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SOCIALLY DEVELOPING THE MAN: EXPLORING THE PERCEPTIONS OF YOUNG, MALE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN RELATION TO GENDER STUDIES

A report on a research study presented to

The Department of Social Work

School of Human and Community Development

Faculty of Humanities

University of the Witwatersrand

In partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the degree Master of Arts in Social Development

by

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December, 2013

DECLARATION

I declare that this research report is my own, original work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in Social Development at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. The author further declares that this piece of work has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other University.

Igbanoi Leo Osikhena

30 April 2014

DEDICATION

To the memory of Anthony Berridge, SJ, who helped me to become me

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I would like to express my gratitude to the following people for their contributions to the accomplishment of this project:

Foremost thanks go to you Edmarie Pretorius, my supervisor, for your guidance throughout this venture. Your invaluable insights and support allowed me to come to the end of this undertaking successfully and in time. I am deeply grateful!

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ABSTRACT

The present study set out to explore how male university students perceive their involvement in gender studies and how this intersects with their masculine identities. The research was a qualitative one and semi-structured individual interviews were used to collect data from ten Humanities postgraduate students attending a large, urban university comprising men who do gender studies and those who do not. Two key informants were also interviewed for the study. Qualitative thematic content analysis was employed to analyse the data collected; these reflected themes that bordered around the men and their identities, gender equality, engagement in gender studies, and changing attitudes towards observable gender transformation. In comparing the responses of both categories of men, an inference made was that, although the men mostly expressed positive attitudes towards engagement in gender studies, there does not seem to be a direct relationship between exposing men to gender studies courses or not, and changes in perception towards gender relations. This was evidenced by the fact that both groups of men predominantly upheld traditional hegemonic ideals of masculinity through displays of complicit, accommodating and defensive masculinities amidst a couple of progressive representations. The study affirms the thesis that masculinity is socially constructed based on the contradictory manner in which the men spoke about their identities. This reaffirms the essentiality of speaking about men in diverse ways and rejecting any notions of singularity.

Key words: *Gender studies, masculinity, hegemonic masculinity, masculinities, university men, changing attitudes*

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The importance of studying men has taken center stage within gender studies. This has led to a novel appreciation of the sphere of gender, which heretofore had been considered a realm for women's issues. Indeed, the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) made it clear that women's concerns can only be tackled in partnership with men (Connell, 2005; Morrell, 2001; Moser & Moser, 2005). Hence, over the last three decades, men have become a subject of interrogation resulting in an explosion of research on men (Connell, 1995 & 2000a; Whitehead & Barrett, 2001; Edley &Wetherell, 1995; Clatterbaugh, 1990). These studies have extended beyond the North and have flourished in a context like South Africa (Morrell, 2001; Ratele, 2001; Sideris, 2004; Wood & Jewkes, 2001), and elsewhere in Africa (Lwambo, 2013; Pattman, 2001). Men, as such, have become the new focus in gender work in recent times.

It is important that one examines how gender manifests itself in everyday life between the sexes. This is particularly indispensable because such an enterprise will entail examining the power structures that maintain gender relations in society (Connell, 2000a). One way in which gender manifests itself in everyday life is through the expression of masculinity. A query, thus, that has guided the masculinity endeavour is why men behave the way they do, with the corresponding query being why there has not being significant achievements, globally and locally, in gender relations in society. To illuminate this point, Connell (2005) observes that the notion of gender equality has been a subject in international circles since the adoption of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948 and has enjoyed widespread acceptance. However, it is discernible that theory has not always translated into practice with respect to significant improvements in male and female relations. Hence, it is in line to agree with Connell (2005, p. 1802) that men and boys have been and are still the "gatekeepers for gender equality"; whether they would be willing to open the gates fully to gender reform remains a perennial question.

A possible way to respond to the query in the foregoing paragraph is that work on gender has historically side-lined men from the gender and development domain. Thus, echoing the Beijing submissions, scholarly works in recent times assert that excluding men from the sphere of gender and development is counterproductive (Hebert, 2007; Morrell, 1998;

Oyegun, 1998; Cornwall, 1997; White, 1997). This is because the development enterprise must be understood as a continuing process which must involve men and women fully, and is useful to both sexes in the longer term. Indeed, Connell (2005, p. 1806) observes that "When men are present only as a background category in a policy discourse about women, it is difficult to raise issues about men's and boys' interests, problems, or differences".

An essential theme that has emerged from studies on men is that masculinity is a social construct (Connell, 2005; Morrell, 2001; Whitehead & Barrett, 2001; Cornwall, 1997). It is never fixed or understood in advance of social interaction but is constantly constructed in everyday interaction between men and women (Ratele, 2001; Burr, 1995; Segal, 1992). In fact, some scholars who write about role theories argue that masculinity is ultimately performative (Edley & Wetherell, 1995; Ratele, 2001). The general impression, then, is that when one draws conclusions about what masculinity entails, one must avoid universalising theoretical models that posit the concept as some eternal, transcendent principle (Kimmel, 2001a). In this thinking, masculinity would mean different things to men and women in different contexts at different times. Research, thus, must always account for this heterogeneity among men. The current study is motivated by the latter premise and looks to expanding understandings of the fluidity and multiplicity of masculinities as observed among male students in a South African university.

1.2 RATIONALE

The motivation for the study hinges on observations that masculinity studies, in many respects, have tended to focus on men who fall into commonly researched categories such as rural, oppressed, unemployed, professional, sexually aggressive, adolescent, and so on. Hence, research on other less common sets of men have been sidelined, and in the case of the current study, male university students. The researcher suggests that this presents a limitation to further appreciating the plurality of masculinities, especially with the observation that the latter category of men may express their masculinity differently from already existing masculinity types due to generational differences, context, class, race, exposure to issues of gender, and so on. Indeed, if perceptions of the self and gender are intrinsically tied to differing values and belief systems (Midgley, 1995), then these would affect how manhood is understood within any context, even within an academic environment.

Literature on masculinity explores the diversity of responses by men to the changing gender order. Clatterbaugh (1990), for example, suggests at least six ways in which men have acted or reacted to gender transformation in contemporary society. With growing debates around whether men's attitudes are changing or not in the gender equality era, and as men are becoming interested in gender issues, albeit slowly (Segal, 1992), research work with men students becomes necessary to assess, for instance, how exposure to academic gender/feminism discourses alters their understandings of gender, and in particular masculinity. If the notion of differing masculinities is a real one, then one can see the possibility for change and the expression of alternative identities among men as opposed to the idea of masculinity being a fixed essence in men, which is put forward by essentialist definitions (Connell, 2001), and thwarts any hope for change.

Continuous exploration of men's notions of masculinity has the potential to unravel what informs men's decisions to become part of any gender related enterprise, and in the case of this research gender/feminism courses. The study has the potential to reveal that men's decisions to be involved in any gender project are informed by different reasons. Indeed, it will further lend support to the view that men cannot be treated as a single category and continuing masculinity research has to account for new forms of masculine expressions. The study is of special interest to the researcher who was the lone male student in a feminist course at postgraduate level at a University in South Africa in 2012. Although the number of male students taking the course increased to four in 2013 among Humanities postgraduate male students open to register for the course, observations around the globe indicate that it is a recurring phenomenon with respect to gender/feminism courses, sometimes with no men present at all in these courses (Joshi, 2012; Strimpel, 2012). Hence, the present study has the potential to contribute to literature about why this trend continues.

Finally, the relevance of the study for development, especially from the social development perspective, is prompted. Social development is concerned with harmonising social and economic policies in order to enhance the holistic wellbeing of individuals (Midgley, 1995 & 1998; Patel, 2005). It, however, cannot achieve its aim without engaging seriously with gender relations within society. As such, the continuous study of men of diverse categories and contexts becomes pertinent because socially relevant policies in the long run depend, in part, on understanding how and what maintains gender constructions in society and how these impact on gender equality issues. The present study is an addition to the exploration

of masculinities around the globe and hopes to contribute further to instructive conclusions about how and why men behave the way they do.

1.3 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

1.3.1 Primary aim and secondary objectives of the study

The primary aim of the study is to explore how male, Humanities postgraduate students perceive gender studies and to examine how this coincides with their masculine identities.

The secondary objectives are:

a. To explore the views on masculinity of male students engaged in gender studies and those who are not

b. To examine whether these views indicate changing attitudes to gender transformation or not

c. To explore the implications of these for gender equality and development

1.3.2 Research questions

a. The present study explores three central research questions:

b. How do male, Humanities postgraduate students perceive men's involvement in gender studies?

c. How do the participants view masculinity in general and themselves as men in particular?

What images of manhood emerge from participants' discourses?

1.4 OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH STRATEGY AND METHODOLOGY

The study was qualitative in nature and the single case design was employed to achieving its aims. Because the study required a specific group of participants i.e. male, Humanities, postgraduate students open to take gender studies courses, a non-probability purposive sampling was used. Two key informants were also included in the study and these were limited to academic personnel based on their ongoing engagement with gender studies in general, and masculinity studies in particular. Semi-structured interview schedules were the research instruments that were used for the study. These contained open-ended questions in order for participants to express themselves as profoundly and comprehensively as possible, and were formulated around the aims and questions of the

research. Data was collected from participants through one-on-one interviews. Each individual interview lasted between forty-five minutes to one hour. All of the interviews were tape-recorded to ensure that the responses of participants were accurately captured. The study employed the thematic content analysis to analyse data collected from the participants. This was influenced firstly, by Creswell's (2007) idea of a data analysis spiral and Creswell's (2009) six-step approach for thematic content analysis. Also, Tesch's (1990 as cited in Creswell, 2007) eight-step approach to data coding was utilised.

