gendered, individuals conform to the norms and expectations associated with their gender. Society has constructed the essence of being male or female as binary opposites and in this, the traits of each are considered separate and distinct (Davies, 2002). The focus here is on masculinities and how these have been socially constructed into the way they are understood at present.

Masculinity and the idea of becoming a man thus can be viewed as largely resulting from social constructions. It is because of this that it is a dominant belief that men are not born, but rather they are made (Fausto-Sterling, 2000). Society plays a large role in the constructions of masculinities and associates being masculine with tough-mindedness, confidence and self-reliance (Lindsey, 1990). In addition, Courtenay (2000) describes typical masculine behaviour as “independent, self-reliant, strong, robust and tough” (p. 1387).

Masculinity can thus be understood as a constructed concept that stands in opposition to femininity. One has to consider then where such differences in gender originated from. Connell's (2000) gender relations approach can be used as it provides a way of understanding the different dimensions of gender, the relations between society and the bodies within it, and finally the patterning of gender. From this approach gender is understood as organising social life in a process of patterning in social relations referred

to as structure. Important to note however, is that gender does not involve a single structure, but rather there exist multiple structures at play in society (Connell, 2000). Connell (2000) suggests "a four-fold model of the structure of gender relations" (p. 24) involving power relations, production relations (the division of labour), cathexis (emotional relations), and finally symbolism. Each will be discussed as they assist in understanding gender relations and the influence of this on constructions of masculinity.

The first structure, namely power relations, involves the concept of patriarchy that largely defines broader society. This is more commonly understood as the subordination of women due to male dominance (Connell, 2000). Despite continual resistance as illustrated in gay and lesbian movements, patriarchal systems prevail in broader society (Connell, 2000). Patriarchy is central in considering the constructed nature of masculinity as this is directly related to the greater degree of legitimacy masculinities are afforded over femininity for example. Secondly, Connell (2000) speaks of production relations and the division of labour which further involves a patriarchal dividend. This refers to the benefit men receive as a direct result of their gender as opposed to women who view this as largely unequal (Connell, 2000). This is by no means considered an accident, but rather is considered a direct result of social constructions of masculinity that afford men greater control (Connell, 2000).

Connell (2000) considers cathexis to be the third structure within his gender relations approach. He sees this as related to emotions and desire which are considered as resulting from gender order (Connell, 2000). Within this structure, men are seen as being afforded more sexual freedom in comparison to constructed ideas that consider women to be more sexually conservative (Connell, 2000). Additionally, this structure results in clear sexual boundaries that largely determine appropriateness of sexual relations (Connell, 2000). It is this structure that can be considered largely influential in constructions of masculinity that afford greater legitimacy to heterosexuality. Furthermore, cathexis largely determines the appropriate emotions each gender displays, and within this, the constructed nature of men as tough and unemotional is central (Connell, 2000).

The final structure to be considered is that of symbolism. Here Connell (2000) refers to the understandings of gender differences in terms of symbolic oppositions as opposed to images of gradation. This is largely understood as reinforcing the gender dichotomy. Within this, dress, make-up, gestures, one's tone of voice, body culture and linguistic terms all assist and contribute to the symbolic presentation of gender (Connell, 2000). The structures defined by Connell in his gender relations approach already begin to provide a greater understanding of the constructed nature of masculinity. This is because each serves to structure and create boundaries between masculine and feminine behaviours.

It is important to further consider that Connell (2000) sees such structures as linked to bodies. This is understood in relation to the idea that within the gender process, “the everyday conduct of life is organised in relation to a reproductive arena, defined by the bodily structures and processes of human reproduction” (p. 26). This points to the idea of gender as a social practice that continually refers to bodies and what they do. Moreover, Connell (2000) speaks of gender configurations which refer to the practice relating to the structure of gender spoken of. Within this, masculinity is important as when we speak of this construct, we are in a process of naming the configurations of gender. Connell (2000) further posits that masculinity must be understood as a gender project involving a dynamic process of configuring practice over time.

Gender configurations are further understood as a practice resulting in institutions that contribute to the overall patterning of gender relations. This practice results in a certain gender order in society that is both a product of history and hence subject to change (Connell, 2000). Masculinity is thus a constructed concept within this historical process. Masculinity, being a configuration of gender practice, refers to male bodies, however male biology does not determine it (Connell, 2005). Masculinity then, refers to many configurations of practice within broader gender relations thus explaining the multiple masculine identities evident in everyday life. Still, even these multiple masculine identities are organised around a principal axis of social relations between men and

women (Connell, 2000). This can be used in understanding the emergence of a hegemonic standard that is subordinating of other identities.

Connell (2005) posits that the constructed nature of masculinities largely results from gender relations as discussed above. More specifically, such relations "constitute a coherent object of knowledge for science" (Connell, 2005, p. 44). Viewed as a historical process, the making as well as the remaking of masculinities, is a political process that affects both societal balances of interests and directions for social change (Connell, 2005). Connell (2005) believes that gender projects, through the processes of configuring practices over time, largely transform the very starting-points related to gender structures. Hence it is through this that masculine identities are constructed. In light of this, one must remain aware that masculinities should be understood as resulting from "large-scale social structures and processes" (Connell, 2005, p. 39), and hence the constructed nature of masculinities becomes increasingly evident.

Due to its constructed nature, the term masculinity and the masculine identities within it are regarded as complex and multi-faceted. Clowes (2003) contends that through expectations that are founded on such constructions, along with interactions and relationships, masculinities continue to be actively and creatively reproduced. These social constructions of masculinities are fairly inflexible and the problem is that such constructions lead to negative consequences for both sexes (Lindsey, 1994). This is because men who fail to conform are often viewed as inadequate. Similarly, women who portray masculine attributes are similarly viewed negatively in that they are going against constructions of femininity. In addition, such constructions prevent both men and women from acquiring behaviours, skills and capacities that are considered appropriate to certain genders (Courtenay, 2000). It becomes clear that constructions of masculinities have created limitations for individuals because, based on these ideas, society expects everyone to conform to dominant expectations.

Men, in an attempt to avoid such stigmatisation, continue to internalise masculine ideologies in order to live in line with these constructed images. This only serves to

maintain the constructions of the social order (Smiler, 2004). It is because of this process of internalisation that men are seen as active agents in both constructing and sustaining the norms associated with masculinities (Courtenay, 2000). Such negative consequences go further as even those who display alternative forms of masculine identities are silenced and marginalised (Shefer, 2003). Thus society continues to construct a masculine standard to be adhered to.

Masculinities thus result from social constructions that society continues to create and reproduce in everyday contexts. They are therefore not naturally occurring phenomena, but rather represent ideas that are constantly enforced through continual performances encouraging idealised understandings of masculine behaviour (Shefer *et al.*, 2007). Failing to live by expectations of manliness results in negative consequences and because of this, this construct continues to be adopted and displayed by men in their daily interactions and relationships. It was also noted that in constructing masculinities, they are continually elevated over femininity. This can be explained as a socially constructed hierarchy that places men and their attributes above those of women.

It was mentioned that the construction of masculinities has been viewed as largely inflexible, however there still exist multiple masculine identities within it. It thus becomes important to consider these as each differs in the degree of acceptance it has received from broader society. Shifts in society have resulted in increasing accommodations being made for the masculine identities previously considered as falling outside the realm of masculinity. Although some consider masculinity to be fairly inflexible and hence quite stable, this is not so and the varying identities within it continue to evolve and seek growing acceptance from broader society. The literature now shifts its focus to a consideration of masculinities as they are understood today.

2.5. Defining Masculinity:

It is only through recent developments that understandings of masculinity have shifted in understanding. This shift has been away from singular understandings of Western norms

to consider the diversity that exists within the term masculinity (Hearn, 2007). The recognition of multiple masculinities is largely a result of the growing awareness of factors such as gender, race and class and how these intersect and influence understandings of identity (Connell, 1995). With this point in mind, it is important to consider different forms of masculinity as these have played an enormous role in the differing experiences of men. The literature begins by giving a background to initial understandings of masculinity before considering different forms.

Initial attempts to create a theory on masculinity date back to the nineteenth century where definitions revolved around sex differences and the concept of masculinity involved the male sex role (Connell, 1995). Strongly related to sex roles, the idea was that there existed two sex roles, namely a male and a female role. Interpreting masculinity and femininity as internalised sex roles arose out of this (Connell, 1995). Such sex roles are associated with the gender roles discussed earlier. The importance of discussing constructions of gender and masculinities is therefore directly related to conceptualising theories of masculinity.

The problem in defining masculinity is that the term itself implies a fixed definition of male identity based on unrealistic ideas around differences between the two sexes (Connell, 2000). This has resulted in a distorted belief by society that a single, fixed and true masculinity exists and Connell (1995) disagrees with these assumptions. In discussing social constructions of masculinity it became apparent that this term is indeed complicated. Viewing this concept as a description of the ideal man is thus not as accurate as previously assumed (Connell, 2000).

Masculinity has multiple definitions and cannot be simplified to a description of maleness, but rather it is described as a term that rests on both personal and institutional forms of power (Berger, Wallis & Watson, 1995). Masculinity is a socially constructed variable and although it relates to male bodies, male biology in no way determines this concept (Connell, 2000). This relates back to discussions on gender and therefore it is a mistake to equate biological sex with either one's gender or more specifically, masculine

identity. The similarities are explained very simply as masculinity is a configuration within gender (Connell, 2000). This assists in explaining why the social constructions of both concepts overlap.

Complicating definitions and theories of masculinity further, is that there are numerous types of masculinity that exist, such as hegemonic masculinity or subordinated masculinities. The different forms of masculinities are constructed in relation to both femininities and other forms of masculinities, as well as through gender and social structures (Connell, 1992). In order to gain a thorough account of constructions of masculinity, it is important that both be considered to shed some light on how society continually constructs masculinities in an effort to suit dominant beliefs.

2.5.1. Hegemonic Masculinities:

Connell (1995) uses Gramsci's writings on class relations and borrows from this the term hegemony, which refers to the dynamics in which a social group obtains and maintains the status of power in society. Hegemonic masculinity forms the most popular and idealised form of masculinity (Connell, 1995). This is because the idea is around maleness and being a man, which used to be termed the male role. It is largely believed that hegemonic masculinity best explains this authoritative form of masculinity (Connell, 2000).

It is important to realise that hegemonic masculinity is not static or fixed but rather it "occupies the hegemonic position in a given pattern of gender relations, a position always contestable" (Connell, 1995, p. 76). With this in mind, it is important to treat the following explanations of hegemonic masculinity as explanations rather than viewing them as over-arching truths when concerned with this construct.[2] Hegemonic masculinity

[2]Through constant processes of renegotiating and reconfiguration, the term 'hegemonic' masculinities adapts to shifting contexts and thus this is no longer a historical form of relation between men and between men and women (Connell, 1995). Rather this represents an invisible perception that continues to influence and have an effect on society's understandings of masculinity

involves "dominant ideas about masculinity which work to structure the way men think and act and the expectations that others have of them in social and cultural contexts" (Carrigan, Connell & Lee, 1985 as cited Crawshaw, 2007, p. 1608). Connell (2002) believes that the subordination of women is perceived as beneficial to men and further believes that hegemonic masculinity is the cultural expression of this idea. This implies a process of maintaining the practices that promote men dominating over women (Connell, 2002). It thus implies a patriarchal point of reference when considering the social position of men.

Hegemonic masculinity not only places masculinity over femininity, termed external hegemony, but in addition it suggests this form of masculinity as dominant over any other form of masculinity and this is termed internal hegemony (Demetriou, 2001). Hegemonic masculinity thus continually reproduces a patriarchal system that represents both power and authority and this is reflected in the relationships between men as well as those with women (Courtenay, 2000). Hearn (2007) concludes from this that a system of patriarchy can be just as negative for men as it is for women.

Hegemonic masculinity implies an absence of weakness and vulnerability which are instead replaced with both physical and emotional control. Furthermore, attributes of strength and robustness together with the refusal of assistance, a relentless interest in sexual activities and the portrayal of aggression and dominance are central (Courtenay, 2000). Hegemonic ideals further propose that men are in power and thus are not as vulnerable as women. Their physical bodies are seen as superior to those of women and feminine attributes, such as staying healthy and needing assistance from others, are irrelevant (Courtenay, 2000). This suggests that it is not simply possessing certain attributes that define this type of masculinity but also the absence of feminine attributes.

Brannon (as cited in Lindsey, 1994) defines some useful principles of masculinity that can be understood as mapping out co-ordinates commonly associated with hegemonic identities. Five principles are identified and each will be discussed as these together help in explaining the attributes society commonly associates with hegemonic masculinities.

‘No sissy stuff' is the term that associates masculine attributes with being in opposition to femininity, and thus deems this construct as anti-feminine in that males are expected to reject any form of behaviour considered feminine (Lindsey, 1994). Feminine attributes such as sensitivity and being emotional are considered to be in opposition to the construct of hegemonic masculinity and any man showing such emotions is frowned upon (Dover, 2005). Expectations of hegemonic masculinities are further complemented by the term 'the sturdy oak' which refers to the toughness and independence expected of men (Lindsey, 1994). This encourages the confidence in the abilities associated with this construct (Lindsey, 1994). Again, weakness and dependency which are more commonly associated with feminine characteristics are not considered manly, and therefore are assumed to be absent in 'real men'. In addition, 'give 'em hell' is linked to the aggression associated with hegemonic masculinity (Lindsey, 1994). Through many means, such as the media, men have been socialised to view masculinity as linked to violence and aggression (Lindsey, 1994). Crawshaw (2007) has demonstrated how the media such as *Men's Health*, a popular magazine in South Africa, have greatly contributed to societal constructions of hegemonic masculinity. Due to examples such as this, the construct continues to be associated with violence and aggression displayed by men.

'The big wheel' is another principle society associates with men and this involves the expectations society places on men to succeed (Lindsey, 1994). Through this, expectations of manliness are strongly tied to career success and the ability to assume the role of breadwinner (Lindsey, 1994). This principle is also associated with self-esteem and self-worth which are considered priorities in constructing masculinity. In order for a man to have high self-esteem and self-worth, he has to prove himself to be competent and able to be the sole provider for his family, thus displaying his masculinity. Finally Brannon (as cited in Lindsey, 1994) speaks of 'the macho man' which implies that manliness is linked to sexual ability or rather sexual competence. Accordingly, it is a common belief that one's sexual competence and performance seem to confirm a man's masculinity. The differences between masculinity and femininity continues to be emphasised as although sexual competence is viewed as manly, the opposite is true for

women, who would instead be viewed as promiscuous. This highlights the patriarchal constructions society creates and associates with individuals dependent on their gender.

Together the above principles serve as a guide to explaining how society has continually shaped masculinity, specifically the hegemonic form. This has subsequently placed pressure of men to live up to this masculine ideology. This implies that men should display characteristics that are specific to their gender (Thompson & Pleck, 1995 as cited in Smiler, 2004). The above description can be considered as largely reflecting dominant expectations placed on men in broader society and thus the influential nature of hegemony in conceptualising masculinities continues to dominate our understandings.

Hegemonic masculinity in addition, is viewed as distinctly heterosexual and, in light of this, it is also viewed as homophobic (Connell, 1992). This point will be better articulated when considering subordinated masculinities and how hegemonic masculinities continue to oppress other existing forms. It is for this reason that men and boys are continually socialised into a hegemonic masculine orientation. Such conformity is an expectation placed on them in order to be seen as real men (Lindegger & Maxwell, 2007). This results in a constant regulation of the behaviour of men as it is often supported and further used to judge any behaviour that differs (Lindegger & Maxwell, 2007).

Before moving on to subordinated masculinities it is of vital importance to remain aware that although hegemonic masculinities are considered dominant, this is largely a result of stereotypes. The importance of shedding light on the less talked about forms of masculinities thus becomes central in understanding constructions of masculine identities (Hearn, 2007).

2.5.2. Subordinated Masculinities:

As mentioned, hegemonic masculinity is currently the 'accepted' form of masculinity but it is important to consider this in relation to other forms of masculinity such as subordinated masculinities. Subordinated masculinities are forced to position themselves

in response to what are considered the hegemonic standards and thus are viewed as distant from accepted norms of masculine characteristics[3](Lindegger & Maxwell, 2007). Important to note however, is that subordinated does not imply inferior. Rather such identities do not receive the same degree of social legitimacy that other masculine identities do and this will be further explored.

The importance of considering alternative masculinities is based on the idea that to challenge dominant forms of masculinity and gender requires a thorough understanding of those that have been resisted (Shefer *et al.*, 2007). Although hegemonic masculinity implies the subordination of women only, the term hegemony is used to explain all dominance within society. Connell (1995) thus states that dominance and oppression can occur between men as well and this he terms subordinated masculinities. As a result of hegemonic masculinity, all other forms have been suppressed or subordinated and thus are continually striving for social legitimacy in broader society (Salo, 2007).

An example of this would be homosexuality. For many people in society, homosexuality is considered to be separate to masculinity and some go as far as to equate being a man with being homophobic (Connell, 1992). This point serves to explain the subordination of others involved in hegemonic masculinity, as homosexuality is viewed as a less legitimate form of masculine identity. Demetriou (2001) thus contends that homosexual men are subordinated in relation to straight men in terms of social status, prestige, as well as through other material practices that in turn lead to discrimination.

Connell (1995) explains that hegemonic masculinity may even result in equating homosexuality with femininity thus further subordinating any form of masculinity that does not fall within the 'normal' and expected range of masculine attributes. Why this point becomes interesting is that for hegemonic masculinity to include homophobia, it implies that homosexual individuals cannot be displaying hegemonic masculinity.

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[3]Subordinated masculinities have also adapted to changing contexts and thus some forms of subordinated masculinity may have been given 'legitimacy' as hegemonic in form (Connell, 1992).

Connell (1992) however, in his research has found examples of homosexual men who display attributes of hegemonic masculinity in their daily interactions. This implies that homosexual individuals remain continually subordinated in relation to the dominant form of masculinities. Again the literature points out the value of social constructions in understanding masculinities and the influential nature of society in assigning degrees of legitimacy to masculine identities. The problem lies in the very fact that this has resulted in a gender hierarchy that places subordinated masculinities, such as homosexual masculinities, at the very lowest level. Again the emphasis here is that the hierarchy implies degrees of legitimacy and thus must not be confused with comparisons relating to superior and inferior identities.

Subordinated masculinities however, are not limited to homosexuality and may further include any man viewed as displaying behaviour that differs from the constructed norms attributed to the hegemonic form of identity (Connell, 1995). This contributes to the reasoning in understanding different constructions of masculinities in understanding trauma, as such constructions greatly contribute to how we talk about and respond to violence against men.