1.5 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

***Gender*:** Although gender has been understood in different ways historically, especially from biologically perspectives, it has now come to be commonly understood as a socially constructed term. Hence, Cornwall (1997, p. 10) asserts that, "Gender relations are context-bound". In this thinking, gender is not just created by society but its meaning necessarily varies from society to society. Thus, to get a full grasp of gender, one must continually look beyond the concept itself and engage other aspects of social reality like race, class, power, and sex (Connell, 1995 & 2001; Kimmel, 2001a; Morrell, 2001). The point, therefore, is that the terms sex and gender cannot be confused since the former is biologically determined while the latter is socially constructed.

Gender studies: Many times, gender studies have been confused with women's studies, or the equation of women with gender. Thus, Joshi (2012, p. 1) defines gender studies as, "Discussions on subjects that affect both men and women". This is corroborated by Dean (2012, p. 5) who suggests that, "Gender studies programmes encourage students to acknowledge the diversity of relations between men and women, the limitations of a victim-centred understanding of womanhood, and the complex ways in which gender intersects with race, class, and sexuality". These descriptions help to clarify that gender studies is not just about women issues alone but also involve those of men.

Masculinity: It has been observed that masculinity is a difficult concept to define (Clatterbaugh, 1990; Whitehead & Barrett, 2001; Brittan, 2001; Morrell, 2001). However, for the purposes of this project, two definitions are considered. The one is found in the work of Connell (1995, p. 44) where masculinity is described as "Configurations of practice structured by gender relations. They are inherently historical and their making and remaking is a political process affecting the balance of interests in society and the direction of social change". In this thinking, masculinity only exists in relation to femininity because

it cannot assume an existence without this other (Morrell, 2007; Connell, 1995). The other definition is by Segal (1992, p. 284) who suggests that "Masculinity gains its meanings, its force and appeal, not just from some internalised psychological components or roles, but from all the wider social relations in which men and women participate, which simply take for granted men's authority and privileges in relation to women". These characterisations of masculinity are important because they encompass the increasingly common notion that the concept constantly undergoes constructions and reconstructions across time and space. What is also of interest in these definitions is the suggestion that the idea of masculinity is informed by a number of dynamics, but mostly by the way in which the gender order is organised.

Masculinities: As a result of the arbitrariness that trails the concept of masculinity, it is now common to speak about it in the plural (Connell, 2000a; Segal, 1992; Brittan, 2001). Hence, the use of the term masculinities implies that men's identities cannot be understood singularly anymore across all sites, or based on any essential attributes found in men.

***Development*:** The concept of development is another notion that tends to elude a standardised definition across multiple sites. Hence, it is a perpetually contested term (Adelman & Morris, 1997; Brohman, 1995; Pierterse, 2000). Be that as it may, this venture understands development from the social development perspective, which considers the term as the harmonisation of social and economic policies in order to enhance the holistic wellbeing of individuals (Midgley, 1995 & 1998; Patel, 2005). This way, its definition avoids the sometimes limited definitions put forward by various theorists.

1.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher had intended to utilise one focus group interview as a data collection method in the research. This was important to test/confirm conclusions from the individual interviews with the men since individual men may express their masculinity differently in private as opposed to how they might speak about it among their peers. The researcher regrets that this this could not take place for reasons beyond his control. Had the focus group taken place, it would have added credibility to the results of the study.

It is also important to mention the research sample. The men who are engaged in gender courses at postgraduate level in the university are significantly small in number to those who do not, creating an imbalance in the spectrum of discourses that would be produced.

This is a valid limitation because it indicates fewer contributions from these men. Be that as it may, the researcher does not think that this necessarily translates to getting less enriching discourses from this group of men. The study is a qualitative one that explores meanings that are produced by participants about a complex social reality. As long as these meanings from individuals' lives and experiences are being enunciated relevantly (Janesick, 2000) it is not so much about creating balance among participants than it is about the articulation of understandings attached to the social reality being researched. Nonetheless, it is admitted that this is a limitation.

The subjectivity of the researcher also stands as a limitation. Although he took great care not to allow his biases affect the data collection process and the subsequent analysis by reading the collected data severally and reflecting on different masculinity types, he is aware that his analyses of the data cannot be absolutely objective, especially because he identifies as a profeminist man. His views are but one elucidation of several other interpretations that can be elicited from the data.

All of the individual interviews were tape-recorded. The researcher, however, cannot guarantee that some of the participants' responses were not guarded during the interviews. Indeed, some of them wanted to be assured of where the data would end up and the researcher did his best to do reassure them. However, because the candidness of the responses provided cannot be controlled by the researcher, which may in turn affect the accuracy of the results, the researcher can only hope that any inaccuracies resulting from this are as limited as possible. Finally, because the researcher is a man studying other men from contexts different from his, his understandings of how masculinity should be expressed necessarily differed from those of the men. Hence, the researcher's masculine biases may have had an import on the study. (See section on reflexivity for more of this).

1.7 ORGANISATION OF THE RESEARCH REPORT

The rest of the discussion is structured as follows: chapter two focuses on relevant literature on masculinity and presents theoretical positions that underscore the concept. The complexity surrounding masculinity demands that theories underpinning the concept be scrutinised, especially those bordering around biological and social constructivist ideas. Further still, the chapter examines issues around the nature of masculinity including its hegemonic and non-hegemonic forms, the masculinity in crisis thesis, men's responses to gender transformation and the possibility of change among men.

Chapter three concentrates on explaining the methodological approach to the research especially concerning the research approach and design, method of data collection, sampling procedures, as well as method of data analysis.

The fourth chapter is devoted to presenting and discussing the data collected. Both the findings of the research and the consequent discussion will be done within this chapter to allow for simplicity and unity. Themes that will be pursued in this chapter border on how men speak about their masculine identities, their reactions to gender studies, submissions on gender equality, and attitudes to change.

Chapter five, the final chapter, focuses on highlighting the main findings in relation to the secondary objectives and research questions of the study, drawing conclusions from the research, and making some recommendations and suggesting paths for future research work.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the present chapter the theme of masculinity and its formations is taken up at length. It begins by considering briefly the problematique of defining masculinity as a concept that cuts across all sites. Then, feminism is briefly discussed. This is necessary because masculinity research is sometimes said to owe its parentage to the feminist movement (Whitehead & Barrett, 2001). Next, key theories that underpin the conceptualisation of masculinity are taken up; these will be useful to locating the current study within any of the discussed theoretical frameworks. Then, masculinities within the South African context will be considered, which would be followed by the notion of a crisis in masculinity. Finally, the chapter discusses the issue of change among men especially as related to how men have responded to gender transformation so far.

2.2 THE ELUSIVITY OF MASCULINITY

Clatterbaugh (1990) points out that although masculinity is the social reality of men in contemporary society, it is characterised by changeability; thus defining it is a difficult process. This is due to the realisation that the concept is laden with stereotypical realities that are limited by specific historical, ethnic and even religious realities (ibid), its meaning changes during the lives of men themselves (Whitehead & Barrett, 2001), and it is in a continuous process of interpretation (Brittan, 2001). Morrell (2001) corroborates these assertions when he argues that masculinity is not the entitlement of any one group of men or the other because the process through which it is constructed involves a contestation between rival understandings of what being a man entails.

The issue is taken up more radically by MacInnes (1998) who argues that the concept is ultimately an invention that not only lacks a core but is the ultimate ideological defense of male domination in a world that has already acknowledged male and female equality. Hence, he advocates that researchers focus on pursuing a politics of justice and equality as concrete enterprises rather than being preoccupied with a conception that obfuscates analysis of social relations. The complexity of this reality extends to the realisation that there's a continual disjuncture between what men truly are, what people think men are, and

what people think men should be (Clatterbaugh, 1990). This, indeed, subjects the expression of masculinity, in concrete terms, to varying dispositions.

A fundamental consequence of this reality, therefore, is that one may not talk of masculinity in the singular sense; rather, one ought to speak about the concept in the plural - masculinities (Connell, 2000a; Segal, 1992; Brittan, 2001). In the latter regard, Connell's (1995), Clatterbaugh's (1990) and Morrell's (2001) notions of masculinities are instructive; latter sections of this report will elaborate on these. In the present study, the concept of masculinity is treated critically because it is pertinent to theorising how men become gendered, how they speak about their identities, and how these masculine identities are expressed in their daily lives.

2.3 FEMINISM

Feminist thought is said to be the most powerful political discourses that came out of the twentieth century (Whitehead & Barrett, 2001). Gaining influence in the 1960s to 1970s, women became conscious that they lived in a world governed by men; hence they demanded equal rights as men, among other demands (Friedman, Metelerkamp & Posel, 1987). As a result of the varying conceptions of how the struggle against men should proceed, and indeed what should be resisted in concrete terms, different orientations arose within the feminist movement, ranging from liberal to radical and social feminism (Campbell & Wasco 2000; Friedman et al, 1987). The ideologies informing these differing strands of feminism thus allowed for the notion of 'feminisms' to become the new way of speaking about the feminist project (Campbell & Wasco, 2000). Indeed, it has been pointed out that the different constituents of feminism which emerged over time reflected the different social and class positions of the women that took up the feminist struggle (Friedman et al, 1987). In effect, then, although the different orientations of feminism all address the circumstances of women as an oppressed sex, they do this in different ways.