In South Africa specifically, constructions of masculinity are just as stereotypical in their failure to allow the same degree of legitimacy when concerned with diverse types of masculinities (Morrell, 2001). Morrell (2001) further identifies how, within this context, African identities have been subordinated because the ideal is still based on Western ways of viewing men. Hearn (2007) extends this further and posits that it is not just people of colour who are socially excluded but also men belonging to the working-class and minority ethnic men. Hearn (2007) thus suggests that this subordination only results in reproducing power of certain groupings of men. Morrell (2005) posits that the process of viewing African masculinities as the 'other' is only done to continually reproduce the social construction of White masculinity as more legitimate. Connell (1995) noted how multiple masculinities exist based on contributing factors such as race and class. Thus a greater understanding of this socially-created hierarchy needs to be gained so that no single form of masculinity dominates over all. Rather all masculine identities need to be

considered for the valuable factors that make them different instead of continually equating difference with deviation.

It thus becomes apparent that strongly related to subordinated masculinities is the term marginalisation (Connell, 1995). This is because the powerful continue to emphasise hegemony as dominant at the expense of building a level of respect for anything that is different. Understanding theories on masculinity is thus a complicated process as it cannot be narrowed down to a single definition. The important point to remember is that masculinity has resulted in a set of expected behaviours of men. Hegemonic masculinities narrow this definition by explaining such behaviours as the dominant form of behaviour that fits neatly within patriarchal societies. This continually encourages the subordination of femininities and less prominent forms of masculinities. The importance of this research will be in using male rape in the service of understanding these different constructions.

2.6. A Critical View of the Concept of Hegemonic Masculinity:

Having considered both hegemonic masculinity and subordinated masculinities it becomes increasingly notable that the construct of masculinity places limits on the behaviour of men. This is because the promotion of hegemonic standards and a masculine ideal has continually resulted in pressure being placed on men. In comparison, those who do not conform are continually viewed in negative and discriminatory ways, hence receiving less legitimacy in understanding their identities. Ideal standards of masculine behaviour thus emerge from the acceptance of hegemonic standards as optimum. The literature has so far alluded to the fact that gender, and more specifically masculinities, are socially constructed concepts. In support of this, the concept of masculinity and hegemonic forms within this has not emerged without being critiqued. Hence a more critical stance of this construct will be taken in considering alternative views that critique this notion of one accepted and dominant masculine identity[4].

[4]For a more thorough critique of the construct of hegemonic masculinity, see Donaldson (1993) or Hearn (2004).

Although the concept of hegemonic masculinity has had considerable influence within gendered studies, it has simultaneously received criticism from a variety of sources. Important to consider is that both hegemonic and subordinated masculinities can show themselves at different times and in different contexts and this point is often overlooked. They do not represent single constructs, and one must remain aware that each is subject to change. In response to such critiques, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) suggest a re-examination of hegemony and the literature now turns its focus to this.

Although hegemonic masculinities have been distinguished from other masculine identities, it is still "not assumed to be normal in the statistical sense, [because] only a minority of men enact it" (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 832). Despite this, it is still considered normative in its perceived encapsulation of the most honoured way of being a man and hence most men are viewed as positioning themselves in relation to this concept (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). This in turn leads to receiving the benefits of a patriarchal system, while still not displaying an overly strong version of masculine domination. The concept of complicit masculinity was termed to account for this (Connell, 2005). This refers to men who do not conform to the prescribed hegemonic model but instead of denying this, this term serves to explain those men who passively sustain it and subsequently benefit from it (Connell, 1995).

In response to the above, Demetriou (2001) critiques the idea of an ideal form of masculinity. Both he and Connell (1995) admit that the hegemonic idea does not form the dominant identity of men because most men fall within this category termed complicit masculinity. In light of this, hegemonic masculinity is considered a cultural ideal that is not necessarily promoted by the men practising the behaviour that defines it. Rather it is promoted by society through the continual production of exemplary masculinities that align well with the reproduction of a patriarchal society (Demetriou, 2001). Societal pressures thus result in this hegemonic model that is honoured, desired and supported on the sole basis of enforcing patriarchy. The problem here is that in dealing with hegemony and subordination, the fact that masculinities represent a greater structure of patriarchy is often forgotten. This system of patriarchy is representative of a broader gender inequality

but it is suggested that patriarchy is lost in this process. It is thus important that focus be relocated to an understanding of this.

Even with shifts in understandings of constructs and recognition of the discriminatory nature of hegemonic notions, this construct continues to influence and have an effect on society's understandings of masculinity (Connell, 1995). This is illustrated in the subordinated and marginalised masculinities explained previously as although Connell (1992) among others, acknowledges that subordinated masculinities continue to shift and thus have been given legitimacy, the hegemonic form is still attributed as the accepted form of men displaying 'manly' behaviours. New understandings of masculinities continually critique and attempt to dissolve this dictative and isolated definition of 'masculine'. Yet still men, in the complicit way highlighted previously, continually reproduce behaviour that is expected in the construction of gendered behaviour. In accordance with this, men can then be seen as involving themselves in a greater process of enforcing patriarchy.

Further critiques involve the viewpoint that the underlying concept of masculinity remains blurred and uncertain in meaning and simultaneously de-emphasise important issues related to both power and domination (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Such an issue may be better understood in addressing patriarchy more directly. Hegemony is similarly critiqued for "being framed within a heteronormative conception of gender that essentialises male and female differences and ignores difference and exclusion within the gender categories (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 836). In response, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) acknowledge the confusion related to the concept of masculinity, however they hold that abandoning the concept is not the solution, but rather the cure involves adopting a relational approach to gender. Again the emphasis falls on a need to reconsider the patriarchal system that underpins broader understandings of masculinity.

Additionally, the concept of masculinity has been critiqued for its ambiguity and overlap that result in an unclear illustration of who actually represents hegemonic masculine identities (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Edley (1999, as cited in Connell &

Messerschmidt, 2005) poses that the concept of hegemonic masculinity has failed to articulate what conformity to this identity would look like in practice. Perhaps this again speaks to the complicit masculinities spoken of, as again the emphasis is on the miniscule number of men viewed as directly adhering to hegemonic masculinity in its purest sense. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) do however note that this may be representative of the fluidity of this concept and the changes it constantly undergoes as society reshapes and reformulates masculine ideals.

Despite the ever-changing nature of this concept as implied above, it is still further critiqued for its reification of power and toxic practices that continually uphold the subordination of men over women (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Those that oppose and constantly critique this notion are viewed as fighting for gender justice, and in doing so involve themselves in the process that Morrell (1995) refers to as gender transformation. Such organisations remain committed to contesting male privilege and within this, both concern over the cost of masculinity, as well as the struggle of other forms for recognition, become central (Morrell, 2005). The costs and toxic practices spoken of refer to the psychosocial issues such as domestic violence or rape which are viewed as having emerged from the attributes such as aggression, dominance and physical control that the term hegemony promotes. Thus gender transformation is a process that moves towards an acceptance of masculine behaviour that is not at the expense of either women or other masculine identities. With this is mind however, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) remind us that hegemony has multiple configurations, and thus violence and other toxic practices cannot be continually viewed as involving the defining characteristics of hegemonic masculinities. Again this points towards the need to consider patriarchal gender relations and the influence of this in constructing masculinities. This is because constructions of masculinities emerge from this greater patriarchal structure.

In support of what has been noted, Morrell (2005) contends that the vested interest that some men have in critiquing ideals of manhood is largely based on the idea that men along with women continue to suffer the consequences of the present patriarchal order.

Although Morrell (2005) acknowledges that it is men who have by and large been considered the cause of gender oppression, their acceptance of the oppressive nature of masculinity and a willingness to move towards gender peace as well as equality is key if gender transformation is to take the fore. Both collectively and individually it becomes imperative that men actively and openly contest the notion of hegemony as ideal. In doing so, the need to create a new model of masculinity as well as a shift in ways of "being men" becomes central. In order to do so, understandings need to go beyond an isolated consideration of masculinity, and thus a further consideration of the structure of patriarchy that underpins this needs to be considered.

Added to the above, the concept of hegemonic masculinity is further critiqued for being based on what some consider an unsatisfactory theory of the masculine subject. This is because in reality, this concept involves multiple meanings as opposed to the singular definition often implied (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). More specifically, it is believed by some that men can adopt these multiple meanings dependant on their needs. Hence one can adopt this identity when beneficial, but also, one can distance oneself from it when not as desirable (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). It is because of this that this concept is seen as representing the way that men position themselves in different situations, as opposed to explaining a unitary masculine identity.

Finally, this concept is critiqued for the pattern of gender relations it creates resulting in the view that such relations are self-contained and self-reproducing. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) note that this is not the case, as rather the practice of men subordinating over women results from a historical process, and not as a result of a self-reproducing system based on masculinity. Such a point serves to support the argument that masculinities represent a greater structure of patriarchy that has often been overlooked and forgotten.

Demetriou (2001) although acknowledging the role of history in shaping gender relations, further suggests that another form of simplification has in fact occurred. He identifies both external subordination of women and internal subordination of men which he terms

external and internal hegemony. The former results in continual subordination of women whereas the latter results in marginalised and subordinated masculinities living in tension and further having limited impact in constructions of hegemonic masculinities (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Thus it becomes evident that hegemonic masculinity does in fact influence patterns of gender relations. Yet still, a patriarchal order is key in understanding both internal and external forms of hegemony as each is largely due to a greater structure of patriarchal gender relations.

It can thus be seen from this argument that the concept of hegemonic masculinity does not represent a neutral term but rather a conflicted, critiqued and contested construct. Furthermore, this construct unfairly promotes oppression and hence categorises masculine behaviour into very distinct do's and don'ts. Within this argument it also became increasingly clear that a system of patriarchy underpins the hegemonic position. In line with this, the importance of re-addressing this greater structure of subordination becomes key if we were to truly understand and conceptualise the function of constructions of masculinity at a broader level. This is suggested because in essence, masculinity represents a vehicle to understanding patriarchy.

2.7. Masculinities in Transition:

Due to the constructed nature of masculinity, shifts in this concept are continually occurring. As illustrated in critiquing this construct, it has been noted that there can be no single masculinity that describes all forms of men's behaviour. Morrell (2001) believes that gender change is a complex notion. Although not definitive of all types of masculinities, he conceptualises three categories that he believes have arisen from the responses of men within South Africa to the changing construct of masculinity. These are reactive or defensive, accommodating and finally progressive masculine responses, and each serves as a way of describing the constant shift in ideas when concerned with the behaviour of men (Morrell, 2001). Although described in relatively distinct ways it is important to note that they overlap, while at the same time some contradict each other

(Morrell, 2001). Each will be discussed in an effort to shed light on constructions of masculinity within the context of South Africa.

2.7.1. Defensive and Reactive Masculine Responses:

With the constant shifting of gender relations, it has become apparent that women are in a constant transition in terms of asserting their power within gender relations. This has resulted in men having to renegotiate their relations within this. It is in response to this that many men have attempted to reassert their power in an effort to restore ideas around the male image and masculine authority (Morrell, 2001). Because of such transitions, organisations such as the South African Association of Men (SAAM) began to directly challenge feminist notions that opposed traditional masculinities (Morrell, 2001). Primarily a White group of men, this organisation arose in a time in which their masculinity appeared to be under threat in relation to the newly elected Black government, in addition to affirmative action policies that saw the entry of Black men into positions commonly considered as belonging to the White population of men (Morrell, 2001). In addition, an acceptance around homosexuality was coming to the fore and hence gay men were seen as openly flaunting their sexuality, thus showing signs that hegemonic notions of masculine behaviour were losing strength. This led many men to believe that a 'crisis' was emerging in terms of constructions of the male image. These together shaped what is now categorised as a defensive or reactive masculine response.

It is worth noting that at a similar time the incidence of female rape in South Africa rose, which can further be seen as a defensive and reactive response to transitions that were occurring (Morrell, 2001). Goldbatt and Meintjes (1997, as cited in Morrell, 2001, p. 28) cite a response by a member of the South African Rapist Association which sheds some light on this idea of defensive masculinity:

> We rape women who need to be disciplined (those women who behave like snobs), they just do not want to talk to people, they think they know better than most of us and when we struggle, they simply do not want to

join us.

Supporting this defensive notion is the feminist views of rape which, through a variety of studies, have yielded data supporting the idea that rape is considered one way in which men assert their dominance over women (Morrell, 2001).

Additionally, it is believed that Black migrant labourers similarly respond defensively to transitions in masculinity in their wanting and longing for the rural lifestyle they once lived. Within this, they perceived themselves to be respected and treated like 'real men' (Morrell, 2001). One rural woman describes how the countryside was once considered paradise for men in that they would arrive home and consume alcohol to the point of being drunk only to leave their wives afterwards with no money and often impregnated (Morrell, 2001). Shifts in this relationship have now occurred in which women have become increasingly independent, thus breaking away from the dependency they once felt in relation to men.

The above sheds light on the fact that although transitions have occurred this has not happened without creating some level of unrest. Society has witnessed both Black men and women entering the domain previously considered that of the dominant White men, in addition to women in general assuming a greater sense of power within gender relations. The masculine response to this however, has been one described as defensive and reactive in directly challenging these ideas, and acting in ways that makes such a transition more difficult.

2.7.2. Accommodating Masculine Responses:

Morrell (2001) contends that not all responses have been of the above described defensive manner. Rather, some represent attempts to relocate masculinity in a non-violent manner and this he coins accommodating masculine responses (Morrell, 2001). Within these responses, manhood is rather constructed as involving a sense of responsibility, being respectful and wise (Morrell, 2001).

An example includes African initiation practices of circumcision. Although largely contested due to the multitude of deaths resulting from operations that have gone wrong, this practice represents a form of initiation separate from other forms of anti-social masculinities using violence or crime as a form of initiation (Morrell, 2001). Apart from traditional inspiration, other ways of rejecting such violent forms of masculinity have arisen which, although not considered defensive, are still an attempt to re-establish the power of men. Field (as cited in Morrell, 2001) describes how men continually move with the changing times by not necessarily fighting for pre-existing patriarchal order, and yet not completely relinquishing their male power.

Using the work of Kopano Ratele, Morrell (2001) acknowledges that the negotiations that lie ahead go beyond the concept of gender to include issues of inequality and race. However it is further noted that even having undertaken the exploration of a new sense of being, the Black men that Ratele (as cited in Morrell, 2001) used as informants, are described as still clinging to old ways, especially the argument around male superiority created in discourse. That said however, a shift in asserting racial identities has been noted in which oppositional imperatives and violence have been replaced with more assertive and dogmatic ways (Morrell, 2001).

The above indicates how some responses have encouraged a masculinity that is more accommodating to the changing times and the shifts that have occurred in both sets of gender roles. The politically violent nature of the 1970's and 1980's impacted many men in a way that a reconsideration of their masculinity resulted (Morrell, 2001). In this process, concepts such as forgiveness and acceptance began to enter into understandings of what is meant in being a man (Morrell, 2001). Additionally, the AIDS pandemic that has become a central concern in South Africa has resulted in many men having to confront death and the emotions that accompany this, thus leading to a new consideration of mortality and vulnerability within constructions of manhood (Morrell, 2001).

Further to this, Morrell (2001) poses that the absence of “male opposition to the improvement in women's positions and to the tolerance of gay men is possibly the most

impressive testimony to the accommodationist position" (p. 31). Although both misogyny and homophobia have not completely disappeared, a shift has occurred from a time in which both were completely contested by society, to our current situation in which both have become more acceptable. Thus we see that responses to masculinity from men in South Africa sometimes represent a form that is compromising and more accepting, or rather accommodating of changes in constructions of manhood.

2.7.3. Progressive Masculine Responses:

The final category Morrell (2001) talks about is that of progressive responses to masculinity which he further describes as emancipatory masculinities. The gay movement represents an example of this form in its shift from a once marginal position to its slow progression to acceptance. Within this, the gay movement struggled for public visibility, the right to representation as well as acceptance. As opposed to the banning of gay literature under the Apartheid government, there have been increases in this too, such as the publication of gay magazines since 1993 (Morrell, 2001). Additionally, gay activists have been actively and publically campaigning for gaining recognition of same-sex marriages. Thus we see the progressive responses that evolve in an ever-shifting society.

In terms of organisations, many are now focused on violence and specifically an attempt to encourage men to take responsibility for this and condemn it in order to work for more equitable relations between genders. Such organisations include The White Ribbon Campaign (a movement against violence of men towards women) and Gun Free South Africa (an attempt to lobby for stricter laws around gun use) (Morrell, 2001). Thus South Africa and its organisations are viewed as engaged in this progressive shift away from historical and accepted forms of manhood (Morrell, 2001).

In the middle-class sector of society the idea of a new man is becoming more widespread as more men become involved in the process of introspection and a conscientisation around issues related to gender (Morrell, 2001). In society today it is more acceptable to share the housework between a man and a woman and additionally, more men are

becoming involved in childcare. The shift of women into the workplace has encouraged this and thus men have been encouraged to adopt this participatory and supportive role thus further contributing to shifts in constructions of masculinity (Morrell, 2001).

The above represents a shift in gender order and, whether accepted openly or due to a lack of choice, this still represents potentially shifting responses in what we consider men to be. What this then represents is a possible shift in hegemonic masculinity and furthermore adds to the idea that this construct continues to change accordingly. What one must also remember in considering the three categories discussed is that this has been a gradual process and will probably continue to progress in a slow manner because changing gender relations is no easy task. Within the context of South Africa, it is highly likely that men will continually be faced with conditions that undermine them and may cause them to further question their masculinity. Morrell (2001) however, believes that it is through this that South African men will be pushed towards what he considers a truly emancipatory masculinity.

2.8. Feminist and Profeminist Understandings of Men in Social Context:

The discipline of psychology has come a long way in terms of creating a social science that recognises the different experiences of men and women. Feminist theory initially developed as a critique of the dominant forms of knowledge in psychology (Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006). This is because knowledge seemed to be objective and value free, and this resulted in many marginalised voices in terms of the production of knowledge. Feminist theory acknowledged such people and how one's social position is largely based on gender. Within this, gender became the focus of research (Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006). Along with this was the importance of taking personal experience into account as well as acknowledging the role of power differentials in any given society (Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006). Although the focus was in terms of gender and power, feminist theory is not limited to this and looks at all factors that lead to oppression. Feminism looks at social meanings and holds that individuals are largely defined through their own experience (Mejia, 2005), and thus feminism considers cultural meanings associated with this. This

theory is commonly used when making sense of constructions of gender and thus it seems appropriate to adopt in this research.

The name itself does not suggest an easy application of feminist theory in relation to men and so, many believe that a feminist perspective is in no way applicable to this sex (Gilbert, Good & Scher, 1990), but because this theory takes gender as its focus, application to men is in fact possible. Hearn (2007) believes that in fact, using a feminist understanding in research, in some ways has always included men. Men have been part of the same socialisation process as women and this has led to the dominant belief that 'men don't cry' or display their emotions. This is because this is not the expected or accepted behaviour of their gender (Cockcroft, Hook & Watts, 2002). It is these expectations that cause men to face further complications in their experience as they cannot find a 'masculine' way to express their emotions. Furthermore, masculinity does not allow for feminine attributes such as emotions, because these are interpreted by society as a weakness (Mejia, 2005). This has resulted in societal constructions of masculinity repressing men, which has further led to the repression of their sense of self (Javed & Gerrard, 1998).