Feminism, however, has had its fair share of complications. The contextual, ideological, and cultural differences that surround the issues being addressed by women has sometimes led to a rejection of feminist notions by many women, especially if it is understood as an imposition from outside (Friedman et al, 1987). This kind of refutation have led black feminists, for example, to point out one of the most important challenges to feminism is its homogenisation of women's issues. Hence, Mohanty (1988) observes that sisterhood should not be presumed on the foundation of gender but must be forged in real historical

and political milieus. In the same vein, Oyewunmi (2002) argues that First World 'feminisms' tend to assume the category 'woman' and her subservience as universals, which goes against the notion that gender is intrinsically a sociocultural construct. The contention, then, is that the issues experienced by black women and women in other parts of the developing world are not necessarily the same experienced by women from other racial and class backgrounds (Molyneux, 1985), and this must be accounted for by feminism.

Men's response to feminism has been diverse in many respects. Connell (2005) notes that this has been an issue in places like Germany, Canada, and even South Africa where debates around issues of violence, patriarchy and ways of changing men have been rife. Also, because of the way in which gender issues came into the public domain, it has been regarded as a women-only arena, which did not include the male sex (ibid) and which, then, made men react negatively towards it. However, voices from different quarters argue that including men in initiatives directed at addressing women's issues will only allow for men to undermine the prospects for success since they are still in control of society's wealth and most especially institutional authority (White, 2000 as cited in Connell, 2005). Be that as it may, it has been pointed out that feminism acted as a spur for the development of masculinity studies because it placed men and masculinities in a critical limelight (Whitehead & Barrett, 2001). Further still, based on the critique levelled against it as homogenising, it becomes relevant to this study because men also have been treated as a universal category in many instances that does not take account of the various ways in which they have responded to the feminist project and how they express their manhood.

2.4 THE NATURE OF MASCULINITY

2.4.1 Biological basis of masculinity

Biological explanations posit that the nature of human beings and their social behaviour are consistent with the principles of natural selection like other animal species (Clatterbaugh, 1990; Edley & Wetherell, 1995). This perspective, which gained significance in the 1960s and 1970s (Schneider, 2005), argues that men and women have become masculine and feminine today as a result of evolutionary processes, resulting in the level of biological success of both sexes. Thus, masculinity is a manifestation of biology because men simply had more natural tendencies to succeed than women in the latter process (Clatterbaugh, 1990). Hence, factors such as hormones, brain organisation, and

progress of maturation basically account for the differences between the sexes (Kolb & Wishaw, 1996), for instance, that higher levels of testosterone account for aggression and violent behaviour in men (Whitehead & Barrett, 2001).

Biological elucidations, however, have come under heavy criticisms for various reasons. Whitehead and Barrett (2001) suggest that men are not puppets of hormonal impulses and that while it is true that hormones may influence behaviour, for instance testosterone linked to aggression, it has been shown that the reverse can also be the case i.e. aggression can increase levels of testosterone. Moreover, not all men express such behaviour and women with low levels of the latter hormone do exhibit dominant and aggressive behaviours. Indeed, Segal (1992) observes that violence and aggressive behaviour are themselves difficult concepts to define and occur mostly not as a result of gender differences but because of a lack of resources. Biological explanations, therefore, suggest that biology is destiny, which allows for a slip into biological determinism that reduces human potential (Whitehead, 2002), and they replicate myths of gender that reinforce a gender order where males are primary beneficiaries (Whitehead & Barrett, 2001). Ultimately, thus, biology does not determine the social realm since social practice is determined within fixed structures of social relations (Connell, 2001). In this thinking, males and females only become men and women within particular sociocultural milieus.

2.4.2 The psychoanalytic approach to masculinity

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries witnessed the advent of psychoanalysis that originated with the psychologist, Sigmund Freud, although it has been pointed out that Freud did not strictly have an account of masculinity (Segal, 1992). Psychoanalysis understands men and women's characters as structures that are internally divided and contradictory; thus, masculinity and femininity are products of psychological compromises (Connell, 2000a). Conceptualised in this sense, masculinity is neither biologically determined nor simply produced on a system based on social expectations and stereotypes. Rather, it exists, and needs to be understood, as a complex process of psychic constructions influenced by tension, anxiety and contradiction (Segal, 1992).

Like biological models, psychoanalytical perspectives have also being criticised on several fronts. Connell (2001) suggests that the categories of man and woman are already assumed under such a scale, and defining masculinity as something that men possess innately excludes women in its usage, as well as the usage of femininity on men. Hence, such

categorical theories portray ethnocentric generalisations and miss complexities inherent in gender, which then continually posit masculinity as a single, essential identity that men possess (Connell, 2002). In the same vein, Whitehead and Barrett (2001) observe that such theories overlook diversity, rest on limited views of human history, and validate men's oppression and marginalisation of women and other men. Burr (1995), thus, suggests that we ought to transcend psychological explanations of masculinity and femininity, which is itself historically and culturally determined, and rather move towards more social, political and economic understandings of gender and social life.

2.4.3 Sex role theory

With an invigorated focus from the social sciences beginning from the 1970s onwards, it became clear that the notion of masculinity could no longer enjoy its comfortable space within essentialist frameworks of the human and natural sciences. The rejection of the latter led to a search for new ways to explain gender behaviour. Role theory, then, became the new orthodoxy and gained significance in the 1930s (Connell, 1995). In concise terms, this approach posited gender as conformity based on men and women behaving according to social expectations and norms (Segal, 1992; Connell, 2000a), and that all social behaviour are like performances on the social stage of life (Edley & Wetherell, 1995). The idea of the male sex role, thus, became widespread and accepted at the time.

Sex role theory, however, began to be questioned, especially with the dawn of feminist criticisms. Edley and Wetherell (1995) argue that it was reductionist in that it simple assumed two sex roles on the foundation of two distinct biological types; hence, biological difference existed as the origins for constructions of gender. Thus, roles were just added to biology to enact gender (Brittan, 1989 as cited in Edley &Wetherell, 1995). Segal (1992) also points out that role theory did not allow for conflict, tension and contradiction as they relate to gender identity, and failed to locate gendered identities within contexts of power subtleties and other concrete, complex realities of social relations. In the latter regard, feminist writings in the 1970s radically criticised sex role theory and considered it gender stereotyping, which did not problematise gender inequality and oppression across numerous sites, and could not explain dominance and how this was resisted (Whitehead & Barrett, 2001).

2.4.4 Social constructionism

Social constructionism entered into the gender realm in the 1980s as a new way to speak about gender. Termed the ethnographic movement in masculinity research, gender became understood as a structure of social relations (Connell, 2000a), and this approach aimed to take into consideration those issues that has eluded gender theorisation over the decades, especially as related to power and its resistance, marginalisation, race, sexuality, class, nationality, etc. (ibid). Although it has been observed that social constructionism cannot be linked to a single theoretical position (Stam, 2001; Burr 1995), proponents of the theory generally posit that reality is socially constructed in everyday social interaction (Burr 1995; Andrews, 2012). In short, therefore, the theory rejects all forms of essentialism presented by biological and psychoanalytical delineations, as well as those posited by role theory, in understanding human persons, focuses on the importance of language and discourse for identity formation, takes seriously the question of power in speaking about the world, and also opens up the possibility for change among human persons.

Social constructionism considers masculinity as ultimately constructed. Concepts of masculinity and femininity, therefore, are socially constructed and the appropriateness of gender behaviours are thus produced and reproduced within cultural contexts (Davis & Gergen, 1997). To illustrate this point, Pattman (2001, p. 228), in a research he carried out on students at a teacher's college in Masvingo, Zimbabwe, observed that male college students' masculine identities were constantly constructed in relation to femininities by what he refers to as the "eroticisation and problemitisation of women". By this he meant that the college education of women was a threat to male dominance hence they resorted to discursively construct certain women students as prostitutes because they wore miniskirts and trousers, and also were vocal in class. This is reminiscent of the notion of 'jackrolling' or gang rape in the Diepkloof area of Soweto, South Africa, where male gangsters deliberately raped school-attending girls in order to keep these women in their place (Vetten, 1997). Further in Pattman's (2001) research, beer-drinking and churchgoing were also used to construct male identities where real men drank beer, got drunk and chased prostitutes while their counterparts went to church. This illustration, in many ways, highlights how social constructionism focuses on social processes and interactions between the sexes to identify how gender identity is constructed in everyday life.

Social constructionism has however not being left without its criticisms. Craib (1997) argues that the theory is not a theory per se, but simply a comforting collective belief, based on its anti-realist position (as cited in Andrews, 2012). But this has been argued to be nothing short of a nihilist argument in that the critic is suggesting that because social construction is a construction itself, therefore, it cannot claim precedence over any other theory (Andrews, 2012), which is fundamentally a self-refuting argument. A second criticism against the theory is that it undermines people's trust in their personal experiences and encourages an externalised relationship to male experience when considered as a product of particular constructions (Seidler, 1994). Thus, social constructionism may have helped to limit the essentialism that characterises biological explanations of masculinity but only at the expense of the interwoven nature between the social and the biological. However, Burr (1995) observes that social constructionism neither takes the nature nor nurture side of the nature-nurture debate but out-rightly rejects both biological and environmental determinism as both essentialist in orientation.

2.4.5 The gender relations approach

Connell (2000a) expands on the social constructionist framework and proposes what he refers to as the gender relations approach. The approach focuses on the social relations within which individuals and groups act, goes beyond gender as understood solely along lines of dichotomy and difference, and highlights structures as enduring arrangements that govern people's actions. These arrangements reveal the gender order within any society, the latter which then impacts on the gender regimes of institutions and organisations. Within this schema, thus, gender is understood as social structure and masculinity then exists as a configuration of gender practice. Connell (2000a), thus, classifies gender relations under four dimensions:

Firstly, power relations – linked basically to the notion of patriarchy, which positions men above women and treats of them as the dominant sex. This is not only observed in families, cultures, but it has extended even to large scale organisations, which have become culturally masculinised and controlled by men. Also, because men are the major beneficiaries of material resources this, then, gives them power to dominate.

Secondly, production relations – in which division of labour in society is based on gendered difference. Thus, because men possess what Connell (2000a) refers to as the 'patriarchal dividend' this extends to how work is divided between the sexes e.g. that men

work outside of the home and women within the home. And even though women may have begun to penetrate the public sphere, the patriarchal dividend still allows men to get higher wages, for instance, while capital has become a gendered process of accumulation. The force of this argument is that over time this sexual division of labour between men and women has assumed an eternal existence of its own. Hence, a division that was originally based on gender differences is now mostly interpreted as a natural phenomenon between the sexes.

Thirdly, emotional relations – this focuses on the pattern of relationships within the family and between the sexes. These relationships could be coercive, in that the man dictates the way sexual relationships proceed, or they could be consensual. A study of Xhosa youths by Wood and Jewkes (2001) in Ngangelizwe, located in the Eastern Cape of South Africa, exposes ways by which young, black South African men enforce discipline and control over their female partners. They observed how violent male practices – assault, forced sex and verbal threats - are common features of young people's sexual relationships. Successful masculinity in this regard meant the ability to have several girlfriends but more importantly to control them, this being reinforced by patriarchal ideas of entitlement to women and importance of men asserting hierarchy. Emotional relations could also take a negative pattern, which would then translate into misogyny against women or homophobic reactions against men who display alternative sexual orientations.

Lastly, Connell (2000a) explains how gender relations show that people live in a world of meanings, which he refers to as symbolic relations. Thus, the ways in which we speak about men and women already presuppose certain understandings and connotations, which in turn have implications for gender action and behaviour. So, when a group of men refer to another man as a 'sissy', for instance, because of the way he talks, walks or dresses, it carries a symbolic meaning in society. Connell (2000a) observes that this final dimension is the most entrenched of all and the most difficult to change. It is what sustains the patriarchal order in society because it is intrinsically ingrained in people's attitudes, which is reflected in both overt and covert communication.

Although the present study recognises the importance of alternative theoretical models for the conceptualisation of masculinity, it situates itself within the overarching perspective of masculinity being ultimately socially constructed and specifically within the gender relations approach to masculinity. This is because these approaches allow for the

theorisation of masculinity in multiple forms. To be sure, Edley and Wetherell (1995) point out that the approach is valuable for the examination of power subtleties in gender relations, not just between men and women, but also among men themselves as they construct their masculine identities.

2.5 MEN AND MASCULINITIES

2.5.1 Hegemonic masculinity

The notion of hegemonic masculinity is usually credited to the 1985 work of Carrigan, Connell and Lee (Whitehead, 2002). Connell would expand on this idea in his 1995 book *Masculinities* where he posits the notions of subordinated, complicit, and marginalised masculinities and how these relate with hegemonic masculinity. Connell (1995) describes hegemonic masculinity as a dominant form of masculinity that epitomises, organises and legitimates the domination of men on the gender order inherent in society. It is a culturally exalted pattern of male behaviour across cultures that subordinates and oppresses women and other men (Oyegun, 1998). Male power, in this sense, dictates the gender order in society, prescribes male behaviour (Morrell, 1998), and refers to that which constitutes successful masculinity (Morrell, Jewkes, & Lindegger, 2012). Hegemonic masculinity denotes attributes that have been socially ascribed to men such as bravery, rationality, toughness, and aggression in most societies. Further still, it is about status and power, and usually about the ideal man, who provides, protects and decides for women and others (Sweetman, 2013). Lwambo's (2013) research on men in the North Kivu province of the Democratic Republic of Congo is instructive in this sense. He explains that masculinity implied a man being able to perform and assert himself, and also to assume a leadership and dominant role by providing assets for his family and the society. This coincides with Ratele's (2002) point that the dominant construction of masculinity continues to view men principally as economic providers. Hence, when a man says 'I used to be a man' he means he has lost the ability to provide leadership and maintain dominance, and has therefore lost his masculinity (Lwambo, p. 54).

Further still, hegemonic masculinity is sometimes described as being patriarchal and authoritarian, which justifies the domination and subordination of women based on cultural and biological discourses (Donaldson, 1993), and not open to egalitarian discourses, especially as present by feminists struggles thus far. Morrell (2001), however, cautions on the ascription of aggression to hegemonic masculinity arguing that it is not necessarily

maintained by brute force but on a range of other factors which create a gender consensus that legitimates the power of men. Thus, from cultural studies and post-structuralism, especially from the Foucaultian perspectives of power, hegemonic masculinity is constantly changing; within this thinking, everyone has got some power. Morrell (2001), however, notes that the latter point may lose sight of the bigger picture that men still dominate society.

Hegemonic masculinity does have its limitations as not all men conform to the hegemonic form (Cornwall, 1997; Morrell, 1998). Indeed, it has been noted that this image of masculinity has continued to lose its status mainly due to the feminist critic (Segal, 1992; Connell, 1995), or what MacInnes (1998) refers to as the 'female gaze'. Those men, who subscribed to the feminist ideal, began to see that conventional masculinity was an ill in society. Moller (2007) argues that men's activities and motivations are usually more complex than the concept allows while Edley and Wetherell (1995) assert that hegemonic masculinity is limited in accounting for the ways in which masculinity identity is actually created, and that it is not clear whether the concept is fixed or varies across different sociocultural contexts.

The main thrusts of these arguments is that hegemonic masculinity cannot always be in control as new forms of masculinity will always arise to oppose it (Connell, 1995; Edley & Wetherell, 1995). It is always prone to resistance (Segal, 1992) and is in itself contradictory and variable (Edley & Wetherell, 1995). Building on the notion of contradiction, Lemon (1995) explains that men, in contemporary times, are confronted with conflicting images of manhood and themselves brought about by the feminist struggle, the mass media, traditional society, and even important social institutions like the Church. Hence, they find themselves in a 'potent patriarchal hangover', which amounts to an inconsistency between the traditional male image and the real conditions of men's lives (Brenton 1967 as cited in Lemon, 1995). Further still, Morrell (1998 & 2001) deviated from the traditional use of one form of hegemonic masculinity and proposed instead three forms within the South African context including a white masculinity (political and economic dominance by the white ruling class), an African rurally based masculinity (exemplified in chieftaincy and customary law), and a black masculinity (represented by the urbanised blacks). In light of the foregoing, Whitehead (2002) suggests that we can talk of 'hegemonies' since a masculinity that is subordinated in one site may be hegemonic in another. For example, black masculinity may be subordinated in the face of its white

counterpart but becomes hegemonic when judged in relation to homosexual expressions of masculine identity.

2.5.2 Subordinated masculinities

Because hegemonic masculinity effuses ideals of traditional masculine identity, it also tends to extend its authority over other men who do not conform to the traditional male image. Hence, Connell (1995) highlights the gender politics inherent in different masculinities and speaks of subordination in masculinity. Subordinated masculinities are those that, through oppression, have been ostracised through tactics like political and intrapsychic discrimination, and cultural exclusion. They necessarily occupy the bottom of the gender hierarchy among men and are sometimes assimilated into femininity (Connell, 1995 & 2001). Hence, gay men and other men who are identified as queer, or display non-masculine attributes, would necessarily fit into this category of men. The hegemonic ideal, thus, is reinforced by a denunciation of homosexual behaviour or what is commonly referred to as homophobic behaviour (Kimmel, 2001b; Connell, 1995), and a marginalisation of the rejected.

2.5.3 Complicit masculinities

The number of men who vigorously subscribe to hegemonic masculinity may be small but all men, being partakers of the patriarchal dividend, are necessarily complicit masculinities (Connell, 1995). Hence, they still enjoy the rewards of the patriarchal ideology (Connell, 2005), especially through their silence in the face of hegemonic domination (Kimmel, 2001). Complicit masculinities encompasses most men in society but it also includes those men who fit into images of what is now commonly known as the ‘new man’ (Morrell, 1998; Ramazanoglu, 1992), who has become more sensitive to the female sex. Concrete experience, however, indicates that these new men, like other complicit masculinities, are still beneficiaries of the patriarchal dividend as long as they continue to remain mute in the face of oppressive gender structures in society (Kimmel, 2001).

2.6 PERSPECTIVES OF MASCULINITY

2.6.1 Conservative perspective

Men who fall into this category of masculine expression are essentialists and contend that men and women have intrinsically different natures (Clatterbaugh, 1990). Although

sometimes differentiated into moral and biological conservatives, they, however, all believe that the present gender hierarchy in society is a natural phenomenon (ibid). Thus, while men are the providers and protectors of women, the role of women is to be child-bearers and caregivers (Clatterbaugh, 1990). Also, men ought to be the socially and politically dominant sex, and male behaviour and attitudes are hinged fundamentally on male nature (ibid).

2.6.2 Profeminist men perspective

Profeminist men are divided into radical profeminists and liberal profeminists (Clatterbaugh, 1990). While the former group follow in the tradition of radical feminism and see men as oppressors and beneficiaries of the patriarchal system the latter imbibe the ideologies of their liberal feminist counterparts and argue that the social roles assigned to men and women are informed by stereotypes, which have resulted in a lack of basic rights, equality, and social injustice between men and women (Clatterbaugh, 1990). Both groups are, however, influenced by feminist writings and reject traditional masculinity as a moral or biological given. Indeed, the American based National Organisation of Changing Men (NOCM) is said to be the brainchild of profeminist men (ibid).