Being a man in most cultures does not allow a man to feel helpless, vulnerable or powerless (Eagle, 1998). Instead men are expected to display the dominant characteristics such as those explained in hegemonic masculinity. The feminist approach thus recognises that society's constructions of gender have resulted in placing limits on the feelings, thoughts and behaviours of both sexes (Gilbert *et al.*, 1990). This approach thus represents one of the first theories that acknowledged gender and how the socially constructed nature of this concept can be limiting to both sexes in its dictation of what behaviour is expected of either sex.

Feminism considers how this socially constructed idea of masculinity has impacted on men and their responses to experiences that occur outside the range of expected behaviours of their sex (Gilbert *et al.*, 1990). This theory uses a process in which one's problems are examined with respect to and in terms of the individual's own unique

experience (Hill, 1990), and how being a man as opposed to a woman can make the interpretation of an experience completely different. Recognition of gender role socialisation as well as identifying the extent to which we have internalised these messages is imperative (McLeod, 2003), in addition to understanding how this affects our understandings of gender in relation to factors such as trauma. This is termed consciousness-raising as it brings awareness to the effect that this idea of masculinity has had on how society responds to victims who are men (Israeli & Santor, 2000).

Feminism recognises that social constructions of masculinity spoken of have resulted in greatly oppressing men and their ability to cope with emotions such as the experience of trauma or even their reactions to it. The feminist approach proposed that women and men experience trauma and its impacts in a way that is determined by the distinct patterns of gender socialisation pertaining to each sex (Mejia, 2005). From this we see that in using this approach to understand traumatic experiences of men, the process of socialisation is important. This is because it greatly affects how society views male victims of trauma, as it is directly related to how society constructs men. This process of socialisation results in a need to confront gender as a central factor. By incorporating gender sensitivity in its application, the feminist approach recognises the uniqueness of an individual's own experience in terms of gender differences (McLeod, 2003).

Because this study focuses on constructions of masculinity through men's talk on male rape it is important to understand the role of socialisation as well as how this has affected perceptions of victims. Thus this study draws on feminist theory in understanding masculinity and how society negotiates gender when confronted with trauma.

Further to the above however, this study goes further and largely draws from profeminist writings in making sense of masculinities. In general, men's studies have been accused of ignoring the unique behavioural and sociological issues of men (Cools, 2008). In response to this, profeminism, which grew out of feminist writings, is a theory used in men's studies because it offers a potentially useful way for understanding and conceptualising men and masculinities (Cools, 2008). This theory is thus of great value

within this research as it will assist in explaining the influence of masculinities in the participants' responses to male rape.

Profeminism does not overlook the power that men exercise over women through something like violence for example, but rather it represents an attempt to understand where such behaviours stem from (Cools, 2008). Within this approach, the idea that men enjoy the privileges that accompany male dominated societies is acknowledged. It additionally remains focused on the idea that traditional masculinities and the norms they enforce can be destructive to men as well as women (Cools, 2008). Central to this perspective is an understanding that masculinities exist along a continuum which thus allows for the incorporation of the influences of race and class in its understanding (Cools, 2008).

Added to the above, this approach gives attention to the limitations that accompany masculinity, such as the masculine ideals and stereotypes that limit or restrict the behaviours of men (Cools, 1998). For the purposes of this research, this approach will be of great value as this research draws on similar ideas in its interest in understanding why men are continually viewed as falling outside the vulnerabilities associated with women. Additionally, a focus on understanding that masculinity is a social construct is supported in this approach in viewing masculinity. This is because a profeminist approach directly acknowledges that masculinity is a result of social constructions, and furthermore, that within this, “there exists a hegemonic masculinity against which most men must construct their masculinity” (Cools, 1998, p. 36). The influential nature of hegemonic standards has been referred to throughout and thus a profeminist stance, in making sense of the data that will be obtained, is central.

Finally a profeminist approach acknowledges the ever-changing nature of masculinity as a result of historical influences as well as contextual ones (Cools, 2008) and thus the idea that the construct of masculinity is neither fixed nor stable is again emphasised. This approach thus lends itself well to the purposes of this research as it draws on the same discourses that were articulated throughout the literature review. It thus represents an

alternative way of considering men and masculinities and the influential nature that these are expected to have on men in responding to the traumatic experience of male rape. Through using this approach, an understanding of such responses that draws directly from the idea that masculinities result from social constructs, and furthermore that such social constructions can be equally destructive to men, can be further gained.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

3.1. Research Aims:

By making use of a sample of fifteen participants divided into three focus groups, this study aimed to examine how constructions of masculinity emerged in men's talk on male rape. In using male rape as a vehicle for such discussion, this research further aimed to gain insight into how participants understand and construct masculinity in their consideration of men as victims of trauma. A further aim of this research was to understand how participants construct dominant and subordinated forms of masculinity and how these relate to broader social understandings of gender and masculinity. The gendered nature of this research rests in its consideration of masculine attributes that contribute to how men construct and perceive male rape.

3.2. Research Questions:

1. What are the hegemonic forms of masculinity that emerge in participants' talk on male rape?
2. What are the subordinated forms of masculinity that emerge in participants' talk on male rape?
3. How does this reflect broader constructions of masculinity in social context?

3.3. Research Design:

The data collection strategy used in this study involved both a semi-structured interview (see Appendix F) and a vignette (see Appendix E) in initiating discussions. The vignette was chosen as a tool for gathering data because it allowed for spontaneous discussion by the participants. Because participants raise discussions following a vignette, there exists greater flexibility and furthermore, this form of data collection is more naturalistic in allowing the participants to interact as they see fit. The interview schedule was used to complement this when further information was sought.

Further to the above, thematic content analysis was used in analysing and interpreting the data obtained, as it allowed for common themes to be recorded and further interpreted. A social constructionist perspective for analysing results was selected over a phenomenological interpretive approach. An interpretive perspective uses language to understand subjective understandings, whereas the social constructionist perspective is focused on broader patterns of social meaning that are encoded in language. Further, a social constructionist approach attempts to illustrate how society's understandings and experiences are derived from broader discourses while simultaneously feeding into them (Terre Blanche, Kelly & Durrheim, 2006). From this perspective, the focus is not on language specifically, but rather the construction of a kind of language in the social world that brings with it both systems of meaning and practices that in turn construct reality (Terre Blanche *et al.*, 2006). Therefore, a social constructionist perspective understands peoples' thoughts and feelings as though they are products of social systems of meaning, rather than a focus on individual and subjective meanings (Terre Blanche *et al.*, 2006).

A focus on this was central as it is the kinds of language that the participants of this study used that largely informed understandings of their constructions of masculinities. From a social constructionist perspective, it is these kinds of language that in turn create specific representations of people or groups of people or objects, and such representations are understood to underlie how we experience such people (Terre Blanche *et al.*, 2006). Through using this approach and further focusing on the social meanings of the participants' responses, a greater understanding of broader reality and the social meanings of its constructions of masculinities was gained.

This was a qualitative study that involved no control group, no manipulation of an independent variable and finally no randomisation, and thus can be classified as a qualitative and exploratory research design. A qualitative and exploratory design was chosen because such a design has been found useful when the purpose of the study involves investigating phenomena that are not clearly understood (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Male rape, being the vehicle through which discussions emerged, remains an under-researched area of study. This study thus served to shed light on the limited

understanding associated with this phenomenon. Furthermore, exploratory designs are equally useful in identifying and discovering categories of meaning considered important (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Through the use of male rape, this study attempted to further explore and identify the social meanings that influence the constructions of masculinities in the participants' discussions associated with this traumatic experience. No hypotheses were initially proposed as hypotheses only arose after the information obtained from the focus groups was analysed. Exploratory designs however, have been found useful in generating hypotheses for future research (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Thus the possibility of hypotheses emerging out of the data obtained following interpretations was not ruled out.

3.4. Participants:

Being of a qualitative nature, this research aimed to work with a manageable number of participants and thus the sample in this study was intended to consist of fifteen men. Two participants however, withdrew on the days that their relative focus groups took place and thus a sample of thirteen was obtained. Participants included males in and around the Johannesburg area. An exact age group was not important, however an age range of between twenty and thirty was aimed for. This was sought due to the already discussed fluid and changing nature of masculine constructs. Thus this age range was chosen in an effort to understand constructions of masculinities within this age group specifically.

It was further intended that the sample would not be limited to one race and hence it was hoped that both Black and White[5] individuals would be obtained to allow for richer data based on their different experiences. The researcher considered it important to obtain a representative sample of men in South Africa. Further to this, Black men have been found to be disadvantaged due to the constructed hierarchies of masculinities which have been found to have further implications for their gender role fulfillment (Cools, 2008). Hence,

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[5] In adopting the labels of 'Black' and 'White' the researcher does not support the existence of such constructs, but simply uses them as a means of providing terminological consistency in the writing of her report (Stevens, Franchi & Swart, 2006).

including both White and Black men in this sample was deemed important to unpack these constructed hierarchies, and further explore their implications for men in broader society. Unfortunately the sampling strategy used prevented the researcher from controlling this and only White participants were obtained through the method of snowballing. This method of sampling will now be further discussed.

Non-probability sampling is believed to be a convenient and economical method of obtaining participants and this method of sampling was used (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1999). More specifically, convenience samples were used because those who were both available and willing to take part participated in the research. This type of sampling is useful in saving time as well as effort and money (Punch, 2000). Convenience sampling helped in obtaining a small amount of participants. This was completed by a further technique of snowballing that allowed the initial sample to suggest acquaintances who they believed would be willing to participate (Devlin, 2006). Thus through a combination of convenience and snowball sampling a sample of thirteen participants was achieved.

Snowballing has often been critiqued because it leads to participants knowing each other and an increased likelihood of responding in a socially desirable. However, Ferreira and Puth (1988) perceive this as a strength, as providing homogeneity within a focus group aids in avoiding too many differences as this leads to different needs and perceptions of reality. This could have caused difficulty in how communication between individuals proceeded. Although this topic is debatable, this research used snowballing because “spontaneity and ease of conversation among acquaintances may make an interview with friends more productive” (Ferreira & Puth, 1988, p. 174). Through the use of this method, participants were faced with a more familiar environment that allowed them to let their guard down and voice their opinions more openly (Ferreira & Puth, 1988).

Having obtained thirteen participants and divided them into three groups accordingly, the researcher considered further the group dynamics that were observed in each. The first focus group consisted of men in their late twenties. They seemed to be strongly influenced by society's constructions of gender, and thus responses were of a highly

masculine and more specifically, hegemonic orientation. Furthermore, the participants in this group were very assertive in their responses and each participant attempted to voice their opinions strongly. They involved themselves in heated debates around different forms of masculinities. Some discomfort in some of the participants due to the use of the topic of male rape was noted, and this resulted in humour often being used to possibly distance themselves from the reality of this topic.

The group that followed consisted of men ranging from their early to late twenties. Overall, they were perceived as less assertive in their conversations with one another and hence were understood as more flexible in their understandings of masculinities. They engaged themselves in discussions around many different forms of masculinities, further displaying acceptance and openness to these. Some of their responses appeared to be very academically orientated, bringing a mixture of opinions and factual information to attention. Despite this, some subtle comments were made that were understood to be in contradict to earlier statements. It was thus understood by the researcher that this group displayed a strong need to positively present themselves and this was noted during further analysis.

The final group of participants was experienced as very similar to the first focus group that was facilitated, possibly due to them being of a similar age group. The participants in this group were thus also understood as very set in their understandings of men's behaviour and their associated constructions of masculinities. They too, appeared to adhere to a hegemonic understanding of masculinities, and further distanced themselves from the reality of male rape in attributing this experience to other subordinated masculine identities. Humour was used frequently within this focus group, thus further illustrating their discomfort with the topic of male rape. Overall, the group dynamics were of a pleasant nature, although certain topics initiated heated arguments, and it was because of this that the researcher felt that rich and varied data were obtained.

3.5. Data Collection Methods:

Focus groups were used as the method of data collection in the study as using focus groups has proven extremely useful in stimulating in-depth discussions on topics that may not be as easily addressed in formal interviews. It is further believed that questions of a sensitive nature are more easily addressed in group discussions (Ferreira & Puth, 1988)[6], hence further supporting the use of these in the research.

Facilitation of focus groups is an important factor and in order to run these effectively, the careful use of both leading and listening was important (Kelly, 1999). To provide a sense of structure to focus groups, a semi-structured interview schedule (see Appendix F) developed by the researcher, was used and this was administered as a group interview (Whitley, 2002). Semi-structured interview schedules provide participants with fixed questions, but this is less restrictive in that it also allows for other responses and further discussions to develop (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999). This allowed the researcher to focus on specific questions of interest while also catering for emerging topics not considered that may have been of value in the analysis. When making use of focus groups researchers aim to gain insight into the participants' perceptions of the related topic through such group discussions (Whitley, 2002). The researcher felt that the use of focus groups allowed for this to be achieved.

The sample of thirteen was divided into three groups and hence three focus groups were administered in which one consisted of five participants and the other two involved four participants each. It has been found useful to make use of a stimulus in initiating discussions among participants (Kelly, 1999), and thus this study made use of a vignette (see Appendix E) to do so. The vignette was a narrative developed by the researcher

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[6] The researcher is aware that the use of focus groups may cause individuals to hold back responses on issues deemed overly sensitive or even respond in a socially desirable way as Lea, Spears and de Groot (2001) note this as a limitation in using focus groups in data collection. In addition, Bird (1996) speaks of 'homosocial' heterosexual forms of interactions in which group solidarity may develop in maintaining hegemonic forms of masculinity as the norm in the face of perceived threat to gender identity.

using reported case examples of men who have been raped in South Africa. By using actual reports to develop the vignette, ecological validity was increased as this was more representative of actual occurrences of male rape in South Africa (Doherty & Anderson, 2004). The vignette thus served to initiate discussion on this phenomenon which further elicited talk around masculinities, as male rape brings with it a sense of stigma directly related to how men construct themselves.

The value in using a vignette in this research is that male rape may have proven to be a difficult topic to introduce to participants. It was important that this topic be addressed as it was the vehicle through which discussions on masculinities were expected to emerge. The vignette hence acted as a method that allowed participants to ease into the topic, while also providing a foundation for spontaneous discussions to emerge from (Doherty & Anderson, 2004). Because participants themselves raised discussions following the vignette, there existed greater flexibility and the participants interacted as they saw fit (Doherty & Anderson, 2004).

The vignette cannot be seen as the only stimulus, and so the researcher used the interview schedule to encourage discussion when the vignette failed to serve this purpose (Whitley, 2002). The semi-structured interview used involved a variety of questions related to certain topics deemed important to cover. These were not done in any specific order, and rather the participants spoke freely and, where appropriate, questions from the interview guide were posed to them. The value in using this method is that such interviews allow for systematic collection of data, while also allowing for further flexibility in the direction of conversations (Whitley, 2002).

The vignette and interview schedule as well as the researcher together acted as important tools during the research process, and therefore all contributed to the range of data that this study aimed to achieve.[7] The researcher used the interview schedule to ensure that

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[7]The researcher remained aware that her gender may have influenced the nature of participants' responses in that they may have held back or alternatively exaggerated other issues in an effort to positively present themselves.

discussions did not centre on male rape but instead used it to encourage talk on masculinities through the talk on male rape. Because this study was based on a previous study (Field, 2007), both the vignette and the interview schedule have proven to be of use, but modifications from the previous study were made. The adapted interview schedule and vignette were piloted in a mini focus group consisting of three participants. Piloting the interview schedule and the vignette allowed for structural changes to be made that enhanced the research procedure. In contrast to quantitative research, a qualitative approach results in the researcher being the primary instrument for collection of data, and it was important that she acted as a moderator during focus groups so that discussions flowed freely (Punch, 2000).

3.6. Research Procedure:

The procedure began by obtaining a sample to conduct the research on, and this was done through accessing representatives of the intended participant group. These men were then asked to provide the researcher with snowballing access to others whom the researcher did not know at all and whom she could then invite to participate independently. The aim was to make contact with at least three men falling within the proposed age range from the Johannesburg area. These men were then asked to further suggest another potential participant. This method of snowballing was used until a sample size of fifteen willing participants was obtained.

Once the above process was completed the researcher made contact with potential participants and three meetings were set up to further discuss the research. Having snowballed through three participants, the researcher allowed the participants to remain in these three divisions. Although a familiar setting for focus groups to take place is often helpful, the participants were asked to meet at the University of the Witwatersrand in the Emthonjeni Centre as this provided participants and the researcher with a neutral setting to conduct the research in. To outline the research and its aims, subject information sheets (see Appendix A) were then distributed at each meeting. Furthermore, the researcher was present to answer any questions or concerns of the participants. Although the subject

information sheet aimed to address all possible concerns, the presence of the researcher ensured that arising issues were dealt with promptly to control for possible withdrawals occurring later in the process. Having thoroughly discussed the process with participants, they were invited to participate and further asked to sign the accompanying consent forms (see Appendix B) if they wished to proceed in the research. The signing of consent forms was followed by arranging an appropriate and convenient time for the focus groups to take place.

Audio-taping was used in this research to capture exact responses and this allowed the researcher to fully attend to discussions through the reassurance that all data would be readily available following completion of focus groups. This prevented the researcher from being pre-occupied with note-taking that may have interfered with facilitating effective discussions. This required further consent and so consent forms to audio-tape (see Appendix C) were read and signed before focus groups commenced. The issue of confidentiality is not simple when administering group interviews, and thus it was important that the researcher and participants negotiated this at the beginning of each focus group. Participants were then informed of their responsibility in terms of not disclosing any information discussed during the focus groups afterwards and confidentiality agreements (see Appendix D) were signed to safeguard against this. This aided in encouraging participants to be honest in their responses which increased the richness of the data obtained. Anonymity is a further issue that needed to be clarified prior to data collection. The researcher informed the participants that although confidentiality and anonymity could not be guaranteed, all comments and other data obtained during focus groups would remain as anonymous as possible in the writing of the research report. This was achieved through the use of pseudonyms that aid in stripping away any identifying information. All participants agreed to this and hence the researcher proceeded with data collection, however it was at this point that two participants withdrew and the sample size dropped to thirteen participants.

The researcher began the process by welcoming participants and asking one participant to read the vignette aloud. Having heard this narrative the researcher initiated further

discussion by asking participants to comment on this. The researcher remained aware of discussions and asked for clarification when needed while also referring to the interview schedule when discussions ended. Once all three focus groups were conducted, the researcher began the process of transcribing the data verbatim. Transcribing the data herself allowed for the process of familiarity with data to begin. Through listening to the tapes numerous times, the researcher gained further understanding and dominant themes already began to emerge.