2.6.3 Men's rights movement perspective

The aim of the men's rights movement is to correct the injustices that have been meted out against men with the dawn of the gender equality era. They argue that feminism only led to the disruption of society and allowed for a new sexism against men, which has made men the new victims of oppression (Clatterbaugh, 1990). Also, they argue that men cannot be blamed for their own socialisation; hence, laws should be created to protect men against this new injustice against them especially with respect to divorce, child custody, and domestic violence prosecutions (ibid). The South African Association of Men (SAAM) falls into this grouping and they advocate for equal treatment of men and women in society.

2.7 MEN'S RESPONSES TO GENDER TRANSFORMATION

Morrell (2001) observes that the responses by men to the changing gender order around the globe have been diverse and not uniform. Hence, he proposes three types of masculine reactions to the new order, as outlined briefly below.

2.7.1. Reactive or defensive responses

According to Morrell (2001), some men respond in a radical way to the changing gender relations in society. These men respond specifically to the challenges posed by feminism and what they interpret as the new sexism against men. The struggle for these anti-feminists men, therefore, is an attempt to reclaim male dominance in society and is based fundamentally on essentialist notions linked to traditional hegemonic images of masculine identity where, for instance, the role of the man as father and head of household is being eroded (ibid). The Promise Keepers initiative in the West in 1999 was organised around this ideology and so was the South African Association of Men (SAAM). The latter, founded in 1994 and composed of white, middleclass men, did not only challenge the policy of affirmation action but also reacted aggressively to gay masculinity and the presence of blacks within the new government (Morrell, 2001). The backlash against feminism, thus, called for a return to traditional forms of the gender hierarchy (Gough, 1998).

2.7.2 Accommodating responses

Men who responded accommodatingly to gender changes are argued to be torn between adjusting fully to the new gender order in society and holding on to patriarchal tendencies. Hence, while they express their openness to change, they still invoke the old ideal of manhood (Morrell, 2001). The characteristic of the men in this group is mostly reflected in rural and urban youths (Morrell, 2001). For example, in her study of black South African men in Nkomazi, a rural region of the Mpumalanga province, Sideris (2004) observes masculinity types who are open to change in the context. She points out that although these liberal men are responsive to gender equality talks based on human rights and morality they still find themselves evoking tradition to restore the dominant male ideal. This was evident as the men found it difficult to dissociate being a man from being head of the family, maintaining the traditional form of manhood. These men, then, are torn between the will to change and the benefit of being part of the patriarchal dividend (Connell, 2000a). Accommodating response are also found in urban educated men, who express their progressive natures in rhetoric only while maintaining hegemonic models discursively and strategically (Gough, 1998).

2.7.3 Progressive masculinities

Morrell (2001) proposes a third form of masculine response to gender transformation that he attributes to progressive men. These men project new ways of being a man and are committed to gender justice and fairness. Examples of these are the White Ribbon Campaign in Canada and the National Organisation of Men Against Sexism (NOMAS) in the United States, formerly known as the National Organisation for Changing Men (NOCM). In South Africa the Men as Partners Network, the One Man Campaign, and Stepping Stones (South Africa Country Report, 2007) are initiatives that have seen men becoming more and more responsive to gender transformation. The report highlights that these are described widely as best practices initiatives. Indeed, Morrell (2007) asserts that while some men may organise along sex lines to counter feminist achievements are affiliating with feminist, anti-racist and anti-classist groups to attain social justice, including the overturning of patriarchal privilege. Indeed, the gay rights movement is seen as the forerunner of such progressive men.

2.8 CRISIS OF MASCULINITY

A pertinent question that has arisen in masculinity studies is whether men are in crisis. Being faced with feminism and the women's liberation movement, as well as by the gay liberation movement, the scenario that is presented is that men have become insecure and confused about what it is to be a man today, and are caught between the male image of the past and gender realities of the present (Lemon, 1995). MacInnes (1998), taking the position that this is a bad time to be a man, argues that the intensification of the female gaze and ever-growing heterogeneous images of men has contributed to this crisis. Hence, attributes such as heroism, courage, strength, rationality, etc. that used to be seen as virtues found in men are now being interpreted as abuse, aggression, coldness, detachment, and considered rather as vices (ibid).

The crisis goes beyond just a backlash against feminism but appears to be indicative of the collapse of the power of men within the patriarchal system, especially from material and ideological standpoints In South Africa, for instance, questions have been raised repeatedly why men exhibit so much violence and aggression. This has sometimes been linked to a crisis in manhood as a result of poor economic conditions, especially among young African men, spurred by post-apartheid transition challenges (Sideris, 2004; Ratele, 2002), and a poor response by men to changing gender relations in contemporary times, the latter being

met by uncertainties around identity, sexuality, and work (Walker, 2005 as cited in Dworkin et al, 2012). To be sure, the 'moral decadence' revealed by the high rate of rape incidences in the country, even among babies and old women, has been linked to expressions of this purported crisis of manhood. Referring to the issue of baby rape, Posel (2005 p. 250) points out that, "The discovery of baby rape in 2001 ignited an already volatile field of public concern and controversy, into nothing short of a moral panic, manifest as a crisis of manhood". With the picture been painted here, little wonder MacInnes (1998) suggests that the demise of masculinity is nigh.

Despite the foregoing, caution has being applied to the crisis of masculinity theory. Whitehead and Barrett (2001) point out that although consumerism, feminism, and widespread disapproval of display of male chauvinism may have put men in some kind of crisis in Western societies, this hardly translates into a larger crisis of masculinity. Yet, they are quick to recognise that the changes in the gender order in contemporary times are historically important for the status of men in society. However, we must not equate changes in men's experiences and opportunities with a crisis since men do adapt to change, which is a continuing process (ibid). More importantly, Whitehead (2002) suggests that the crisis bespeaks a singular masculinity that is white, heterosexual and ethnocentric. But masculinity is nothing fixed, basically indefinable, multiple, and which changes during the course of men's lives (Whitehead & Barrett, 2001); hence, it is hard to talk about a crisis. This is because for such a crisis to be a universal one there must be a single, definable and fixed masculinity.

In effect, rather than a crisis of masculinity, which is best interpreted as a perceived emasculation of men, what we have is that a discourse on the crisis of masculinity has emerged and is gaining some importance. Lemon (1995) also notes that although men may be undergoing some tension with the economic reconstruction in South Africa, they remain the privileged sex. In the same vein, it has been pointed out that the crisis argument has the potential of blaming women for men's problems, and this may be why it enjoys acceptance among male organisations that struggle for a return to traditional male privilege (Faludi, 2000 & Segal, 1999 as cited in Sideris, 2004). These scholars, thus, agree that male domination is still entrenched in most societies hence the crisis theory is for the most part unfounded. Be that as it may, Whitehead (2002) points out that the crisis thesis suggests to us the necessity of appreciating men and masculinities as discursive while thinking and talking about them in diverse cultural milieus.

2.9 THE CHANGING NATURE OF MASCULINITIES

An issue that characterises the masculinity domain is whether men can change their attitudes and behaviours in light of the ongoing gender transformation in society. Indeed, Segal (1992) points out that if men are not changing, then nothing really would change since they are still the dominant sex. Further still, she observes that while some men have changed a lot others have only done so minimally, making change a slow process.

Connell (2001) suggests that because of the tension that exists within masculinity, masculinities do change with changing circumstances and as gender practice are contested and reconstructed. However, if one takes seriously Connell's (1995) notion of the patriarchal dividend, one may agree with Segal (1992) that change is itself a contradictory process because it can actually be a modernising project for contemporary masculinities, who loosen up a bit here and there but maintain older privileges and power relations, making change a surface project.

Whitehead and Barrett (2001) argue that the changes in the gender order that have been experienced in recent times are not a direct consequence of men changing, but would have happened anyway. Hence, they caution that although there might have been an increase of women in the public sphere, we must avoid the illusion that any cultural change is taking place in men. The implication of this assertion is that despite the changes in the gender order men's perceptions are not necessarily changing with the same magnitude. While Whitehead and Barrett (2001) may be right in their assertion, it is important to remember that due to the realisation that not all men conform to idealised versions of masculinity there are always possibilities for change and reflection among them (Cornwall, 1997). Morrell (2007) corroborates this optimism by observing that the masculine dimension in gender research has deep implications for gender politics because it allows men to consider themselves part of a gendered society in which they have an investment to seek gender fairness.

One must then recognise the possibility of change among men even in the midst of resistance (Connell, 2000; Edley & Wetherell, 1995; Kimmel, 2001b; Morrell, 2007). While we may find resistant masculinities in society like those who organise themselves in staunch opposition to feminism and gender equality moves, exemplified in groups like the National Congress for men (NCM) in the West and the South African Association of Men

(SAAM), we also find those men who are open to change and have aligned themselves with the feminist movement, and regard themselves as profeminists (Clatterbaugh, 1990).

Be that as it may, if change is taking place at any level, it is hardly a uniform phenomenon among men. This point raises the question whether change ought to take place at the personal or collective level. Whitehead (2002), while observing that individual men can change, expresses scepticism at the possibility of this happening with men as a political category, and suggests that any thought of the latter is premature. Seidler (1994) opines that any talk of change must be part of a political movement for change because the personal must go with the political and one cannot be reduced to the other. This is corroborated by MacInnes (1998), who cautions that we must not fall into the trap of assuming that the personal is purely political. This would amount to underestimating the force and power of social structures, which constrain human beings to act in certain ways. Burr (1995), however, focusing on the structure-agency debate, contends that we must dissolve the individual-society dichotomy if we are to consider change seriously. Thus, if human agency is taken as seriously as structure, and human persons are capable of critical historical reflection and analysis, which involves making choices, then we can talk of the possibility of change.