3.7. Data Analysis:

The data obtained through focus groups was analysed using thematic content analysis. Because there are numerous ways to use this form of analysis, the researcher chose to use the steps suggested by Terre Blanche and Kelly (1999) to guide this process. This form of analysis allows for a large amount of information to be sifted through efficiently, and further aids in discovering trends and patterns that may be used in the conclusion. Although commonly used in interpretive studies, this type of analysis can also be applied when analysing from a social constructionist perspective. Due to the influence of social constructions within this study, it seemed appropriate that analysis took a social constructionist perspective as its focus.

A social constructionist approach analyses how signs or messages contribute to how society represents certain people or objects (Terre Blanche *et al.*, 2006). The social constructionist approach focuses less on individual understandings, and rather views thoughts and experiences of people as resulting from the meanings that exist at a broader social level (Terre Blanche *et al.*, 2006). Under this approach language is central as the social world is often understood as a type of language that carries with it a specific construction of meaning (Terre Blanche *et al.*, 2006). The nature of this research was to understand how participants construct different forms of masculinities and in turn how these reflect broader social understandings. Thus this approach was well suited in analysing such data. In using a qualitative, critical thematic content analysis, the

researcher placed less emphasis on interpretation and rather focused on the social meanings that lay beneath the participants' responses.

The researcher began the process of analysis by familiarising herself with the data by immersing herself in it through both transcribing the data verbatim and reviewing it constantly (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999). Through this, the researcher became more familiar with data and a general idea of the types of the associated meanings that were likely to emerge during analysis was gained (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999). The researcher attempted this numerous times to ensure a thorough understanding of the data she captured during the focus groups.

The above was followed by a second step of inducing themes. This involved a bottom-up process where rules were developed in a process of organisation of data to ensure consistent coding within the different themes that emerged (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999). No rule existed as to how many themes were necessary, and instead the aim was to keep the research focused in aiming for a manageable amount that may have included subheadings within them. This step was revisited because as analysis progressed, the researcher continued to refine her themes. It is at this stage that Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that one generate a visual representation of the emergent themes in an effort to represent the intended argument diagrammatically, and thus the researcher used a mind-map to do so.

Step three involved a process of coding. Although labelled as a separate step, the researcher actually began this during the previous step in her decisions to code certain data under specific themes (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999). Any data that could not be coded under a decided-upon theme was discarded from analysis in an attempt to keep the research as refined and focused as possible.

It was mentioned that the researcher continually revisited themes and this formed the step of elaboration. This contributed to the continual coding process which led to a more focused interpretation and meaning (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999). Once satisfied with

the themes and the data under each, the researcher completed the method of content analysis through the fifth and final step of interpretation and checking. This step involved a final revision of themes in addition to fine-tuning. On completion, the researcher was able to write up a discussion and draw conclusions from the data (Stemler, 2001).

3.8. Ethical Considerations:

Ethical considerations form an important component of research. Ethics are not limited to considerations of participants, but instead they should be adhered to as early as during the planning of the research. The Health Professions Council of South Africa [H.P.C.S.A.] (2006) provides clear guidelines for conducting research and so the researcher considered the following throughout the process.

3.8.1. General Ethical Guidelines:

Those conducting research are expected to only attempt research areas that fall within their personal abilities, and this is defined by the H.P.C.S.A. (2006) as competence. The researcher ensured that her sample was appropriate given her level of qualification. Strongly related to competence is the notion of integrity because it is important that training psychologists promote the science of psychology. Therefore the researcher remained honest and fair and maintained a level of respect for the participants (H.P.C.S.A., 2006).

Informed consent is essential for any form of data collection to proceed. This process involves fully informing participants of the research aims as well as their rights to partake in the study or later withdraw (Punch, 2000). This also includes consent to audio-tape and this should be obtained in a separate document (H.P.C.S.A., 2006). These ethical standards were adhered to during data collection. Debriefing is a further responsibility as well as an ethical obligation set forth by the H.P.C.S.A. (2006), and thus any additional information related to the topic as well as information on the results of the research on completion were offered to participants on request. An important ethical consideration is

that of confidentiality as all participants have the right to this (Punch, 2000). Due to the nature of this research and the use of focus groups, it was important that this issue be attended to and clarified before data collection commenced

Information obtained was recorded accurately and interpreted accordingly and the reporting of results was fair and accurate without any fabrications. The researcher further ensured that all sources used in the research process were acknowledged appropriately (H.P.C.S.A., 2006).

3.8.2. Ethical Procedures:

Having received ethical clearance (Protocol number: MACC 08/010 IH) the process of data collection began. Thirteen participants were obtained through convenience sampling and snowballing which were promptly followed by arranging meetings for each group. Each meeting was facilitated at the University of the Witwatersrand in the Emthonjeni Centre to provide a neutral setting to distribute subject information sheets. These explained to participants both the aims of the research as well as the expectations placed on them if they decided to participate. The researcher was present at these meetings to answer any questions that arose in an effort to deal with concerns over participation. Participants were informed that this was a minimal risk study as the central focus is on constructions of masculinities. However, if the topic of rape seemed offensive to them or they felt a sense of discomfort talking about such a sensitive topic, they were afforded the choice not to partake in the study or remain aware of their right to withdraw from the study at any time. This process was meant to screen out vulnerable individuals from agreeing to participate as, although male rape was only used as a vehicle for talk on constructions of masculinity, the topic still had to be addressed and those not comfortable with this remained aware of its role in data collection. The vignette formed a valuable part in adhering to ethical procedures as it allowed participants to speak in the third person. This resulted in minimal likelihood of harm and assisted in creating a study that was non-invasive. If however, participation led to any negative feelings, the researcher

had provided the participants with contact numbers for both the Rape Crisis Centre and Lifeline.

Further consent forms to audio-tape the focus groups needed to be read and signed prior to the commencement of focus groups. Because confidentiality forms a core component for participants in any research, the researcher discussed with participants the limitations of this in terms of using group interviews. Thus this needed to be negotiated at the beginning of each focus group where participants were reminded of their responsibility in terms of not disclosing any information discussed during the focus groups afterwards. This does represent a limitation of this method of data collection in qualitative research as using group interviews threatens confidentiality and thus this could not be guaranteed. The researcher developed a confidentiality agreement to safeguard against this. This had to be read and signed by each participant and this represented a precaution the researcher took in maintaining confidentiality among participants. The fact that anonymity was not possible formed a further limitation of this research. Although it could not be provided during focus groups, the researcher ensured participants that all comments would remain as anonymous as possible in the research report by using pseudonyms.

To further ensure confidentiality once data collection was completed, the data was kept in a safe and secure place at the University of Witwatersrand. No one other than the researcher and her supervisor had access to either the transcriptions or recordings and the researcher brought this to the participants' attention. On completion, the research report was submitted to Faculty and once qualification has been obtained, both the recordings and transcriptions will be destroyed. Having read the subject information sheet and raised any concerns, participants agreed to partake in the study and signed the consent forms. The above procedure ensured that the research proceeded in an ethical manner that did not result in discrediting the discipline of psychology.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE REPORT

4.1. Introduction:

Being of a qualitative nature, the data obtained from the focus groups were analysed using critical thematic content analysis. Having reviewed literature involving male rape, gender and masculinities, and designing the vignette and interview schedule around such themes, talk around masculinities and the connotations the participants attached to this construct emerged as dominant. The chapter will begin by considering issues of reflexivity that the researcher felt needed to be addressed as they may have influenced results. This will be followed by a presentation of the themes that arose. This was achieved by using available literature on male rape and masculinities, and was further understood in using feminist and profeminist theory as well as a social constructionist perspective to inform the writing of the results.

4.2. Reflexivity:

In accordance with the social constructionist perspective that was used, the researcher's own bias may have impacted on the research process. The researcher thus remained cognisant of the fact that this research remains open to other findings. Although she endeavored to maintain neutrality, her own values and viewpoints may have influenced both the data collection process and the analysis and this will now be addressed.

During the planning of this research the researcher remained aware of her own assumptions around masculinities due to both a thorough review of the literature and her own experiences in broader society. It was thus important to be reflexive on this so that her own constructions of masculinities did not influence facilitation of focus groups and further analysis. Although she attempted to remain neutral during focus groups and keep her own assumptions under control, it is possible that some of her own views may have informed interpretations and she remains aware of this.

Further to the above, before the commencement of focus groups, the researcher had considered that her gender may impact on the overall process. More specifically, the possibility of her gender influencing the nature of participants' responses was important. She considered that her being female and facilitating focus groups with only male participants may have affected the level of engagement. It was possible then that the participants would hold back or alternatively exaggerate other issues in an effort to positively present themselves. This appeared to play a role in focus groups as participants were perceived as reluctant to divulge information to some related topics. Further to this, it was noted that some participants did attempt to positively present themselves. The level of this was noted when further analysis allowed the researcher a greater awareness of contradictions that certain participants had made. This was noted in that some participants presented in a fairly neutral manner, however later statements contradicted earlier points. Through remaining reflexive on this issue, the researcher was able to use this in analysis, however she remained aware that results may have been different should the researcher have been male.

Additionally, a certain power dynamic appeared to arise during data collection. As will be noted in the reporting of results, participants at times attempted to depower the researcher in their responses by speaking in a negative way about women. It was understood by the researcher that the topic of male rape may have left participants feeling vulnerable, threatened and depowered. In an effort to invert this perceived power dynamic, the participants used female rape as a way of defending their masculine identities. This at times caused great discomfort in the researcher. In response to this, the researcher found herself reluctant to question further on certain issues and this may have impacted on the quality of the data obtained. This is because further questioning of some of these points may have elicited further explanations that may have allowed for a richer understanding of the participants' constructions of masculinities.

It became apparent during data collection that it was not only gender that influenced the process, but issues around race and class seemed to equally play a role. Both the researcher and participants were from a White middle-class background. This appeared to

play out in focus groups as participants afforded greater legitimacy to White middle-class masculinities. At times, a combination of issues of class and race in discussions led the researcher to perceive that the participants were attempting to collude with her and receive her approval on their views surrounding these issues. This also resulted in a sense of discomfort which led the researcher to avoid this topic. Avoidance of such topics may have come at the expense of valuable data as this may have enriched her understanding of the reasons that White middle-class men afford themselves a greater degree of legitimacy when compared to other racial groupings or men of different socio-economic backgrounds.

It is because of the above that the researcher feels that her own role impacted on both the data collection process and the analysis of results. It is for this reason that she acknowledges that the following presentation of results may have been different should she have been of a different gender, race or class. In a similar fashion, her interpretation of the results was equally understood as possibly affecting the process and this should be considered in understanding the following results.

4.3. Constructions of the Rape Encounter:

Having introduced the topic of male rape to participants, it had been anticipated that participants would seek clarification of what male rape involved. This however, was not further explained, and instead the participants were allowed the space to openly discuss their perceptions and further consider their own definitions of this phenomenon. This additionally allowed the participants to construct this experience according to their own understandings. Although the research was focused on male rape as a psychosocial issue, participants extended their discussions further and in each focus group female rape was discussed at length. The participants' constructions of female rape were highly negative in relation to the female victim, and further centered largely on the dominant myths that surround this phenomenon. These will be further addressed in the discussion that follows.

Further to the above, participants constructed male rape in what was understood to be highly influenced by gendered understandings. More specifically, a hegemonic reference was understood as dominating. Within this, participants separately discussed and constructed the experiences of male rape in relation to different forms and identities of masculinity. Specific reference was made to this experience from a heterosexual man's perspective as well as how this experience might differ for homosexual men. Additionally, some participants continually attempted to distance themselves from the reality of male rape through situating this experience as falling outside of their own contexts. From this it was understood that participants were attempting to 'other' this experience and therefore locate it as falling outside of their own realities.

Each will be discussed as each was understood as largely shedding light on the constructed nature of their responses. More specifically, it further adds to an understanding of the overarching influence of masculinities in shaping their responses. The value in understanding why participants constructed the experience of rape into separate categories lies in the fact that, as will become clearer as analysis progresses, participants appeared to construct such experiences in a way that represented a hierarchy of masculinities. Such a hierarchy not only emphasises the continual elevation of men over women (Connell, 1995), but as will be illustrated in the participants responses, they similarly adopt this hierarchy in the legitimacy they assign to victims of rape dependent on both gender and masculine identities.

4.3.1. Male Rape and the Implosion of Masculine Identity:

Participants' initial responses to male rape involved disbelief that this was in fact an occurring phenomenon in broader society. In debating through the possibility of this and then offering acceptance that this is a possible reality in South Africa, participants attached highly negative connotations to this. Their initial disbelief and further difficulties in making sense of male rape were understood as largely involving ideas around gender and masculinities. This is because it further appeared that the

vulnerabilities associated with male rape were not in line with the constructed expectations placed on men and their behaviours.

Further discussions revealed the extent to which having a man overpower another man goes against a man's sense of identity. Such explanations provided by participants represent the perceived gender hierarchy that places men above women (Connell, 1995). Largely a result of hegemonic understandings, their responses shed light on the influential nature of constructions of gender and hegemony that assign gender appropriate behaviour to the different sexes (Lorber, 1994). Falling victim to the traumatic experience of rape was thus not perceived as appropriate when concerned with men. A feminist understanding would largely view this as related to the limitations that the socialisation process of gendering places on men (Gilbert *et al.*, 1990). Interestingly, for the purposes of this analysis, such limitations, although directly associated with its influence on actual victims of male rape, can further be understood as limiting the participants in initially being able to even accept men as falling victim to rape. A profeminist understanding further illustrates this in its understanding that masculine constructs specifically, largely influence the ideals and stereotypes that we attribute to men. Furthermore it is these that directly influence and further limit the participants' ability to construct men as victims of rape (Cools, 2008).

Given the responses that largely separated the vulnerability of male rape from masculine expectations of behaviours, it was commonly perceived by participants that male rape can severely destroy one's masculine identity. It was further understood that as a direct result of masculine expectations that do not allow men to feel helpless or powerless (Eagle, 1998), participants were inclined to equate the experiences of male rape to a death sentence. It would appear then, that masculine identities by and large define men, and thus anything that threatens this would then be considered threatening to their very existence. Such a comparison serves to illustrate the value that participants place on their masculine identities. Responses were bold when referring to male rape and the use of profanities was not unusual, thus illustrating the aggression and anger that men associate with threats to their masculine identities.

> P3: Well that's an oke's cock in your bum! It's your manhood you talking about. It's pretty much self-explanatory really! It's just something you don't ever want to happen to you…
> P5: So you won't have respect for anyone or anything ja…
> P3: Or yourself!
> P5: Ja, you won't have any values nothing…
>
> P9: Um…for that reason of well, couldn't you defend yourself? You know, what's wrong with you? You're not a man! You're not…you know, so you're basically put into that category of, of, of what a man should be…and he's supposed to be the one that defends and he's supposed to be the one that protects but now he's at like the lowest point in his life of like, his manhood was taken away and what more do you have so…I think… I think it's not…um, it's not easy for somebody to you know, stand up and say listen this is what happened and…I think it's just everything that comes after that…
>
> P13: You just had your manhood taken out of you! I mean-
> P11: Dead straight!
> P13: You don't have much to live for-
> P12: You got a death sentence!

Participants, although making reference to the possible physical damage that male rape would bring, were more inclined to go beyond this. Thus it was understood that their concerns largely revolved around the psychological impacts that would ensue based on their gender. It became even more apparent and thus was concluded by most participants that being the victim of male rape could potentially destroy a man's sense of identity. Such an argument is supported by Doherty and Anderson (2004) who similarly contend that the destabilising nature of this act can be severely distressing to a man's sense of self.

Most participants further alluded to the negative affects this would have on a man's self-confidence, self-esteem and his overall ego. It was agreed by all that this could potentially destroy all of these thus leaving such a man with little to live for. Mezey and King (2000) support such an argument in their explanation of male rape as dehumanising to a man. The idea that male rape can potentially take away a man's manhood was universal. Participants in one specific focus group equated the impact of this with the severity of death as from their perspective, having one's manhood taken away would leave a man with nothing to live for.

Such an argument serves to illustrate the importance men place on their relative position as men in the social order. The hegemonic standard that is based on authority of men over both women and other masculine identities has thus been continually produced (Demetriou, 2001). Understood as largely adopting a hegemonic point of reference in their understandings, participants thus displayed a strong reluctance to accept that someone could destroy their position of power through this sexual crime.

The possible increase of male rape as a reality in society might then represent a potential threat to men and their ability to oppose conflicting views. It is because hegemonic masculinity views men as powerful and showing no weakness or vulnerability (Courtenay, 2000), that a traumatic event such as male rape, that goes against and hence contradicts the behaviours we expect of men, could prove damaging to how we view men in general. Ideas around masculinity, and specifically the hegemonic form, have served to construct an illusion that men are largely invincible. Hence equating male rape with a death sentence can be interpreted as speaking to the value men place on their manhood and the insecurity experienced when this is put under threat.

It can thus be concluded that the participants in the study attached masculine connotations in their understandings of male rape. Furthermore, due to the destructive nature of this on a man's sense of self and identity the act of raping a man could prove severely destructive to a male victim. It is due to similar explanations that participants largely rejected male rape as a growing reality in society, initially. Such arguments illustrate how hegemony continually plays out in broader society, and hence shapes how we more broadly view men. This can be further argued as representative of the idea that male rape inverts masculinity for men because it directly contradicts the common attributes society associates with them. In being a phenomenon that directly attacks and puts under threat the attributes men commonly use to define themselves by, male rape represents a sexual crime that goes against accepted masculine experiences. The participants further supported this argument in considering the general reactions that a male victim of rape would receive following this experience.

It was through a consideration of male rape as a reality that the participants further grappled with the reality of male rape in addressing possible reactions this might provoke in others. Although still adopting a hegemonic standpoint, they involved themselves in discussing ideas around general responses to this event. In doing so, their responses reflected reactions largely based on gendered stereotypes and thus societal responses were largely constructed as negative. Such perceptions can be viewed as reflecting broader constructions of the connotations attached to male rape, and the focus of analysis now shifts to a consideration of such responses.

In continuing with the construct of hegemonic masculinity, responses of participants indicated an affiliation to this in considering the reactions a man who was raped by another man would receive. Such responses are largely based on perceived gender appropriate and gender inappropriate behaviours. It is in going against such norms that Mendelsohn and Sewell (2004) believe shapes the negative responses that society attaches to experiences such as male rape. It is because of masculine constructions that men are expected to be strong and independent and thus any sign of weakness is viewed as incongruent with masculine expectations (Lindsey, 1994). Within discussions, participants then alluded to the fact that being raped by another man can be perceived as displaying weakness in not being able to defend against this and thus prevent the event from occurring. This along with other discussions that constructed male rape as a homosexual experience resulted in the perceptions of participants that male rape could lead to much judgment for not being able to assert oneself.