2.10 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The exposition of different types and perspectives of masculinities is indicative of the problematique of defining masculinity. It may be useful for theorists to stop treating this matter as a problem and begin to appreciate the relevance of diversity. If the assertion that masculinity is ultimately constructed is granted, then it is important that the notion of the multiplicity of masculinities across different sites continues to guide investigative work on men and how it manifests itself in everyday life. Morrell' s (2001) assertion that the common view of men is mostly stereotypical and does not account for masculine diversity is not only relevant for the South African milieu but is also instructive for any masculine research. Indeed, research must continually move away from undue generalisations about men towards working from their experiences as groups and individuals because we cannot impose meanings on these particularities. Rather, we must allow meanings emerge from these localities (Kimmel, 2001a). This invitation includes the need to examine the subjective lives of men, as men. To be sure, this is the direction that feminist research has taken in recent times, which has seen women not been treated as a single category or as

having the same shared experience (Mohanty, 1988; Molyneux, 1985). The study of men ought to follow this trend in order to disrupt the often taken-for-granted connection of biology, psychology, race, class, and gender subjectivities.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH STRATEGY AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The present chapter focuses on the research strategy and methodological orientations of the study. It begins by discussing the research approach and design and then goes on to address the population, sample, and sampling procedure employed in the study. This will be followed by a discussion on the data collection methods used and thereafter a detailed elucidation of the method of data analysis employed. The chapter will conclude by exploring ethical considerations of the research and will also address issues of reflexivity.

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH AND DESIGN

The study employs a qualitative approach to achieving its aims. According to Creswell (2009), this paradigm is a means "for exploring and understanding the meanings individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem". Qualitative approaches do not only allow for in-depth appreciation of the subject under investigation but also avails participants the space to express themselves freely. This is because the researcher is interested in understanding the reality being researched rather than just explaining it (Fouché & Schurink, 2011; Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

Qualitative research is concerned with gaining inductive meanings from the subjective submissions of participants and is committed to presenting the complexity of the social issue under investigation (Creswell, 2007 as cited in Creswell, 2009; Fouché & Schurink, 2011). Because individuals and groups construct their experiences of the world "based on their historical and social perspectives" (Creswell, 2009, p. 8), the plurality of the subjective views of the participants, therefore, and the corresponding meanings that these views carry will be invaluable to an ample understanding of the complex reality being researched.

The study employs the single case study design to its mode of inquiry. Hence, de Vaus (2001, p. 51) points out that, "A distinguishing characteristic of case studies is that contextual information is collected about a case so that we have a context within which to understand causal processes". The researcher, thus, needs to immerse himself or herself in the case (s) being studied so that a level of familiarity is enacted between the researcher

and the social worlds of the participants (Creswell, 2009). Indeed, Terre Blanche, Kelly and Durrheim (2006) speak in the same vein when they observe that it is essential that the participants' subjective experiences are taken seriously and understood in-context by the researcher. Thus, since the present research concerns itself with in-depth exploration of the meanings that participants hold about the social reality being researched, in this case how they understand their masculinity in relation to gender studies courses, the qualitative approach becomes the ideal method to be utilised.

3.3 POPULATION, SAMPLE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURE

3.3.1 Recruitment and selection

Because the study required a specific group of participants i.e. male, Humanities, postgraduate students open to take gender/feminism courses, a non-probability purposive sampling was used (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Strydom & Delport, 2011). This method of participant selections, also termed "judgemental sampling" (Rubin & Babbie as cited in Strydom & Delport, 2011), is founded on the judgement of the researcher who ensures that the participants selected for the study are those "who can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem of the study" (Strydom & Delport, 2011, p. 392). Neuman (1997) corroborates this by noting that in order for purposive sampling to be considered to be appropriate, the sample ought to comprise of subjects who have been pinpointed for the purpose of in-depth study. Hence, the study recruited male postgraduate students for its purposes.

The researcher directly approached students who take gender studies after speaking with the professor that taught the course, who provided the names of the male students in her class. All other male students within the Humanities were subsequently treated as those who do not take gender studies. The researcher, then, approached individual students from diverse disciplines within the Humanities to be part of the study in order to get a broader understanding of the subject. Some of these students were known to the researcher from joint classes taken previously while others were identified after been referred to by colleagues. A total of ten men were included in the research.

Two key informants were also included in the study. This was relevant not just for purposes of verifying the findings of the study (Strydom & Delport, 2011) but these 'insiders' within the field under study were important to providing valuable information

and insights to the researcher (de Vaus, 2001). The key informants were limited to academic personnel based on their ongoing engagement with gender studies in general, and masculinity studies in particular and were also selected purposively for the research.

3.3.2 Composition of participants

The sample under investigation comprised male students within a large, urban, diverse university campus in the city of Johannesburg, South Africa. These students were required to fall under the following specific criteria:

- Be between the ages of 20 – 40
- Are currently registered for a postgraduate course in the faculty of Humanities of the university
- Are taking gender courses or eligible to take gender courses

The rationale behind the age range was that men within this group would have formed precise views about their masculinity (ies), which in turn would affect their decision to be part of a gender studies/feminism course. Eligibility to take courses in gender studies implies that these courses are not part of their core curriculum but only exist as electives, which they can choose from to complete the degree registered for. Of the total of ten male student participants, three registered for the feminism course as an elective, one is doing his research in gender, while the remaining six were not involved in gender programmes in anyway.

3.4 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

3.4.1 Research instruments

Semi-structured interview schedules are the research tools that were used. Three schedules were developed by the researcher; two for the student participants and one for the key informants (See Appendices C, D, & E). These contained sufficient questions to address the different facets of the reality being investigated, and were formulated around the aims and questions of the research. The questions were open-ended in nature to allow participants express themselves as profoundly and comprehensively as possible (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Because the sample that was recruited composed of university students and academics, the questions in the schedule were formulated in the English language, which is the medium of instruction within the university. The researcher ensured the reliability and

trustworthiness of the research instruments by making sure that the meanings of concepts used were clarified and also that participants understood these concepts, in order to reduce obscurities as much as possible (de Vaus, 2001; Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Creswell, 2009).

To eliminate the problem of ambiguity, therefore, and to ensure the answerability of these questions, a pre-testing of the research instruments was conducted. This involved posing questions from the interview schedules to be used in the actual study to four would-be participants, who were not part of the final sample used in the study. Monette et al suggest that a pilot study helps to establish a relationship between the researcher and the participants (as cited in Strydom & Delport, 2011). Further still, it also helps to anticipate potential problems that may arise during the actual interviewing sessions (Janesick as cited in Strydom & Delport, 2011). This helps to ensure that interview questions are understood uniformly by the participants (Babbie & Mouton, 2001), thereby increasing reliability and credibility.

3.4.2 Data collection methods and procedures

Data was collected from participants through one-on-one interviews. This mode of collecting data gives a fuller picture of the reality been researched, informs about the nature of social life, and allows for flexibility (Weiss, 1994). Greeff (2011) speaks in the same vein when he asserts that interviews create a social relation between the researcher and the participant for the effective exchange of information. More specifically, semi-structured interviews are usually organised around topics of particular interest to the researcher while still allowing for flexibility (Jarbandhan & Schutte, 2006 as cited in Greeff, 2011). Although Creswell (2009) has pointed out that interviews may present a situation where participants provide information through filtered lenses, the researcher is still confident that, since the current study deals with complex issues of gender perceptions and identities, individual modes of narration is still the best way to approach it.

Each individual interview lasted between forty-five minutes to one hour and was conducted either at the postgraduate office in the Department of Sociology within the Humanities Faculty, or at some other venue suggested by the participants. All interviews, however, took place within the university precincts. Questions that were posed to participants included preliminary questions about their general thoughts on gender studies and issues of gender equality. These were important to establishing what informed their decisions to take a gender/feminism course or not. Then, main questions bordered around

their understandings of masculinity in general and of themselves in particular. This was a key focus of the interview sessions as the researcher was interested in finding how the participants speak about their masculine identities and what informed these ways of expression. Finally, participants were asked questions about their thoughts on the links of gender change to development. All of the interviews were recorded both on audio tapes and on the researcher's personal computer to ensure that the responses of participants were accurately captured. Babbie and Mouton (2001) suggest that such measures aimed at accuracy add to the trustworthiness and credibility of the research. Each participant was asked to sign a consent form to participate in the research and for tape-recording the interviews (See Appendix B).

3.5 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

According to Creswell (2009, p. 183), data analysis in qualitative research involves "Preparing the data for analysis, conducting different analysis, moving deeper and deeper into understanding the data […] representing the data, and making an interpretation of the larger meaning of the data". Speaking more specifically about thematic content analysis to analysing qualitative data, Babbie and Mouton (2001) suggest that it is best suited to studying communications because what is said, how it is said, and with what effect it is said is important to discovering what is being researched. More importantly, thematic content analysis helps not only to extract comparable trends in data collected from participants, but also allows for such data to be reduced to smaller components in order to aid interpretation and the eliciting of meaning.