> Interviewer: And why do you think it would be difficult to tell other people?
> P5: 'Cause then they judge you!
> P1: Ja, I think 'cause now your sexuality is like looked down upon as well… obviously!
> P4: Lots of jokes…So ja, I presume although it's not easier, it's probably safer to keep it to yourself… less embarrassment.
>
> P1: Probably just because of the stigma attached to it, that's probably why.
>
> P7: Also, people would judge you! Some sort of opinion about what happened to you…I guess that comes back down to your manhood being taken away and people would belittle you because of what happened to you. Some people, I mean nasty people!

> P9: You know, you're a man, what did you do to provoke it or, you know.
> P7: Or what? Are you gay now?
> P9: Are you gay now? Ja, and then that's exactly what it says. Oh my God okay, well, then obviously then…they sensed something and that's what provoked them to...
>
> P11: But I think society's reaction would be... I would say, predominantly negative... For lack of a better word... I think you'd be shunned! You know, it's... first of all...
> P13: 'Cause if you tell me you've been raped I, I, I'm not gonna be giving you advice because I can't understand it...
> P11: That's what I'm saying... because you are the man it would be a negative reaction because how can you let that happen to yourself?

Such responses serve to explain how constructions of masculinity have enforced the expectations we place on men in terms of how they should behave and react in situations. Gender norms do not allow for men to be in vulnerable situations as this is something more commonly associated with women (Courtenay, 2000; Mendelsohn & Sewell, 2004). Thus participants in their responses illustrated how gender messages have been internalised and thus become natural responses. Further to this, the responses are largely based on masculine ideals asserting that men should be able to protect not only themselves, but also those around them. Male rape was interpreted by the participants as going against these ideas. Such expectations placed on men are largely based on the hegemonic form of masculinity that should display authority (Connell, 2000). In not living up to such expectations, the reaction that a victim of male rape would receive was perceived as highly negative.

Participants thus displayed in their responses understandings of male rape as directly going against such expectations. As articulated by Lindegger and Maxwell (2007), anything that differs from hegemonic expectations placed on men can lead to judgment. Although reflecting a societal response, participants through such discussions were again displaying their own affiliations to a hegemonic form of masculinity, thus displaying a difficulty in accepting the vulnerability that male rape can inflict on men. It is possible that although not directly admitting to this, their responses reveal their own sense of judgment that they would attach to a man who had been raped. In further relating such

arguments to a question of the victim's sexuality, participants again displayed the discomfort they experienced in the consideration of this. This aligns itself to the hegemonic standards that construct heterosexual men as homophobic (Connell, 2002). Thus the fear of having one's sexuality questioned and hence being a further victim of secondary judgment supports the idea that responses to male rape are largely informed by hegemonic standards of explanation.

The participants' constructions of male rape were thus largely informed by ideas around masculinity. More specifically, hegemonic masculinity was used by participants in both initially making sense of and constructing the experience of male rape, and further considering the responses this would induce from others. It would seem then that the social meaning attached to this experience was extremely important in understanding their constructions. This is because a consideration of male rape and the accompanying responses it would receive could not be considered independent of the meaning this had for participants in relation to their masculine identities. It can therefore be concluded from this that male rape contradicts what broader society considers masculine behaviour to be and thus a hegemonic reference in making sense of this was continually adopted in responses. This further shed light on the constructed idea that if a man is raped by another man, it shatters the idea of a masculine identity and hence results in a 'removal' of legitimacy as a man.

4.3.2. Deceitfulness and Seduction in the Rape of Women:

Although an understanding of female rape from a masculine point of reference was not initially intended, discussions around male rape inevitably led the participants to consider the rape of women. Having addressed the idea that participants felt that male rape could potentially destroy a man's sense of self, the expectation was that participants would allow for similar explanations when associated with women. However, in realising the influence that gender would have on the responses of participants due to the researcher being female, the emergence of defensive responses was anticipated.

Before directly addressing participants' constructions of rape against women, it is important to unpack the possible reasons that led them to divert discussions to a focus on women. In analysing the data further it was hypothesised that the task of talking about male rape may have been perceived as depowering to participants and, in an effort to depower the researcher as noted previously, they were perceived as colluding with one another. In doing so, participants built a defensive argument involving gender relations. Morrell (2001) coined the term defensive responses to masculinity in an effort to explain the act of men reasserting their power in a society that is constantly in transition when concerned with gender relations. The defensive responses that arose in the discussions in the focus groups in this research centered on the construction of women as either, liars in constructing female rape or seductive in their interactions that in turn lead to sexual advances by men. Each will be discussed in an effort to shed light on the defensive nature of their responses in their own constructions of female rape.

From a feminist point of reference the rape of women has come to be understood as a means of men asserting dominance and power over women (Morrell, 2001). Through such discourses women have come to be constructed as the victim, whereas men remain to be seen as the perpetrators of this act of sexual violence. Although many comparative studies have shown this to be true, there has been limited research that looks to an alternative view and whether some women have in fact inverted this power dynamic and used rape as a way of depowering men. In feminist eyes, this suggestion could be seen as bold and risky as it acts in direct opposition to what their own research has shown, however the participants in their responses alluded to this very idea. In a room where men dominated in numbers in the presence of only one female researcher, the floor was open for the participants to openly voice their opinions and defend against current understandings of men dominating over women in the form of rape. Their focus was thus not located in an exploration of the actual experience and impacts of rape. Rather the participants discussed female rape defensively in alluding to the idea that women have themselves constructed this experience.

P5: I mean, I mean, the stories you hear on the newspapers and TV and shit, it's

> women, they claiming it. Claiming some oke, specifically raped them… It's also publicised more because there's a lot of chicks claiming they were raped…tryna get money and stuff like that, you'll never hear of an oke tryna do that-
>
> P9: I dunno, I dunno. I may have this wrong but it's, it's far easier for a woman I think. In no way do I think that, I don't mean to sound condescending or anything…but it's far easier for a woman to turn around and say well, no I was raped…you know. Okay, she has sex, no! It wasn't good enough or she then decided the next morning oh, I didn't want it…so I got raped! I mean it…the- that has now, that's how it's progressed with them I mean…a man wouldn't just like…have sex with a chick and ag God, it was awful, I was raped!
>
> P13: And a woman is also... when a woman gets raped... I don't always feel that she was raped. I think that women can turn it around and say that because I'm the lesser... the minority... or I, I was dominated and I, I now consider myself to be raped because I regret having sex with that man…

The above quotes taken from the three different focus groups represent how the participants defended against the idea that men dominate women through sexual violence. Instead participants built their arguments around the idea that women construct rape in response to the regret of sexual intercourse or even for monetary gain in other cases. What becomes interesting in analyses is why it was felt by the participants that in talking about male rape they felt the need to defend their identity as men in the face of the ever-increasing rape of women in South Africa.

The above speaks to the very situation the participants were placed in. In possibly perceiving the notion of male rape as a direct attack on their masculine identities, the need to defend this was done through the collusion of the participants against the female researcher. The standards of hegemony become important as it is the masculine ideals centred on power and dominance and being the stronger sex (Connell, 1995) that, in essence, resulted in a refusal of men to accept this being tampered with. Participants can then be understood as possibly distancing themselves from the vulnerabilities associated with male rape. Instead they shifted discussions to a topic in which they could reassert themselves in a defensive way. In choosing the topic of female rape, the participants were able to directly challenge modern feminist ideas in a defensive response explained in

what Morrell (2001) considers as a reaction to perceptions of feminism as loathing traditional constructions of masculinity.

What becomes interesting for analysis however, is the hedging that was noted in responses. Although the statements were bold and the message intended was received, it was noted that within these discussions, there were often comments that served to justify their statements.

> P11: The problem is I think there are a lot of women out there that are getting pushed aside because they just perceived as being, as being attention seekers meanwhile that happened to them…

Comments such as this illustrate how the participants constructed their arguments in a way that not only served to defend against the perceived attacks on their masculinity, but in addition were delivered in a way that were not all-encompassing in defensively lashing out at women. In making way for the possibility that some women are in fact victims of rape, along with other comments that apologise for the condescending messages attached to their arguments, the participants were in fact reacting defensively to the notion of gender and power, while at the same time attempting to distance themselves from the powerful influence of masculinity perceived as emerging in their responses.

Even in using such disclaimers however, the central argument in such discussions constructed women as deceitful. This was done in alluding to the idea that female rape is not as prevalent as perceived, but rather that women constantly construct this in a process that depowers men. Hence within the three focus groups, the need to defend themselves and reconstruct female rape in a defensive manner was central in their overall attempt to defend themselves as men. Again the influence of hegemony is key because such responses can be understood as largely subordinating of women and representative of a greater patriarchal gender structure. In not allowing a full consideration of female rape as a legitimate issue, participants asserted their masculinity in a way that could be intimidating to women.

Further to the above notion of women being conceptualised as lying, and hence making up accusations of rape, was the emerging idea that women are in fact seducing men in their interactions. Thus women were further perceived by participants as largely responsible for being raped. Such responses constructed women as seductive and as such, were perceived as asking for men to make sexual advances towards them.

> P5: It comes back to that females being worse than males, or males being worse than females argument, if you hear about a chick getting raped, your first thought is she probably deserved it… she was dressed inappropriately-
> P4: Or she was just coming on to you-
> P5: Or ja, she, you think she instigated it.
>
> P6: There's kind of a blame her kind of attitude in certain segments of the community where you know she was asking for it type of thing…
>
> P12: And it's also been proven that most girls who get raped out there, they tease. It's because they tease and they tease and they tease and then eventually the guy snaps and he does what he has to do…

The above further represents the defensive nature of participants' responses in the construction of female rape, as again such responses divert responsibility away from men, placing it solely on women. In constructing women in this way, participants alluded to the idea that women are sexualised beings which in fact contradicts expected constructions of femininity. Lindsey (1994) states that a common principle associated with men is that of sexual competence and indirectly this principle constructs men as highly sexual. However, in defending against female rape, participants transposed this idea onto women. Hence in describing women as teasing men and therefore asking for sexual activities to take place, participants again were perceived as removing themselves of any responsibility associated with female rape. Interestingly though, was that the idea of women as seductive alludes to the acceptance of the sexual act occurring, whereas defensive responses that constructed women as liars denied this event as ever even happening.

Analysis of the above statements can be extended further than simply considering female rape, and hence a consideration of gender relations in general must be undertaken. The

responses noted may then also represent attempts to restore male authority from a defensive point of reference (Morrell, 2001), largely as a result of shifting relations that have resulted in women in society increasingly gaining power. The rape of women then from a feminist point of reference may stand true in that some men do intend to assert their power through the aggressive sexual act of dominating over women. Instead of acknowledging this, the responses of the participants again point towards a defensive strategy in which the blame is relocated to falling on women. Indirectly then, participants were understood as continually reasserting their power in relation to a female researcher who may have been perceived as attempting to depower participants in her introduction of the topic of male rape.

4.3.3. A Comparison of Men and Women through the Talk of Rape:

Although discussions have already addressed the differences in how men constructed female rape in comparison to male rape, further discussions that compared the two revealed a greater understanding of the constructed gender differences that participants used in their arguments. In further analysis it was thus noted that in constructing male rape as contradictory to hegemonic masculinity, participants then reverted to making sense of the actual experience of male rape in terms of expected behaviours of men in comparison to women. Participants thus began to construct the rape of women as easy as this would in their eyes involve less power and force whereas male rape was perceived as involving much more of a struggle. Participants were understood as grounding their arguments in the attributes we more commonly associate with each gender largely as a result of a gendering process (Lorber, 1994). In light of the above, whereas male rape was perceived as particularly violent, brutal and humiliating, the rape of women was understood as less embarrassing. This was seen as due to the expectation that a man should be able to easily overpower a woman because the attributes of women limit their behaviours to those that are gentle and passive.

> P5: But also if you hear a chick got raped by a guy, it's- Obviously he can rape her 'cause he's a hell of a lot stronger than her… she hasn't lost a fight, okay

> she's been raped and she's, but she's, it's not embarrassing, well, it is embarrassing but it's-
> P2: Ja. No males, I think it's just different because it's not as common hey?
> P5: It's more violent…
> P2: Ja, exactly. It's more savage man.
>
> P9: So I think initially it's not taken as seriously as…and yet again, it boils down to you know, well a woman is weak and she can't really defend herself and…you know…pity. Whereas a man, well, for God's sake, throw a punch, give a kick or something. Even if you say there was like ten of them, well, become superman or something…
>
> P11: Maybe, maybe they're thinking cool, to, to go dominate a woman is...not really that difficult… It's two men…but to dominate a man…is maybe what gets them going…I dunno!
> P12: I think as the guys said... you know, to be the man, a man would really have to be beaten down...to be raped! A woman does fight you know, but to, for a woman to be raped, they come back bleeding, scratched, bruised whatever...
> P11: But... to answer your question. I think a male rape would be more violent... and I think it would take more people. I think one man going and trying to rape one man, you would have to... pick out what you would see as a, as a weaker male species... so like a one on one...

Interestingly men justified their arguments on the basis that women are the weaker sex. Participants can thus be understood as displaying an orientation to external hegemony that places women as inferior to men, thus serving to explain the expectation that men should dominate over women (Demetrious, 2001). Conversely, where women were constructed as too weak and vulnerable to be able to fight back in the situation of a potential rape, participants constructed an explanation that illustrated how men would violently fight against this. In doing so, men were constructed as doing everything in their power to prevent being overpowered by another man. This appeared to be directly associated with the constructed attributes society deems as fitting to men, and as not associated with women. Although traditionally femininity is not strongly associated with violence and aggression, participants, in staying with their masculine point of reference in comparing female and male experiences and reactions to rape, did not allow for the consideration that in such a situation, a female might also respond by fighting back.

Such explanations naturally led participants to view the overall act of male rape as far more brutal than what would be experienced for a woman. This was understood as due to the former being associated with two men as opposed to the latter which involves a woman. At first comments such as a woman returning bruised and scratched following being raped were perceived as contradictory to their explanations. However, if one considers the masculine standards that were informing such responses, they can be interpreted as displaying that a woman would be more physically wounded due to her inability as a woman to put up a fight. Further supporting this argument, hegemonic references were continually made in subordinating women in the participants' referral to women as inferior and weaker.

> P6: But…um, I agree with P8 here in terms of the fact that it's kind of like uh, uh, it's, it's the worst thing when a woman gets raped, because it is, because it is, it's like, you know, picking on the weaker sex so…
>
> P13: I think that women can turn it around and say that because I'm the lesser... the minority...

The above thus serves to illustrate how the hegemonic reference to masculinity has resulted in not only the continual subordination of other masculine identities, but also the subordination of women in directly referring to them as the weaker or inferior sex. Although such arguments were made with reference to relative physical strength, closer analyses of discussions throughout revealed that most participants were referring to a broader weakness of women that was not limited to physical strength. Hence participants were interpreted as making reference to the many qualities that men are perceived to possess and women are seen as lacking (Lorber, 1994), thus serving to justify the gender hierarchy that so often informs such conversations. This similarly serves to illustrate how masculinity serves as a vehicle through which to understand broader patriarchal gender relations that result in gender inequality.

4.3.4. Male Rape as a Normative Homosexual Experience:

Although participants had considered male rape as involving men in general, such discussions appeared to involve a hegemonic orientation in their discussions that largely excluded homosexual identities. Within hegemonic understandings of masculinity, Connell (1995) states that the term hegemonic refers to a power dynamic not only notable between men and women, but the hegemonic standard of masculinity is further constructed in opposition to masculine identities that contradict constructed masculine standards. Such standards are formed in relation to constructed notions of appropriate gender relations. More specifically, these relate to ideas that the 'norms' of being a man relate to being attracted to women, and hence any attraction between men is commonly constructed as deviant from a hegemonic masculine point of reference. In constructing their arguments around male rape, participants found ease in considering this experience as including a male rapist as it was deemed too difficult for a woman to overpower a man. The construction of a male rapist forcing another man to have sexual intercourse was received negatively and thus the homophobic component spoken of by Connell (1995) arose in participants' discussions.

Further to this, participants also constructed the rape of men as a homosexual experience and thus questioned whether such an act constitutes rape. In further exploring the participants' understandings of this, it became apparent that participants viewed this as almost a normal experience for homosexual men due to their choice of involving themselves in intimate relations with other men. Thus instead of isolating their explanations to male rape as a homosexual act, discussions further alluded to understandings of sexual intercourse between men as normal for homosexual men. The question of whether this being forced by one man on another homosexual man would even constitute an act of rape thus arose in their debates.

> P1: Do you think a gay guy would be more or less a- affected by this than a straight guy?
> P1: But don't you think it's natural, it's more like they used to that?
> P4: But would you call it rape… But it would be easier to get over though…

P5: Well, ja, it can happen to anyone.
P3: Well if you gay…Surely he would have enjoyed it.

P8: But I, if I could say something like…let's say um…the, a gay male, and you know a straight male okay and in their, in their group of friends and they said gay guy gets raped and then the straight guy gets raped you know. The straight guy's not gonna go tell his friends…but the gay guy will probably go tell all of his friends…

Such responses can be interpreted as supporting the constructed social order of hegemonic masculinity and thus was quite stigmatising of homosexual men. Participants in their responses therefore lessened the impact of male rape on homosexual men by constructing the experiences as normal for such individuals. What their responses implied was that a straight man would be secretive about the event due to societal norms that oppose homosexual contact. In comparison a homosexual individual was perceived to react in an open way due to participants' construction of sexual intercourse between homosexual men as normal. What is interesting however, is that sexual intercourse between men and women is considered normal and yet society as a whole does not then interpret female rape as a normal experience to be enjoyed. One therefore questions then what it is that led to the participants' to respond in this way. In light of this, it could be understood as the need to continually locate homosexuality outside the realm of masculinity in an attempt to protect the patriarchal standard attached to being a man.

It is these responses that indicate that the participants have little sympathy for a homosexual man claiming rape. This is because from a masculine framework, such men are viewed as choosing such a lifestyle. Hence participants normalised the experience of male rape by arguing and questioning whether it can even be considered rape if involving a homosexual victim. Connell (2005) contends that homosexuality is perceived as openly graphic about sex and within this, anal sex has come to be associated with homosexuality. More specifically, receptive anal sex is associated with homosexuality (Connell, 2005). Hegemonic standards result in some men receiving such ideas with disgust in association with men because of the understanding that anal receptive sex is viewed as a mark of feminisation (Connell, 2005). “Hegemonic masculinity thus forbids the receptive

pleasures of the anus" (Connell, 2005, p. 219). Thus it might be possible that because some homosexual identities are associated with intentionally acting in opposition to this idea, all homosexual men are incorrectly generalised to enjoying this whether by choice or by force. It is further possible that the hegemonic point of reference used in such responses served to further create distance between the hegemonic and homosexual divide. This may have been done so as to further assert through such responses that such an act can only be deemed traumatic if one does not openly take part in similar activities by choice.

Participants in the focus groups therefore displayed a strong reluctance to allow homosexual men any form of sympathy if such individuals were raped by another man. No justifications other than the perception that a homosexual man would enjoy this were given. Such comments can be interpreted as further discriminating against homosexual men and not allowing them the same degree of legitimacy in the realm of masculinity as hegemonic identities would receive. This was largely associated with disgust over male intimacy, and hence serves to explain why participants displayed reluctance in accepting that homosexual men can be raped by other men.