It has been pointed out that there are few absolute rules in the approaches to analyse qualitative data (Terre-Blanche & Kelly, 1999). Thus, the data analysis for this study was influenced firstly, by Creswell's (2007) idea of a data analysis spiral (as cited in Schurink, Fouché & de Vos, 2011). In this thinking, data is not analysed using a rigid linear approach; rather, the researcher moves in analytical circles, circling around and touching on a number of facets of analysis, then upwards towards completion of the process (Schurink, Fouché & de Vos (2011). Secondly, to guide the process in a logical sense, the six-step approach for a thematic content analysis of data advocated by Creswell (2009) was useful. Although this appears linear in nature, Creswell's (2007) point above was taken into consideration. Lastly, Tesch's (1990) eight-step approach was applied particularly to

the process of coding (as detailed in Creswell, 2009), which was brought in only at the third step of Creswell's (2009) framework. The analysis was done as follows:

In the first step, the researcher transcribed all of the interviews completely, which was done by the researcher himself. Schurink, Fouché and de Vos (2011) suggest that doing all or some of one's transcription provides an avenue to get immersed in the data such that one can already start noticing emergent insights. The researcher ensured qualitative reliability during this step by ensuring that the transcribed data was devoid of mistakes during transcription as far as was possible (Creswell, 2009).

During the second step, the researcher engaged with the transcribed material to get more immersed in it and reflected on its overall meaning (Creswell, 2009). In concrete terms, the researcher read and re-read the transcripts a number of times while making notes and comments where necessary. Terre-Blanche, Durrheim and Kelly (2006) observe that this is very essential so that the researcher notices information that cuts across different transcripts. Also, such persistent engagement and observation of the data helps the researcher to interpret data in multiple ways, thereby contributing to the credibility of the research (Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

The third step involved the coding process. Rossman and Rallis (1998) note that coding involves organising data into smaller pieces or segments of texts before meaning is imposed on them (as cited in Creswell, 2009). Here, the researcher brought in Tesch's (1990) 8-step approach to coding. To ensure dependability (Babbie and Mouton, 2001) during this phase of the process of analysis, the researcher ensured that the codes that were developed corresponded with the data that they referred to in the transcribed text and constantly checked for this (Creswell, 2009).

In line with Creswell's (2009) framework, focus was paid in the fourth step to thematising categorised material for analysis. The researcher spent a while in this step trying to organise the number of categories into a few themes that would be used eventually to guide the write-up in the data analysis and findings section of the report. This also involved clarifying and confirming what categories mean by matching their descriptions to texts in the transcripts (Schurink, Fouché & de Vos, 2011).

Steps five and six of this process involved the researcher structuring how the themes will be presented and conveyed in the qualitative narrative, and what meanings and

interpretations would be brought to the data. In line with the researcher's interests, themes will be presented as a narrative. Also, Creswell (2009) notes that the interpretation stage includes asking what lessons have been learned, the researcher's personal interpretation of the data, meanings derived from comparison of the findings to information found in literature and theories, and how this converge or diverge.

3.6 REFLEXIVITY

Creswell (2009, p. 233) explains reflexivity as when "the researchers reflect about how their biases, values, and personal background, such as gender, history, culture, and socioeconomic status, shape their interpretations formed during a study". This is echoed by Terre-Blanche and Durrheim (2002) who aver that it is important that the researcher recognises that he or she comes into the research process with some form of pre-understanding, which impacts on the process of interpretation. Further still, Creswell (2009, p. 192) opines that such open and honest self-reflection on the part of the researcher contributes to the trustworthiness of the research as this will 'resonate well with readers'. In line with this, therefore, the researcher was conscious at all times that he is a man studying other men and has his own understandings of how masculinity should be expressed, which may differ with how the participants express theirs. Hence, caution was taken throughout the process not to allow the researcher's own masculine biases interfere with the research as far as was possible.

The researcher identifies as a profeminist man. Hence, it was sometimes difficult for him to listen to men who held strong positions against gender equality and transformation, some almost to the extent of displaying misogynistic tendencies. The researcher, however, was able to control himself not to interject or react to these dispositions in order not to affect the dynamics of the study process, both during the interviews and the analysis of the data. The elucidations of the responses, perspectives and types of masculinities already discussed above by Morrell (2001), Clatterbaugh (1990) and Connell (1995) helped the researcher to put issues into perspective and allow for the process to be unaffected in an emotional sense.

Thirdly, having said the above, the researcher admits that it is possible that the way he spoke when asking follow-up interview questions may have revealed his personal sentiments and dispositions about gender issues. Nonetheless, he is confident that this did not affect the flow of the process as participants did not display any form of discomfort.

Fourthly, during one of the interviews, the participant described himself as being queer and was quite open to the researcher about the difficulties he sometimes faced when dealing with other men. Sometimes he became a little emotive especially when he spoke about how some men spoke horribly about him for not displaying masculine attributes. The researcher was a little unprepared for this kind of openness at first but was able to adjust quickly to it. When asked if he would like to speak to someone or get some form of counselling, however, the participant declined.

Fifthly, the researcher observed that the participants spoke quite freely and openly about their masculine experiences during the interviews. He suspects that this was the case because the men felt comfortable being interviewed by a man, suggesting some sort of masculine camaraderie. Perhaps, the men may have been less forthcoming if they were interviewed by a woman, which may have affected what and how much personal information they were willing to share.

All in all, the researcher constantly bore in mind throughout the process that qualitative research is about the participants. Hence, from the interview sessions through to the analysis and interpretation phases, he ensured that the eliciting of meanings stayed true to the perceptions of respondents and tried not to impose undue meanings on these perceptions.

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical clearance to proceed with this research was given by the Ethics Committee (non-medical) of University of the Witwatersrand with protocol number H13/07/09 (See Appendices).

The study deals with concrete aspects of social reality and involves working with people directly. Thus, Strydom (2011, p. 113) points out that “The fact that human beings are the objects of study in the social sciences brings unique ethical problems to the fore which would never be relevant in the pure, clinical laboratory setting of the natural science”. Creswell (2009) corroborates this when he asserts that researchers need to ensure the protection of the participants, develop a trust relationship with them, guard against improper behaviour and misdemeanour, and promote the integrity of research endeavours. Hence, the researcher must always be mindful of potential ethical problems that could arise in the process of research.

The researcher ensured that the autonomy of the participants was upheld with respect to voluntary informed consent to participate in the research and for the recording of verbal submissions. A written informed consent form was drafted for this purpose (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Strydom, 2011) and every participant was asked to sign one before the interviewing process began (See Appendix B). This form recognises that the rights of the participants will be protected during the course of data collection (Creswell, 2009).

Another ethical issue that the researcher took into consideration was the dignity of, and respect for the participants, especially as it concerns issues of anonymity and confidentiality (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Strydom, 2011; Wassenaar, 2006). Strydom (2011) observes that every person has a right to privacy and it behoves on that individual to decide when, where, to what degree and to whom contents of this privacy should be revealed. The issue of confidentiality was discussed with the participants at the outset of the process and the researcher made sure that their identities remained anonymous. They were assured that information about whatever they said or did would only remain with the researcher and his supervisor in terms of tape recordings and transcripts. One concrete way the researcher dealt with this was to remove participants name from the transcripts as soon as the information was transcribed and the participants assigned numbers. Also, recorded material, although remaining with the researcher throughout the research period, was deleted from the recording devices as soon as the study was completed and saved in coded form on the researcher's personal computer as well as on a personal memory stick. Nevertheless, participants were informed that absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed since the research report will be put up on the World Wide Web eventually.

Finally, the researcher ensured that any likelihood of deception of the participants was circumvented (Strydom, 2011; Wassenaar, 2006). Corey et al (1993) argue that "Deception involves withholding information, or offering incorrect information in order to ensure the participation of subjects when they would otherwise have refused it" (as cited in Strydom, 2011, p. 119). Thus, the researcher ensured that the information within the information sheet given to participants was accurate as well as everything that was included in the consent forms. Further still, no participant was offered any form of incentive to take part in the study. The researcher informed participants that the report of the study will be made available to any of them who wishes to have a copy.

3.8 SUMMARY

This chapter considered the research strategy and methodology employed in the study. It discussed the research approach and design used and addressed the population, sample, and sampling procedure employed in the study. Further still, it presented the data collection methods applied to the research and gave a comprehensive explanation of the method of data analysis used. Finally, it highlighted issues of reflexivity that arose from the study and also considered ethical implications of the research.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on analysing and discussing the findings of the study. Both are done concurrently to allow for simplicity and unity of the data collected. It begins with discussing the profile of the participants in the study. Thereafter, in trying to address the objectives and questions of the research, it presents and discusses dominant themes that were elicited from the transcribed individual interviews. The following themes emerged for analysis and discussion:

1. On being a man
2. Sentiments on gender studies
3. Gender equality
4. Change

These themes make up the four sections of the chapter and each theme encompasses a number of sub-themes. The discussed themes may confirm information provided in the existing literature on masculinities but may also reveal certain divergences from the latter as participants' voices are made visible. Something to be mentioned at this point is that the two key informants (KP1 and KP2) will be incorporated into the discussion as theorists. Thus, sometimes, they may appear in parentheses alongside regular in-text references to other authors used for the study.

4.2 PROFILE OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Table 1 below presents a visual breakdown of the student participants' demographics.