4.3.5. Male Rape as the Domain of the Black 'Other':

The researcher had intended to access Black participants in this study however, through snowballing, this fell outside of her control. In line with this, although not a dominant theme in interpretations, some participants made reference to Black masculinities in their responses to male rape. In doing so, they used Black masculinities in combination with issues around masculinities and class in an attempt to distance themselves from the reality of male rape. This was done by attributing this experience to be more commonly associated with Black men from lower socio-economic backgrounds. This further shed light on the constructed hierarchy of masculinities that allows a greater degree of legitimacy to White masculinities when compared with African masculinities. It further sheds light on how class intersects with issues such as race to further afford greater

legitimacy to certain masculine identities. This is significant given that the sample included only White middle-class males.

Cools (2008) notes that Black men have not experienced the same level of benefits associated with masculinity that White men do, and thus many Black men's masculine identities have not been affirmed. This is largely to do with internal forms of hegemony (Demetriou, 2001) associated with the continual subordination of certain masculine identities. This has resulted in a hierarchy that continually dictates the degree of power or legitimacy associated with different masculine identities. Interestingly, participants in one focus group spoke directly to this power dynamic. What becomes interesting is how through the following, this group of participants distanced themselves, as White men, from the taboo associated with the act of raping another man.

> P1: But do you reckon Black okes, Black okes are more likely to rape a White oke 'cause of the power thing, because it is about power…
> P3: No dude, because they've already got the power…
> P2: Not all of them bru…
> P3: Not in the townships but-

In speaking to the power dynamic occurring between White and Black masculinities in an attempt to make sense of male rape as an assertion of power, reference was made to the lack of power that is associated with Black masculinities in lower class areas. In what was perceived as an attempt to distance themselves from male rape, participants placed responsibility of being a rapist on Black men, possibly from townships. Connell (1995) refers to subordinated masculinities and within this, African masculinities have been placed within this construct in relation to White masculinities. Within this, White masculinities are commonly accepted as falling within hegemonic standards of masculinity and thus receive greater levels of legitimacy. Interestingly Messner (1997, as cited in Morrell, 2005) contends that the continual grouping of men of colour into one distinct group plays a central role of racialising the other in what he views as the social construction of White masculinity. Participants' responses can thus be interpreted as using race as a fluid identity in such statements, and hence such an argument is viewed as lacking a material basis.

This can then further be understood as the participants further distancing themselves from the idea of male rapists in locating this as an issue of power between races. Furthermore, issues of race were combined with issues of class in their responses, and together these appeared to shape the participants' arguments. What this can then be interpreted as doing, is placing White masculinity as above Black masculinity and further defining this along boundaries related to class. This is because other responses deemed the idea of raping another man as abnormal and not in line with masculine ideals and yet participants then considered this to possibly be related to race, specifically Black men of lower socio-economic backgrounds.

In another focus group, reference was not made to the rapist but instead the victim of rape. Within this discussion, the participants of this focus group distanced themselves from the possibility of being raped, instead seeing this as a more common reality for a Black man living in a township. Again issues of race and class intersected in the participants' justifications behind their responses.

> P13: And I don't think it happens in our upper class societies... I mean these things are happening in townships... where people don't know anything, I mean the guys-
> P10: Sketchy places!
> P13: I mean it's dark and people, and people don't have the resources to go to the... the police station to go, they, they just don't have the, those resources. They're living in shanty towns... up in the mountains you know? Most people don't even have telephones up there you know? Stuff like that, they just forget about it and... I think the most common...most common thing would be just to like, just dissipate you know?

Again such responses reflect a masculine response that distanced the participants from the vulnerability of being a victim of male rape. Yet behind this statement, closer analysis then suggests that again, in using a hegemonic point of reference that gives more legitimacy to White masculinities, participants constructed the male rape victim as a powerless Black man unable to defend himself. Participants then further constructed such a man as unable to react in any way due to the constructed lack of knowledge the

participants attached to Black men located in townships. What this serves to do is create an 'us'/ 'them' scenario that constructs White upper-class masculinities as powerful and thus not needing to consider male rape as a reality. This was done in comparison to the constructed notion of a lower-class Black man who lacks the resources to do anything about such an event. Such an argument can be interpreted as serving the interests of the socially constructed greater level of legitimacy afforded to White middle-class masculinities at the expense of alternative masculine identities. Additionally, this argument illustrates how issues around class similarly influence how masculinities are constructed in broader social context.

Thus due to the fact that participants were White middle-class men, constructions of masculinity and thus the broader constructions they reflected, do not accurately reflect all forms of masculinities and the researcher remained aware of this in her interpretations. However, what the above serves to illustrate then, is the construction of hegemonic masculinity from a White upper-class masculine point of reference. Such constructions served to combine issues of race and class and more specifically Blackness and class in the service of promoting a White hegemonic masculinity. Additionally, within this theme, a broader construction of masculinity was also discussed. What became most apparent in both was that each discussion extracted hegemonic standards that applied in the service of promoting a White, masculine construction in conceptualising male rape.

The above thus illustrates the emergence of hegemonic responses in the participants' talk on male rape, and the powerful influence that hegemony had on the participants in constructing this traumatic experience. Discussions and interpretations strongly alluded to a hegemonic point of reference in which mainstream views on masculinity were articulated. Additionally, discussions illustrated the discrimination such masculine identities display towards both women and other subordinated forms of masculinity, including both homosexual masculinities and African masculinities. These were further substantiated by participants in collapsing issues around race and class in the service of justifying their arguments. Responses thus served to illustrate an intersection of masculine hegemony with ideas of race hegemony and class hegemony. This led to an

overwhelming result implying that the middle-class White man is normative and the Black lower-class man remains subordinated. From this, the degree of legitimacy participants afforded their own masculine identities became clearer. This fell in line with Connell's (2005) conceptualisation of subordinated masculinities which are continually afford lower levels of such legitimacy.

4.4. Hierarchical Constructions of Masculinities:

As has so far been illustrated, participants continually appeared to adopt hegemonic standards in their understandings of masculinity. Through an analysis of their discussions throughout, the researcher was able to identify the attributes that men associated with masculinity and more specifically the hegemonic form. This appeared to be constructed as the identity receiving the highest degree of legitimacy in all focus groups. Additionally, through the talk of male rape, the researcher also gained insight into an understanding of homosexual identities as receiving less legitimacy by the participants. This was thus understood as representing a subordinated form of masculinity in their discussions. In displaying this internal form of hegemony as spoken of by Demetriou (2001), participants were understood to be further alluding to their own constructed hierarchy that places their understandings of masculinity above other identities. In these discussions, constructed ideas of an ideal masculinity versus a less than ideal homosexual masculine identity, seemed to be of focus.

4.4.1. Ideal Masculine Identities:

Thus far analyses have described hegemonic standards of masculinity and how these continue to influence broader constructions of masculinity with reference to male rape. Further analysis of the data revealed that the constructions participants attach to their explanations of what their perceptions of masculinity are, are similarly aligned to the patriarchal order that hegemonic masculinity promotes. In responding to male rape, and further constructing why this goes against expectations placed on men, participants revealed their own constructions of an ideal masculine identity. Interestingly, their

constructions of being a man aligned well with hegemonic ideals previously noted. What was interesting is that the dominant ideas that arose were in line with what Lindsey (1994) identifies as the five principles or co-ordinates associated with hegemony. Thus in their discussions participants mapped out key co-ordinates associated with the hegemonic realm of masculinity.

Because the participants' understandings of the central masculine attributes were so similar to those discussed in addressing hegemonic masculine co-ordinates, it became apparent that broader constructions of masculinities are highly influential in constructing masculinities. Without even realising this, participants in their descriptions of men, voiced societal expectations and constructions of masculinity as their very own. Hence the participants in this study can be interpreted as responding to discussions according to the social constructions we attached to the concept of hegemonic masculinity. Thus the continual emergence of this masculine identity emerged in men's talk on male rape.

> P8: … there's gotta be a, a like a cut off point…that you've gotta stop feeling sorry for yourself and eventually get on with your life kind of thing…
> P7: And also being a man and having someone feel sorry for you is belittling I guess in a way…especially if it's a woman…
> P12: I think a group- Is the wrong way to go... because no male wants to break down in front of another male...

It would seem from the above that participants were constructing the behaviour of men as excluding any emotional expressions more commonly attributed to women. Lindsey (1994) identifies an attribute of masculinity which is referred to as 'no sissy stuff'. As is suggested in the name, this refers to the anti-feminine ideals that surround mainstream views in constructing masculinity. Within such expectations any behaviour deemed as feminine is frowned upon in association with men.

Responses, such as those illustrated, reveal the discomfort that participants find in showing vulnerability. Throughout discussions, although the event of male rape was considered severely traumatic, the responses indicated that dwelling on this and not allowing oneself to get over it would not be acting in a masculine way. Similarly the idea

of a woman feeling sorry for a male or even breaking down in tears in front of another man was deemed unacceptable. Such arguments serve to illustrate how the participants live by and promote masculine attributes that do not allow for anything considered feminine to enter into this constructed concept.

Further to the above, participants alluded to ideas around strength and independence in their discussions. From their point of view then, the ideal man was further constructed as confident and tough.

> P2: Totally 'cause you always like ja, 'I'm the man, I can do anything bru!'
>
> P9: You're not…you know, so you're basically put into that category of, of, of what a man should be…and he's supposed to be the one that defends and he's supposed to be the one that protects...
>
> P10: He's a male, he can, he can handle it you know so they won't think of it as a se-, a serious matter…

Comments such as the above relate well to Lindsey's (1994) understanding of the attribution of 'the sturdy oak' when concerned with masculine identity. In referring to this attribute, Lindsey (1994) speaks about the independence and toughness as well as self-confidence that men are expected to display in their daily activities. Although participants alluded to the fact that an event such as male rape could possibly destroy these attributes of a man, in doing so they were simultaneously assuming that such attributes are already present in ideal masculine identities. Participants in their discussions were thus understood as continually constructing an idealised masculine identity in referring to the attributes of a man that male rape could potentially destroy.

As illustrated in the above comments, the expectations placed on men in viewing them as 'sturdy oaks' results in limited space for them to be any different, and thus confidence and a high self-esteem remain expected of men. It is the toughness and confidence as well as independent persona that they carry that defines them as masculine within mainstream constructions of this. It was this idea that was seen as largely influential in previous

discussions that constructed male rape as a death sentence. In continuously reminding the researcher of these attributes, the participants were seen as asserting their masculine identities in not only speaking about them, but further alluding to the idea that these are the expectations they too chose to live by. It is thus these attributes that the participants continually constructed as ideal in conceptualising masculinities.

Additionally, as was articulated in discussions that constructed women as weak and inferior, participants continually constructed the ideal man as physically strong and competent.

> P5: Females aren't strong enough…to resist…to resist and guys are like, we are violent…I mean there obviously are lots of violent females but I would say it's fifty/fifty, some are violent, some are not… if it's male, one hundred percent will be violent!
>
> P6: I'd expect it to be men 'cause like it's a very aggressive action and it's unusual that women are so aggressive…
> P7: So I think, I mean I know guys who have fights every time they go out and it's, again, it comes down to being a man, in inverted commas.
>
> P13: I'd go out on a binge...I'd become completely reckless, I'd be shooting every other person that reminded me of them and I, I'd go out actually... I, my life's mission would be to find those men once more and to hang them by the balls or something!

Such responses that constructed men as physically strong represent another attribute associated with hegemonic identities. This is referred to as 'give 'em hell' (Lindsey, 1994). Within this, the expectation placed on men is to be aggressive as opposed to their female counterparts who are distanced from such an attribute (Lindsey, 1994). Interestingly, men had already spoken towards this in their construction of male rape as far more aggressive and violent than female rape. Yet still, this idea of associating aggression with masculine identities continually emerged in their discussions in constructing the ideal masculine identity. Additionally, it was their own aggression that was displayed in responding to the idea of male rape that further was interpreted as the participants asserting their masculine identities within discussions. This attribute therefore proved significant when considering the meta-communications occurring in

their non-verbal behaviours. Additionally, some of their responses further alluded to the aggression that remains expected of men at a broader societal level.

Such responses, whether referring to general expectations of men or simply the reaction of a man to being attacked, represent the aggressive and violent nature broader society associates with men, and thus constructed as normal of their sex. Whereas aggression and violence are deemed unsuitable when displayed by women, they are expectations placed on men. This further illustrates the power men continually exercise in constructing certain behaviours as appropriate for them and yet completely unsuitable for women, and hence further represents gender relations and the gender dichotomy they create (Connell, 2000).

Participants further constructed the ideal man as a man who could provide for and support his family. Within this, the idea that men should be the breadwinners and the protectors within family relations arose. This was further constructed by participants as largely due to the fact that they are the dominant sex, again emphasising a gender dichotomy. This was an idea that was referred to throughout discussions and thus participants were understood to be continually asserting their masculinity, in a space that they may have perceived as threatening to these very expectations, in its focus on male rape.

> P5: Your, your goal in life is to get married, look after your wife and have children and look after the children. If you can't look after yourself, how you gonna look after anyone else, you got nothing to live for…
>
> P7: Yup, you're the breadwinner. You're the man of the house…you are there to protect your wife and provide for her.
>
> P11: But also, like you saying… you supposed to be the dominant species and you supposed to be the provider and the protector and this and that!

Such responses illustrate that participants strongly support Lindsey's (1994) notion of 'the big wheel' in their own constructions of an ideal man. Within this, constructions of masculinity expect of men to be successful and career-wise, and thus men are expected to

accept the responsibility and role of both breadwinner and provider. What is interesting however, is that Morrell (2001) notes how gender relations are continually shifting and hence society bears witness to increasing numbers of women entering the workforce. Yet despite this, the participants in this study continually made reference to the idea that men should be the sole providers and protectors of their family. This is because it was understood by participants that if they cannot live up to these expectations they worry over what they can in fact do as men. What this then can be seen as representing is a strong sense and determination that goes against our changing society that is more accepting of women taking on more responsibility. Hence the hegemonic social order that places men above women was interpreted as important to the participants of this study. It was further understood that participants place great value on continually fulfilling this role in their own lives and thus living up to their own constructions of an ideal man.

Being a discussion of male rape it was not surprising to the researcher that participants felt the need to reassert themselves in a sexual manner. Throughout discussions then, participants made sexual comments that were understood as largely affirming the ideal man's attributes related to sexual competence.

> P7: The urge to fornicate or the urge for sex… men get it a lot more than women do…
>
> P13: 'Cause how do you classify rape in a scenario like, you go watch discovery... and you will see that the lion goes up to the lioness and he scratches her and she walks away... and he'll follow her and he'll scratch her and she walks away, he follows her and he... you know? And he will persist in getting-
> P11: What he wants!
> P13: And eventually the woman succumbs and, and that's what happened, is that not rape as well? Because she didn't... it's not her choice you know? She just doesn't have any power against the man... and the male lion, he's obviously stronger, he's gonna get what he wants eventually... so it's the same thing. We're all, we're all ape, like it's the same thing, it's nature! Our nature as men is to... be with women, go find it, hunt it, things like that! Now society's moulded us a little bit... but that's still-
> P11: It's your natural instinct!

Participants thus understood an ideal man as sexually competent and sexually forward. This again aligns well with the attributes Lindsey (1994) maps out in discussing hegemonic masculinities. More specifically, the above descriptions from the participants refer to the attribute of 'the macho man', and this attribute is largely based on the sexual ability of men. As described in participants using the words 'natural instinct', men are expected to be sexually forward (Lindsey, 1994). What becomes interesting however, is that a statement such as this almost serves to contradict earlier defensive responses constructing women as liars or overly seductive. The point is that constructions of gender more commonly associate sexual ability with men as opposed to women. In their discussions participants alluded to the idea that this forms a natural instinct of their ideal constructions of masculine identity.

What is important then, is that participants' constructions of the ideal man are largely in line with common attributes associated with hegemonic masculinity. Thus the hegemonic views on masculinity illustrated in the participants' discussions support interpretations so far that suggest a strong hegemonic influence in the participants' responses. It therefore appears as though the men within this study affiliate with this masculine identity in their own understandings of masculinity. Within this, participants were clear on their own conceptualisations of what being a man entails and whether directly in indirectly, they continually asserted these throughout discussions. Having analysed and interpreted such responses, the focus on analysis now shifts to a consideration of subordinated forms of masculinities that emerged in the participants' responses to male rape. This is important because it represents homosexuality as constructed as less than ideal by participants.

4.4.2. Homosexuality as a Less than Ideal Masculine Identity:

The hegemonic standard has resulted in the construction of an 'ideal' form of masculinity. Within this, men are continually involved in a process of socialisation in which expectations of being a 'real man' and hence aligning oneself with the hegemonic standards is emphasised. It is through this process that a single form of masculinity, namely hegemonic masculinity, has come to be seen as the appropriate identity for men

to assume. Although many mistakenly identify the term hegemony with placing masculinity over femininity, this perception overlooks the fact that it is a specific type of masculinity that is ranked above other masculine identities as well in its receiving of a higher degree of legitimacy than other forms. Within this, internal hegemony as described by Demetriou (2001) is a term representing the constructed hierarchy that places hegemonic masculinity above other masculine identities.

In light of the above, hegemonic masculinities carry with them not only expectations of what it is to be a man, but further dictate what behaviours situate one outside the idealised masculine construction. In their responses, participants had already alluded to the construction of an ideal masculine identity aligned well with this hegemonic form. Additionally, further analysis revealed that participants in this study constructed homosexual identities as less than ideal.

Homosexuality is described as one of those identities that are excluded from a hegemonic identity. Contrary to Connell's (1992) findings that homosexual men can assume a masculine identity, expectations of manly behaviour continue to remove this identity from the constructed perception of being a man. It is these very expectations that have then resulted in the common occurrence of viewing homosexuality as deviant behaviour. Hence individuals with a homosexual orientation, instead of being viewed as different, are viewed as going against what is expected of them and are further constructed as displaying gender inappropriate behaviour. Participants within the focus groups, in talking about male rape and thus in considering the idea of contact between two males, displayed how society has been socialised in a way that attaches negative reactions to the consideration of this. This is because within the participants' discussions, responses initially revolved around the idea that homosexuality is constructed as taboo within society.

> P1: Because we have been taught from when we were young that being gay is wrong by whoever, the media or our parents so that's probably why as well.

> P6: I think also beside the whole, I mean which was a great point, the whole manhood thing and saying why couldn't you fight and whatever. You know, there's still a very strong taboo in our society against homosexuality. People, people say that we accept it and whatever but uh, we're, we're all aware of kind of…for lack of a better way of putting it, insecure heterosexual males are always wanting to prove that I'm straight and to have some guy, another guy now have his way with you in a homosexual manner it's not, it's not, besides doing damage to the, you know, it would do damage to your whole identity, you know…

The above illustrates how participants battled with considering male rape as a reality. This was largely because, in their discussions, they revealed that such an act places men in a homosexual scenario that is deemed less acceptable in society where heterosexual masculine identities are constructed as ideal representations of masculinity. What was interesting however, was that participants attempted to again distance themselves from stigmatising homosexual men through constructing arguments in a way that externalised the responsibility to that of society in general, and not themselves as individuals. Since the early 1980's Connell (1995) notes that homophobic campaigns have risen and, although society has begun to shift towards a more understanding response to this masculine identity, homosexuality is often viewed by more general society as a violation of God's intention and further threatening to both family and larger social order. It is thus through such messages that a homophobic attitude has been continually promoted in the service of maintaining an acceptable social order in terms of gender relations.

As mentioned, the participants' responses largely reflected a societal understanding of homosexuality and participants appeared to comment with caution. This was interpreted as possibly avoiding their personal views from surfacing. It was only when they let their guard down and were not directly engaging in a discussion on homosexuality, that their personal feelings around gay men began to emerge. It was in such discussions that not only through their verbal responses, but also through observing the discomfort, and then anger in their non-verbal behaviours, that the researcher was able to interpret the responses of most participants as seemingly showing limited acceptance towards homosexual men.

> P11: Because it's a gay experience…more than anything!

P10: Ja…some males are against that, you know so…
P11: And an unwilling gay experience!
P12: I don't want another man rubbing up against me, shit that would-
P10: Ja I think, the fact that it's a male, that's the most disturbing part! That you're a man-
P11: But, it, it brings in that, that homophobic, that homophobic scenario…

Words such as 'disturbing' revealed that responses were largely based on hegemonic standards that do not allow for men to form a neutral perception of homosexuality. It was due to such beliefs that participants continually constructed homosexuality as less than ideal in comparison to their own constructions of acceptable masculine behaviours. As will be discussed later, certain responses did reveal more accommodating responses to homosexual identities. However, the majority of discussions were largely based on the stigmatisation of homosexuality and the understanding that this does not receive as much legitimacy as the hegemonic form. Analysis of such responses revealed that equating homosexuality with taboo was a more common response than the few individual comments that were less demeaning of this masculine identity.

Discussions in focus groups thus revealed a strong affiliation of participants to hegemonic standards of masculinity that often resulted in a denial of them in accepting homosexuality as a fully legitimate identity to affiliate oneself to. Although transitions are occurring in how we conceptualise homosexuality, such responses indicate that true acceptance of this identity is not yet fully observable. It is thus understood that hegemonic standards still attach a degree of stigmatistation to homosexual experiences in the higher level of legitimacy it receives.

The above discussion served to illustrate how the participants within this study strongly adhered to a hegemonic masculine identity in their responses that constructed an ideal masculine identity. Whether this is the exact way in which they lead their own lives or whether they are displaying complicit forms of masculinity and thus are simply sustaining the hegemonic form, cannot be determined (Demetriou, 2001). Despite this, the above sheds light on the idea that hegemonic standards of masculinity still receive a higher degree of legitimacy than subordinated identities. It is because of their responses

that constructed an ideal versus a less than ideal homosexual masculine identity that participants were understood as continually emphasising hegemonic ideals in their discussions.

4.5. Accommodating Responses to Homosexual Identities:

Although the majority of responses from participants illustrated a hegemonic orientation to masculine identity, the emergence of other forms of responses was also noted in focus group discussions. Morrell (2001) speaks of accommodating responses to masculinity in referring to the less reactive forms of masculinity that he sees as the types of responses that reflect a less-violent masculine orientation. Within this concept, Morrell (2001) speaks of shifts in society that have led to redefining masculinities and in doing so, accommodating previously considered unacceptable identities of men. Such responses have led to a greater acceptance of women's shifting roles as well as less homophobic responses to homosexual men. What was interesting in the participants' responses was the emergence of a growing acceptance of the latter as this proved contradictory to responses that emerged earlier in the consideration of homosexuality as less than ideal.

As noted in previous discussions, many responses alluded to the possibility that participants were less accepting of homosexual identities than other masculine identities. This was largely shaped by hegemonic standards of masculinity that have come to be understood as largely homophobic. That said however, contradictions arose, and there were some responses that indicated a growing acceptance of such identities within broader constructions of masculinities.

> P2: Ja, exactly. It's more savage man. I mean dude, even being gay is different but hey, it's okay nowadays…
>
> P7: I think maybe like initially in terms of oh my goodness…that guy was raped by another guy or a girl, I mean, society would n- well frown upon it but at the same time society is moving so quickly now in terms of gay marriages are allowed. Things like that.
>
> P6: So…uh…the taboo in that way is evaporating quickly…
>
> P7: And gay guys aren't all like-

P8: Like that, that's what stereotyping-
P7: We stereotype gays…

What is interesting for purposes of analysis is that such responses lie in direct opposition to the more common responses that did in fact stereotype homosexual identities in a negative way. Lea, Spears and de Groot (2001) note that it is not uncommon in focus groups for participants to conform to what is perceived as a socially desirable response. Thus it might be possible that certain participants in focus groups were more accepting of alternative masculine identities and thus were more accommodating of this. Despite this, it must be noted that social constructions of masculinity that do not easily allow for homosexuality to be included within its definition were more influential during focus group discussions. If this is the case though, it could be further interpreted that in not wanting to go against what was perceived as socially acceptable responses to masculine identities, such participants were more inclined to agree with responses that stigmatised homosexual identities. It is then possible that responses such as those illustrated represent attempts to allow their own perceptions of alternative masculinities to emerge without being constrained by the social norms that would usually prevent this.

In making acknowledgements such as homosexuality being different but okay, this participant can be interpreted as going against social standards that equate such difference with deviance. From this, this participant can thus be understood as displaying a growing tolerance for homosexual men thus illustrating an accommodationist position (Morrell, 2001). Further to this, a discussion from another focus group illustrates that participants are aware that homosexual men often fall victim to stereotypes that do not serve as an accurate descriptions of all homosexual men. The acknowledgment that homosexual men are receiving growing recognition similarly represents the ability to accommodate for other identities in what has more commonly been associated with an isolated and unchangeable definition of manhood.

The researcher however, remained aware that although these responses could serve to illustrate the above, their minority in comparison to the hegemonic responses that denied any form of acknowledgment, could further be understood by a consideration that such

responses represent a way of positive presentation. This would imply that because such responses were limited as well as the fact that they contradict previous responses, they might just represent conscious attempts to influence the researcher in perceiving the participants as more flexible and thus more accommodationist. A definite interpretation can hence not be made as conflicting data such as this represents mixed responses to masculine identities.

It thus cannot be accurately determined whether the participants have undergone any transitions in gender relations. In line with this, an increase in levels of legitimacy afforded to subordinated masculinities such as homosexuality cannot be accurately identified. This is because participants were more inclined to construct homosexuality as less than ideal and further affording it very low levels of legitimacy.

Perhaps this can still be understood as reflecting broader societal constructions. This is suggested because even though participants' constructions were less than accepting of this identity, subtle responses such as those illustrated can be used to understand a possible increase in overall acceptance of this masculine identity. It is thus possible that although hegemonic standards still dominate conceptualisations of masculinities, there have been subtle increases in accommodating identities considered different to this dominant form. The above thus serves to subtly illustrate how homosexuality is in a process of being reconstructed in an accommodating way.

4.6. The Emergence of Progressive Masculine Responses:

Having identified the subtle emergence of accommodating masculine responses in discussions, further responses illustrated a more progressive stance in responses to the topic of male rape. Morrell (2001) identifies this progressive response to masculinity which refers to a category associated with emancipatory forms of masculinity. Within discussions participants displayed such responses in their discussions that went beyond the accepted definitions of manhood.

Participants were thus able to consider shifts in ideas around constructions of men. In doing so, participants involved themselves in discussions that considered current understandings of men. Such considerations illustrated the shifts evident in society and how there now exist many different and acceptable masculine identities that are evident in broader society. Furthermore, participants showed a progressive stance in their understandings of the topic of male rape as well as subtle references to female rape. This is because, although initially they refused to accept male rape as a reality, later discussions illustrated a progression in their way of thinking as they became more accepting of male rape. In doing so, participants began to construct male rape as an assertion of power as opposed to simply relating it to an issue of sexual gratification. Each will be discussed in an effort to illustrate these progressive masculine responses in the talk of male rape.

4.6.1. Male Rape is Not about Sex: Power as a Key Component in the Rape of Men:

As previously noted, initial discussions revealed strong feelings of disgust and intense anger in considering one man raping another, due to the negative connotations this had in relation to masculine identities. Further to this, participants were initially consumed with the physical nature of this act, and thus the idea of two men interacting in a sexually physical manner was not received lightly. It was in further discussing this that discussions then pointed to a different way of understanding and making sense of this sexual act of violence. Within this, participants progressed past the sexual understandings of male rape and instead considered how this event could be explained in terms of power dynamics between men.

In discussions, participants involved themselves in heated arguments around sex and power and which one was more definitive in conceptualising male rape. In doing so, participants illustrated a progressive stance in their conceptualisation of rape as more than simply a need for sexual gratification. This is valuable as it speaks to gender relations and the accompanying power dynamics that occur between men. It further serves to illustrate

power dynamics in broader society related to the dominant system of patriarchy and how it impacts on all genders in the way it structures such relations both between the different sexes and between different masculine identities. In understanding male rape in this way, participants considered that overpowering another man could represent an ultimate display of power and domination.

> P11: This might sound strange okes but it's often been said that... for a man to rape another man, that's a real man... you know what I mean, like that's the ultimate predator! Is the man that can, that is not you know scared to do that! He can or anything that has to do with domination-
> P10: And power...
> P11: Exactly... I am the man!
> P10: He can dominate...
> P11: It's not even about the sex, it's not even about the whole man on man, it's just the complete domination-
> P12: It's about overpowering!
> P11: Exactly, I have ultimate power... and-
> P13: That's. That's exactly what happens in the jungles-
> P11: It's the ultimate, ultimate predator!
> P11: But thats 'cause, I'm just saying I don't think they, they would do it to each other because it's not about…I don't think it's about the sex…I think it's, it's completely about the domination!
> P13: Which is a, which is like a-
> P10: Feeling of having all the power!

Such responses can be interpreted as progressive responses as they illustrate that the participants conceptualised and made sense of male rape as more than a sexual urge. In alluding to the role of power and dominance, participants displayed understandings of the power dynamics and influence that this has in relations between men. Further to this, such discussions further add insight to the relative importance that men place on being the alpha male and thus being the ultimate one to dominate. It thus became evident that hierarchies are central in understanding men and masculinities as, even within masculine identities, participants displayed some sense of a need to show domination.

In a traditional sense however, such responses do not illustrate the emancipatory form of masculinity that Morrell (2001) refers to in coining this idea of progressive masculinities in transitions. However, as emphasised, such responses do illustrate an

consider the act of male rape as not simply a sexually violent attack, but rather an attack on their masculine identities. Such ideas then relate back to ideas that constructed male rape as destructive and potentially inverting masculine identities by shattering ideas associated with this construct. It is thus understood that the idea of male rape being about power lent itself well to the masculine identities adopted in conceptualising the overall experience of male rape. Hence an understanding of this in terms of power and dominance as opposed to attaching sexual connotations to male rape illustrates a progression in the ability of participants to unpack the reasons that some men rape other men.

What is interesting is that their responses were not isolated to a consideration of male rape only. In discussions, participants discussed male rape as an assertion of power and later discussions similarly used this understanding in making sense of both male and female rape. In doing so, responses can be seen as largely contradictory to previous discussions that conceptualised female rape as related to women being deceitful and hence making this up, as well as women being highly seductive thus contributing to the occurrence of female rape. Despite such contradictions however, it was interesting to note the progression in responses and instead of differentiating the two experiences, participants found common ground in discussing both male and female rape.

> P1: Do you think it's 'cause of sex or do you think it's like 'cause I'm in charge of you? Sorry to ask a question! I don't think it's just about like just hammering to be honest. Ja it's not like sexual- More of a power trip, ja, more power, for women rape as well, I think it's like I'm i- I'm in charge... ja I think, I think it's more about power 'cause like 'I'm in charge of you'... like you said something to me in a club or wherever… or not in a club, or whatever, or you my boss and I envy you', you know what I mean something like that. Anything. More power thing.
> P4: Ja, the power and the dominance.
> P1: It's not like, it's not like sexual. It's more a power thing than like I'm desperate.
> P2: And also to get off on it but that's also the trip of being like 'Sweet, I'm the fucken man'!
> P1: Ja, if you, you know, you turn me away when I, I walk towards you or whatever or approached you then… I'll just show you, you can't turn me away.

P6: Or possibly returning to the whole ego thing. It could also be like a dominance display, you're mine sort of…
P7: Natural instinct. Sort of alpha male type of thing…

Such responses thus indicate that men were able to conceptualise the act of rape, whether it be a female or male victim, as an act of asserting power in an ever-changing society. It further speaks to gender relations and extends beyond previous discussions in now adding insight to the power dynamics that occur between men and women as well as those between men. It thus becomes important to understand that power is a central component in conceptualising masculinities as this is an important component that men use in their explanations associated with this construct. Again the emphasis is on a progressive masculine response that, although not directly addressing the issues Morrell (2001) refers to in the coining of this term, still represents progressive shifts in the participants' growing awareness of issues associated with male rape that go beyond a sexual explanation.

4.6.2. The Fluid Nature of Masculinities:

In addition to a growing understanding of the role of power within rape, some participants equally demonstrated progressive responses in reflecting on the shifting constructions of masculinity in wider society. Within discussions, participants in all focus groups alluded to the idea of counselling and how shifting perceptions of masculinity now allow for men to display their sensitive sides. Hence a more sensitive side and greater levels of emotional introspection have become less frowned upon attributes in constructing masculine identities. Morrell (2001) refers to this as the emergence of the 'new man' and thus the idea of men involving themselves in such activities that involve deeper introspection and conscientisation, represents a more progressive response to masculinity in the ever-changing context of South Africa.

P2: Ja but if it's too small you might realise it's just one guy, and everyone is well okay, sorry for you, what are we gonna do? Go on a manhunt for two dudes that only get it in the ass? I mean what are you gona do?
P3: You can't do anything…
P1: Just go talk to your psychologist. I guess that would help…

> Interviewer: Yes, for a man going for counselling or a man seeking psychological services, how do you think society would respond to that?
> P9: I duno, if it, if it was myself in this situation I actually couldn't give a shit about what society thinks I'm sorry. At the end of the day it's for my own well-being and, and for me to go through life…basically a healthier person and not have…I mean there will always be obstacles to overcome but just take them with ease and knowing that, I mean you've got somebody there who listens and is always able to give you that help so I mean at the end of the day, I mean, nobody knows until you've walked a mile in somebody else's shoes…

Participants in these focus groups thus illustrated the shifts that society has undergone. This is because something like seeking counselling was once conceptualised as a service more commonly made use of by women. Participants showed a greater acceptance of this. In their responses they indicated that even if society was less accepting of this, it might be an appropriate option if it afforded them the help they required. In doing so, men were demonstrating progressive responses in that they were displaying shifts that are increasingly allowing men an emotional side associated with introspection.

Further to the above, participants further compared definitions and understandings of being a man in earlier times to current constructions that dictate the acceptable and appropriate behaviour which men are expected to display. Within such discussions, a growing acceptance of the many different forms of masculine identities in society today was illustrated. This was largely representative of shifts from the more isolated definitions and constructions of masculinities that they had provided in previous discussions.

> P7: Because you have manly men, you have meterosexual men and then you have feminine guys who are straight but are just very feminine and then you have gay guys. I think there's totally a huge amount of different type of guys so it's so hard to answer that question…
> P8: You probably even get between like manly men and metero men… you know what I mean like-
> P6: Nowadays guys are you know, it's, the premium is placed on being sensitive…uh…being you know…nobody wants the sort of shit kicking cowboy anymore…or-

Such descriptions illustrate the growing acceptance of softer attributes in defining men. Although previous discussions suggest other expectations placed on men's behaviours, responses such as those illustrated above, can be interpreted as shedding light on the constant transitions that society is in when defining and constructing masculinities. Although participants were largely understood as constructing an ideal masculine identity that was associated with hegemonic attributes of masculinities, the above serves to illustrate growing levels of legitimacy that are afforded to the many different masculine identities evident in broader society today. In referring to these many different identities, participants simultaneously alluded to the idea that masculinities today are conceptualised in a different way. Thus this represents the historical nature of gender relations and how constructions of masculinities remain largely dependent on both social context and time (Connell, 2000).

Connell (1995) accepts that masculinities and more specifically hegemonic masculinity is not a stable construct. Hence the understandings we attach to this concept will continually shift with time. It is for this reason that masculinity is in fact understood as a socially constructed concept. It is thus only through constant debates and struggles that society shifts from a completely defensive response to a more progressive orientation that allows for many different and diverging forms of masculinity to be recognised as acceptable behaviours of men. Participants can thus be understood as showing increasing acceptance of the fluid nature of masculinities and how masculine identities are constructed differently dependant on many factors such as those mentioned.

It must be acknowledged however, that hegemony still dominated in discussions. Because the progressive masculine responses illustrated above were quite subtle by comparison, participants were not fully displaying such a progressive position. Due to the overpowering influence of hegemonic understandings in their responses, such discussions at least serve as a way of illustrating the gradual progression of broader society in accepting non-traditional masculine identities. It can thus be concluded that although participants mostly used hegemonic standards in their explanations and understandings of masculinity, the emergence of subordinated masculinities was noted and thus both

progressive and accommodating responses were illustrated in the participants' talk on male rape.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

The research has thus explored the participants' perceptions of the constructions of masculinity within the talk of male rape. This chapter first considers a summary of the findings from the analysis presented. Following this, the conclusions that can be drawn from the analysis of data in order to address the research questions posed at the outset of the study will be considered. Further to this, an evaluation of the study, in considering both its strengths and weaknesses, will be presented. The implications of the results and the possibilities for future research will be then be discussed, and this chapter concludes with the provision of some concluding remarks.

5.1. Summary of Findings:

Because male rape remains an under-represented phenomenon, it was expected that participants would at first battle with accepting this as a growing reality in South Africa. In initially attempting to make sense of this experience, participants separated the experiences along gendered lines and constructed boundaries that separated different masculine identities. More specifically, participants emphasised the devastating effects this would have on a man's sense of self and his masculine identity. In continually referring to the common attributes society associates with the hegemonic standard of masculinity, it became apparent that participants appeared to strongly adhere to this in their responses. It was these attributes that male rape was seen as acting in direct opposition to. Destruction of these important components of being a man was seen as so shattering, that male rape was referred to as possibly equivalent to a death sentence in its inversion of masculine identity.

Such responses serve to indicate the value placed on masculinity, and more specifically the idealised hegemonic form. Within this, rape was seen as highly contradictory to the behaviours and expectations society places on men. Thus further emphasis on masculine attributes was argued in the participants' understandings that responses to male rape victims would be strongly negative as a result of masculine expectations that do not allow

for the vulnerability of men. It was thus perceived that accompanying male rape would be judgement, humiliation and scrutiny. Such perceptions were seen as strongly influenced by masculine attributes that continually influence and shape the experiences society allows men to be associated with.

In their consideration of female rape, their responses differed significantly. Although attempts were made to legitimise this experience for some women, overall their responses indicated a strongly negative view of women. Within this, participants constructed women as highly seductive, and thus playing an active role in female rape. Partially accepting female rape in some responses, other responses indicated a refusal to accept female rape as such a prominent sexual crime. Rather, participants attributed the growing occurrence of female rape in South Africa to attempts of women to depower men. Hence accusations of rape were constructed as deceitful attempts to either retaliate against the growing sense of power that men possess, or simply for monetary gain.

Participants further widened the division of men and women through a discussion of their relative attributes in association with rape. Through discussing rape, participants compared men and women and concluded that women are the weaker sex and thus are unable to defend themselves in the face of rape. Alternatively men were conceptualised as putting up a fight when confronted with a rape scenario. Through this, participants attempted to justify that the experience of male rape would have to be more violent as a direct result of the differences in attributes society attributes to the different genders. In such discussions, participants attempted to construct masculinity as superior to femininity, thus emphasising the gendered hierarchies in broader society.

Additionally, participants further constructed the experience of rape as different if it involved a homosexual man as the victim. Such an experience was almost normalised in the justification that sexual intercourse between men is a normal experience for homosexual men. In such responses, participants were perceived as affording limited sympathy to homosexual men who were raped. This emphasised the lesser degree of legitimacy that hegemonic standards afford other masculine identities.

Further reference was made to Black men living in townships and thus masculine hegemony was used in association with race hegemony as well as class hegemony in conceptualising male rape. Through what was deemed a process of 'othering', participants distanced themselves from the experience of male rape. In doing so, this experience was considered more likely to be happening in townships with limited resources. Due to the nature of the sample only involving White males, such responses might indicate attempts to further afford higher degrees of legitimacy to White middle-class masculinities. This was done at the expense of Black lower-class masculinities. What becomes interesting in all discussions on conceptualising rape, is that participants separately constructed the experience on what was understood as influenced by hegemonic standards that elevate hegemonic masculinities above other gendered identities.

Throughout discussions continual reference was made to common expectations of a man and thus, through discussions, participants constructed their own ideals around being a man. These were largely in line with the hegemonic principles of masculinity, and thus participants were understood as strongly affiliated with this hegemonic standard. It is possible however, that participants do not consistently conform to this hegemonic model, and hence they may be considered to be displaying complicit masculinity in passively sustaining the hegemonic model through their talk on male rape. In emphasising these expected attributes of men, participants also engaged in discussions that did not afford the same level of legitimacy to homosexual identities. Hence homosexual identities were constructed as less than ideal. Participants were thus seen as constructing their own hierarchy of masculine identities and, in placing hegemony as the ideal identity, they were again adhering to the more commonly accepted hegemonic standards in constructing masculinities.

Interestingly however, some responses displayed greater levels of accommodation to homosexuality. Within this, some discussions revealed an acceptance of this as different, yet not necessarily wrong. Such comments were subtle, however they were significant as it is possible that the perceived group norms may have influenced previous discussions, and thus only later could differing opinions and perceptions come to the fore. Therefore,

although hegemonic standards were dominant that largely excluded homosexuality, more accommodationist positions subtly emerged that afforded such identities increased levels of legitimacy.

Participants were further understood as displaying progressive masculine responses in their ability to move beyond discussions of male rape as a sexual act, and rather consider the influence of power in this crime. They later adopted similar explanations in conceptualising female rape. This was understood as progressive because it moves beyond the act of rape at face value, and considers the deeper undertones that influence it. Further to this, some discussions revealed greater acceptance of the ever-changing and fluid nature of the construct of masculinities. Participants were thus able to compare masculinities decades ago in comparison to current constructions of this. In doing so, the influence of time and context on masculine constructs became more evident in discussions and thus some participants accepted that this is an ever-changing concept. This additionally emphasised their abilities to think progressively.

5.2. Conclusions:

Having summarised the dominant themes and findings, the research questions can now be addressed. Although the topic of male rape was initially met with resistance, participants were able to shift their understandings and further consider this as a growing reality in society at present. Responses in all focus groups indicate that all participants thoroughly engaged in this topic, thus considering multiple associated issues. In engaging with the topic of male rape, participants in this study continually used a masculine point of reference in making sense of male rape.

Most dominant in the talk around male rape was the emergence of hegemonic forms of masculinities in their responses. Participants were thus perceived as strongly influenced by the patriarchal underpinnings of this masculine identity. Within this, a defensive nature was subtly noted, in which participants were understood as vehement in their responses and thus continually defended their masculine identities. This was done in both

their constant referrals to the importance of the masculine ego and self-esteem, as well as in the noted collusions in which the participants were interpreted as attempting to depower the researcher in their talk around female rape. Within this, they attached largely negative connotations to females who allege rape against other men.

Participants in addition, continually elevated masculine identities over femininity. They grounded this argument in power and strength and the ability of men to dominate within this attribute. This seemed to be grounded in hegemonic attributes associated with masculinities and additionally, participants emphasised hegemonic understandings that excluded homosexuality from the hegemonic position. Their constructions of this were emphasised in the limited legitimacy they afforded homosexuality in conceptualising masculine identities. They additionally involved themselves in a process that 'othered' African masculinities through the talk of this in relation to issues of class. Thus participants displayed both internal and external hegemony in their responses. This resulted in a continual expression of the perceived superiority and greater degree of legitimacy of hegemonic standards of masculinity in comparison to subordinated identities.

Participants therefore were understood as displaying a strong affiliation to hegemonic masculinities in their responses, and continually made reference to the attributes expected of such men in the way their responses were framed and this was interpreted accordingly. It thus becomes apparent that the hegemonic standard is central in considering the influence that masculinities have in the way men understand and make sense of events such as male rape that could possibly threaten this.

Participants were further perceived as contradictory in certain responses that conflicted with previous statements and within this, the emergence of subordinated forms of masculinities arose. Further within this, men expressed progressive responses in their consideration of the flexibility of masculinities within society and hence alluded to the ever-changing nature of acceptable behaviour of men dependant on time and context. This was interpreted as progressive in that participants were displaying a shift from the

more rigid hegemonic explanations that had dominated most discussions. Additionally, participants emphasised the role of power within male rape. In doing so, they excluded sexual explanations of this and rather referred to this as an act of power and dominance thus displaying a progressive stance in conceptualising this traumatic event.

Further to the above, perceptions shifted and some participants were noted as going against the norm created in earlier discussions, and hence progressed to responses that included homosexuality as an increasingly valid masculine identity. In showing greater levels of acceptance to this and considering such identities as different rather than deviant, participants were understood as giving recognition and greater legitimacy to homosexuality. However, this was done in a subordinating way and hence hegemonic identities still emerged as dominant in relation to other mentioned masculine identities. The researcher noted that such discussions were contradictory, as previous discussions had afforded limited legitimacy to this masculine identity. This served to display the strong influence of group norms in constructing masculinities and this played out in the data collection process. Hence individual perceptions that displayed an accommodationist stance in a greater acceptance of subordinated masculinities, although emerging, were not dominant due to the largely influential hegemonic identities that navigated most discussions.

In conclusion, discussions in focus groups can be understood as largely reflective of the broader constructions of masculinity that elevate hegemony above other gendered identities in its receiving of greater levels of legitimacy. The relative strength of hegemonic identities in relation to the emergence of subordinated forms of masculinities was clearly displayed in participants' constructions of masculinity in the talk of male rape. Although considered flexible, current constructions of hegemonic identities continue to dominate within society. The men in this study thus continually used such standards as a point of reference in their discussions. Constructions of masculinity can therefore be understood as largely informed by the hegemonic model that strongly dictates acceptable behaviours of men. Furthermore, subordinated masculinities are then allowed limited space to navigate around this in broader society.

5.3. Strengths and Limitations of the Study:

An important strength of this research lies in the methodology employed in studying constructions of masculinity. Although understandings of masculinities is not a new area of research, the reference to male rape represents a new stance in adopting an understanding of the construction of masculine identities. The exploratory nature of this research thus allowed for this to be explored and further made sense of. Although previous research in a similar area (Field, 2007) led the researcher to expect a masculine point of reference in responses, the exploratory nature of this study allowed for themes to emanate from the participants as opposed to setting out hypotheses at the outset. This, in addition to the use of critical thematic content analysis informed by a social constructionist perspective, allowed for a thorough exploration of the social meanings attached to such themes.

The use of this qualitative method of data collection proved equally valuable as the data collection method of focus groups allowed for open discussions. This further provided the participants within the study with a participatory space to engage in a topic not commonly addressed in everyday living. It allowed the participants to engage in discussions where their opinions and perceptions of male rape could be openly expressed, and further allowed for the masculine constructions they attach to this to emerge. The vignette proved significantly valuable in opening up discussions on male rape, and the open-ended interview schedule complemented this in leading discussions towards a consideration of masculinities within this talk.

A potential shortcoming in this study involve the nature of the sample as although a sample that included both White and Black participants was sought after, the intended aim was not met. Thus conclusions could represent a bias construction of masculinities that does not adequately consider African masculinities within this. However, in remaining reflexive on this issue, the researcher considers this as an area that can be addressed in future research as opposed to a limitation specific to this study.

Further hindering to this study was the influence of group norms within discussions. The topic of male rape is seen as a sensitive topic and although not the focus of the study, the emergence of masculine perceptions largely relied on the participants' openness to discussing this topic. Although the group interview helped in stimulating discussion, participants were at times perceived as responding in a socially desirable way, and this could be understood as possibly at the expense of other valuable data.

Additionally, in focusing on the talk of participants, studies often run the risk of privileging participants' language over the meanings this represents in broader society. Hence, while the researcher recognises the limitations of studies that privilege language as a text for analysis, this does not mean that she does not appreciate the importance of understanding how language is a reflection and reproduction of the psychological interiorisation of broader social discourses.

5.4. Implications and Areas for Future Research:

This study served to add to the ever-increasing knowledge base on gender relations and more specifically, the constructions of masculinities that underpin men's behaviour in broader society. This allowed for further insight on men's experiences of masculinities and how this construct influences responses that men attach to gendered phenomena such as male rape. This research further contributed to the growing literature on social constructions and how society contributes to a continual reproduction of behaviours. The research hence sheds some light on masculinities and how they are negotiated, often as a result of the social context that underpins these. Because of the paucity of research that exists on male rape, this research illustrates both an under-researched area in addition to including it in relation to the area of masculinities. It thus represents a valuable and new stance to be taken in considering masculine constructions of trauma.

Future research however, needs to include a broader sample that is more representative of men and masculine identities in society in order to gain an accurate reflection of the masculinities that exist and the constant transitions in conceptualisations of this. In light

of this, future research could extend this to include a focus on issues of class and race by including a diverse sample in its method. Additionally, this research could be similarly replicated with a sample of women as this too would shed further light on the constructed nature of masculinities from another gendered perspective. This will allow for the continual growth in understanding men in South Africa and what influence constructions of masculinities have in prescribing appropriate forms of behaviours.

It can thus be seen that the focus groups yielded valuable data regarding perceptions of constructions of masculinities with specific reference to male rape. Such responses have implications for the understanding of masculinities in the South African context and thus how we conceptualise how men adhere to these constructed standards. Future studies can increase such understandings, and hence the fluid nature of masculinities needs to be continually researched to understand the relative strength of external pressures relating to both time and context in shaping the construction of this.

5.5. Concluding Remarks:

It can thus be concluded that the hegemonic model of masculinity is highly influential in shaping both men and broader society's responses to men, especially in the face of gendered phenomena such as trauma. It appears that this model of masculine identity receives the highest degree of legitimacy, and thus most men in this study appeared to adopt it in their conceptualisation of male rape. This resulted in continual emphasis being placed on the masculine stereotypes and ideals attributed to this masculine identity.

Additionally, the continual elevation of this identity within a hierarchy of masculinities results in other masculine identities receiving less legitimacy. Such identities include both homosexual and African masculinities, which were both subordinated within this study. Further to this, women remain continually constructed as inferior to men, thus further emphasising a constructed hierarchy that occurs in considering the concept of gender. The talk on masculinities thus also yielded valuable data in further understanding the influence of a broader patriarchal structure in understanding gender relations.

It can be further concluded that hegemony has resulted in two forms of subordination, namely internal and external, and both serve in elevating certain masculine identities. The above not only sheds light on the gendered nature of society, but is further illustrative of the gendered nature of perceptions of rape. Hence it can be concluded that constructions of masculinities are highly influential in broader society and these are further emphasised in the face of psychosocial issues that directly threaten the hegemonic attributes we afford to men in constructing masculinities

Such understandings are largely representative of a broader structure of patriarchy and gender relations and thus more attention needs to be directed at this structure in conceptualising gender inequality. This is because it is suggested that understandings of masculinities often result in this broader structure being overlooked. It thus remains important that masculinities be conceptualised as vehicle through which to understand the overarching structure of patriarchy.

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Appendix A: Subject Information Sheet

SCHOOL OF HUMAN & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND
Private Bag 3, WITS, 2050
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Hello

My name is Shelley Anne Field, and I am conducting research for the purposes of obtaining Master of Arts in Community-Based Counselling at the University of the Witwatersrand. My area of focus is that of constructions of masculinity and how this arises in men's talk around male rape. We live in a society that encourages dominant ideals on masculine behaviour and the aim of this research is to discover how men construct masculinities in their conversations on male rape. Through this research, I hope to gain a greater understanding of how masculinities are constructed and how this reflects broader societal constructions. I would like to invite you to participate in this study.

Participation in this research will entail partaking in a focus group with four other participants. Focus groups will entail discussions around masculine constructs through the topic of male rape. If the topic of rape is offensive to any individual and they do not feel comfortable talking about such a topic, they should choose not to participate or at least remain aware of their right to withdraw from the study at any time. The focus groups will take place at a time and place that is convenient for the participants. Each focus group will last approximately one hour. With your permission, each focus group will be recorded in order to ensure accuracy and further consent will be requested to use direct quotes from the focus groups during the writing of the research report. Participation is voluntary, and no person will be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way for choosing to participate or not participate in the study. There are no direct benefits to participating in this study. In addition, there are no direct risks to participating in this study and thus there is minimal likelihood of harm as the study is non-invasive however, if participation leads to any distressing feelings or discomfort, the individual can withdraw immediately without penalty and the contact numbers for both the Rape Crisis Centre and Lifeline have been provided on this form as these counselling services are free. Due to focus groups, this research cannot guarantee confidentiality however, each

participant will be asked to sign a confidentiality form prior to each focus group to safeguard against this. The research cannot guarantee anonymity either, however, pseudonyms will be used to identify the different participants' responses in the research report and in doing this the researcher will keep responses as anonymous as possible and thus no information that could identify you would be included in the research report. The interview material (tapes and transcripts) will not be seen or heard by any person in this organisation other than myself and my supervisor and it will only be processed by them. Both the recordings and transcriptions will be stored in a safe and secure place with restricted access at the University of Witwatersrand. Once the final research report is submitted and qualification has been obtained, the recordings and transcriptions from the focus groups will be destroyed. At your request, copies of the final report will be made available in the form of a one page summary. You may refuse to answer questions you would prefer not to, and you may choose to withdraw from the study at any point.

If you choose to participate in the study please fill in your details on the form below and return to me. Alternatively I can be contacted telephonically at 082 853 1351 or via e-mail at shelley_field@hotmail.com.

Your participation in this study would be greatly appreciated. This research will contribute both to a larger body of knowledge on constructions of gender and more specifically to the growing body of knowledge on constructions of masculinities.

Kind regards

Shelley Anne Field

Additional contact numbers:

Rape Crisis Centre (Sunninghill, Johannesburg)
011 728 1347

Lifeline
0086 132 2322

Research Supervisor: Garth Stevens
011 717 4535

Appendix B: Consent Form for Focus Groups

I _____ consent to being interviewed by Shelley Anne Field for her study constructions of masculinity in men's talk of male rape.

I understand that:

- Although confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, this will be negotiated in the signing of confidentiality agreements.
- There are no direct benefits in participation in this study.
- There are no direct risks to participating in this study.
- Participation in this focus group is voluntary.
- That I may refuse to answer any questions I would prefer not to.
- I may withdraw from the study at any time.
- No information that may identify me will be included in the research report other than direct quotes but through the use of pseudonyms in the writing of the research report, the researcher will keep responses as anonymous as possible.

Signed_____

Appendix C: Consent Form for Recording

I _____ consent to my interview with Shelley Anne Field on her study on constructions of masculinity in men's talk of male rape being tape-recorded.

I understand that:

- The tapes and transcripts will be kept in a safe and secure place with restricted access at the University of the Witwatersrand.
- The tapes and transcripts will not be seen or heard by any person in this organisation other than the researcher and her supervisor, and will only be processed by them.
- All tape recordings will be destroyed after the research is complete and qualification has been obtained..
- No identifying information will be used in the transcripts or the research report as the researcher will make use of pseudonyms in identifying different participants.

I further give consent to the researcher, Shelley Anne Field, to use direct quotes that will be stripped of any identifying information.

Signed_____

Appendix D: Confidentiality Agreement

I _____ agree to keep all information disclosed in this focus group confidential.

I understand that:

- anything discussed during this focus group is to be used for research purposes only and hence I will not disclose any of the information shared by other participants.

Signed_____

Appendix E: Vignette

In recent media reports, a twenty-three year old man was on his way to visit a friend when his car broke down on the highway. A car pulled up shortly after and two people offered to help. Instead of assisting him, they took him to the bushes, beat him and forced him to take off his pants. The young man was raped by both individuals and left lying in the veld. The victim reported feeling a range of emotions both during and after the incident. He was not sure who to see and so visited his general practitioner for a general check up. He is still unsure of how to make sense of his experience and what to do at this point.

Appendix F: Interview Schedule

1. What are the participants' thoughts about the description of the incident that has just been read?
2. What are the participants' thoughts on the reporting of male rape?
3. Where do participants perceive rape against men to commonly occur?
4. Why do participants think that certain men rape in such contexts?
5. How do participants think an incident such as this would make a man feel?
6. How would this incident affect the victim's view of himself?
7. What do participants think his response to the incident was?
8. What do participants think the general response to victims of male rape is?
9. How do participants think ideas around being a man affect these responses?
10. Why do participants think services for rape victims in South Africa are mostly aimed at women?
11. How do participants perceive the rape of men as compared with the rape of women?
12. How do participants think expectations of men's behaviour affect a male victim's own response to being raped?
13. Do participants think that society is less accepting of male rape than female rape and why?