Participant	Age	Race	Discipline	Involvement in gender studies
1	30	Black	Global Labour Studies	Yes
2	25	Black	Sociology	No
3	25	Coloured	Sociology	Yes
4	25	Black	Sociology	No
5	29	Black	Development Studies	No
6	31	Black	Forced Migration	No
7	24	Black	Psychology	Yes
8	23	Black	Development Studies	Yes
9	32	Black	Forced Migration	No
10	28	Black	Sociology	No

While nine of the student participants are of black origins, one participant is so-called coloured. Although the study aimed specifically for black male, postgraduate students eligible to take gender studies courses, the so-called coloured male student was included because he was one of only four male students that were registered for the feminism course in 2013. The researcher thought that this was necessary to create a balance in the numbers, as much as was possible, between those who are involved in gender studies and those who are not in order to allow for richer data collection.

The participants within the sample were approached directly by the researcher to be part of the study. On receiving positive confirmation of their commitment, a participant information sheet was given to them describing the nature of the research and what it is about (See Appendix A). Dates, times and venues for individual interviews with participants were then agreed upon.

4.2.1 *Key informants*

The key informants comprised of one male and one female academic. Both are experts in their fields of gender studies. Their demographics are given in table 2 below:

Participant	**Age range**	**Race**	**Gender**	**Discipline**	**Involved in gender studies**
KP1	45-55	White	Female	Sociology	Yes
KP2	35-45	Black	Male	Psychology	Yes

Finding knowledgeable key informants involved in masculinity studies was challenging. The researcher knew about one key informant, who was approached directly by the researcher to be part of the study. The other was recommended by the researcher's supervisor and then approached by the researcher. Both informants were knowledgeable and contributed to providing invaluable insights about gender studies and masculinity in particular to the researcher.

4.3 ON BEING A MAN

Literature on masculinity presents one with the conclusions that the nature of men is usually understood in different ways among different people, which presupposes that masculinity cannot be grasped as an enduring essence in all men (Clatterbaugh, 1990; Whitehead & Barrett, 2001). The individual accounts of the men in the present study appear to confirm this conclusion. In many different instances, the men spoke about their identities in multiple ways, which sometimes showed contradictoriness. The following sub-themes are discussed in this section: manhood is natural, constructions of dominance and leadership, we are taught to be men and vulnerability.

4.3.1 Manhood is natural

Essentialist viewpoints about men present manhood as an innate characteristic that cuts across all men (Segal, 1992; Connell, 1995; Clatterbaugh, 1990). These perspectives consider masculinity to be natural or physical attributes that define men. Such essentialist views about masculinity emerged during the individual conversations with participants:

> ***Participant 4 mentioned****: "Well, I would just say masculinity refers to something natural, yeah. It's in you. I just think it is biology. We just have it in ourselves, you know".*
>
> ***Participant 7 mentioned****: "Manliness doesn't care if you're black or white or short or tall. All men subscribe to manliness. You see, we are all men because of a certain thing and because of that we can all identify. I'm arguing for an archetype of men, which is basically biological".*

Both participants indicated that what makes men is something inborn, hence both settle for the terms 'biology' and 'biological' to make their point clear. One observes that these men speak about this innateness not just about themselves as individuals but include all men in this essence since "*we can all identify*" and "*we just have it in ourselve*s". What is noteworthy about their use of the expressions '*manliness*' and '*natural*', however, is that they do not concretely pin down what these terms mean but just refer to it as biology. Whitehead (2002) observes that men and women usually express biological dimensions of their sense of reality through experiences of embodiedness in the social world. This point is captured in the following excerpts:

> ***Participant 2 mentioned:*** *"It has to do with how they are physically built. In my society where I come from, if you don't understand that you are a man there's a*

> *problem. So I understand myself as a man because of my reproductive attire and what I carry on me".*
>
> ***Participant 5 mentioned**: "I think it's a given; you're born a man in terms of the organs themselves. I think those are just inborn things. It's more about the physique, the physically aspects of things".*

Thus, Whitehead's (2002) point is made more explicit in the responses of these participants. The references to actual physical parts of the body are therefore clearly expressed as concrete examples of the biological. The man, then, must be aware of who he is because of the corporeal aspects of his person, which include his '*reproductive attire*' and his '*physique*'. Edley and Wetherell (1995) explain that the reality of both sexes appears evident to us due to anatomical differences. These come, then, to stand for masculinity and femininity as reference is made to the penises, breasts and vaginas. Participant 2's point about knowing who you are as a man '*in my society*' suggests that this biological understanding of the man is transferred to and maintained within the social realm such that a man is not a man if he does not recognise what he carries on him and is able to use it. Hence, he asserts: "*I consider myself a man because I know I'm capable of sexually coveting a woman*". This coincides with KP2's point that there would seem to be a disjuncture if one is not playing the gender role determined by his or her sex organ.

Men also think naturally of themselves in mental ways (Edley & Wetherell, 1995). Thus, apart from the physical appearance of the man, there is also his natural behaviour:

> ***Participant 1 mentioned:** "I'll bring in physical behaviour of a man and then I'll attach it to aggression".*
>
> ***Participant 2 mentioned:** "Men should have the mental capacities and strength to endure difficult moment**s.** I'm rather a slim man. But I consider myself manly enough as far as the social and mental are concerned. How my father reinforces that 'you must be aggressive'; 'you're too complacent".*

So, on the one hand, men are expected to behave aggressively because it is part of their natural make-up. Many times, this is sustained by the argument that they have testosterone in them (Kolb & Wishaw, 1996; Whitehead & Barrett, 2001), which could be what participant 4 means by saying "*we just have it in ourselves*". On the other hand, a man with this naturally occurring hormone in him, therefore, exhibits strength and courage, a stereotype about men that is sustained by men themselves and society in general (Clatterbaugh, 1990).

An important implication of these naturalised expressions of masculinity is that men ought to conduct themselves in certain acceptable ways. For example, the indications that men behave aggressively and have a superior physique presuppose that they are the stronger sex and have physical powers more than their female counterparts (Clatterbaugh, 1990). This sets up an opposition between the sexes. Burr (1995 p. 107) suggests that such sentiments create "[…] binary oppositions, the logic of either/or, and such give a more privileged position to one than the other based on ideologies". Indeed, KP1 argues that the critique of binary is about deconstruction of the differences that society continually imposes on the sexes. More important for this discussion, however, is that because manhood is seen as natural, those men who tend not to display 'manliness' are not real considered men:

> ***Participant 5 mentioned:*** *"Some guys are actually masculine-feminine…yeah. Yes, they might have this physique but the way they speak, the way they walk, everything; it's just gay. Some gays, I think, are just afraid of being men. Some men just take the easy way out. And I think the easy way out is somehow being female. I won't take a shower next to such guys".*
>
> ***Participant 4 mentioned****: "You are born a man or a woman. You know, we keep cows in our villages, have you ever seen a male cow want to climb another male cow? So, animals they do know, lions, snakes, they do know…yeah…I don't think we really need these confusions".*
>
> ***Participant 9 mentioned:*** *"Nature is nature. I don't see any progress in a society where they are saying let's value gay relations; what for? It's just destroying the natural order of society".*

What seems to stem from these articulations is that nature is fixed, and so is manhood. Thus, when some men exhibit alternative sexualities they are not just unmanly but are also perceived as going against the natural order of things. As participant 1 argues, it just amounts to '*deviant behaviour*'. This shows how natural understandings of manhood have assumed hegemonic heteronormative existence, which then presupposes that homosexuality is abnormal and not natural (Whitehead & Barrett, 2001; Segal, 1992; Brittan, 2001; Kimmel, 2001b) because that is not how men were made to behave. Also, an interesting observation emerges here. This is because if manhood is necessarily linked to the genitalia that men carry on themselves, as expressed by participants 2 and 5, then, gay men, in spite of their physique or reproductive organs, become emasculated: they are not real men. The implication of this is that power issues come to the fore, especially in a relational sense. Real men are strong and heterosexual and are born that way; and any man who behaves otherwise is a sissy (Kimmel, 2001b; Connell, 2000a). Masculinity, then, is

not given equally as its hegemonic form allows for the exercise of power by 'real men' over women and other men, and determines what is acceptable and what is not. This not only goes to show the complexity that surrounds masculine thinking but also indicates that hegemonic representations of manhood are used to regulate gender and sexuality in society (Segal, 1992; Kimmel, 2001b; Connell, 2000a).

If we, then, consider Connell's (2000a) gender relations approach, which theoretically informs this project, we begin to see how his concepts of emotional and symbolic relations between the sexes apply. Because masculinity exists as a structure of social practice, hegemonic understandings of masculinity dictate the pattern of sexual expression not only between men and women but also among men themselves. KP1 points out that, "The fact that our sexual bodies are so important is very much constructive of the way we kind of organise our world. It is a fiction that we have created for ourselves that obviously has become a reality because that's how we live". KP1, thus, thinks that this binary is perilous both for society and for men themselves. Misogynistic thinking towards women, then, is reflected in homophobic reactions against men who, in the words of participant 5, are "*actually masculine-feminine*". Hence, because hegemonic heterosexuality should apply to all real men, those who do not measure up to this standard are therefore women-like. Segal (1992) suggests that this aversion to homosexuality is really a transference of the contempt for the feminine onto other men, or what Kimmel (2001b p. 275) refers to as the "flight from the feminine". KP1 also notes that such understandings of what is natural, fixed and unchanging can be quite damaging to people's senses of themselves. Yet, the popular belief remains that real men cannot behave like 'sissies' but must be seen to display natural masculine tendencies.

It is essential to note that this thinking about masculinity existing as a natural attribute in men cuts across both categories of men i.e. those who take gender studies courses (participants 1 and 7) and those who do not (2, 4, 5 and 9). This appears to suggest that most men, irrespective of their exposure to gender studies or not, continually speak about their manhood in an essentialist sense. To be sure, Clatterbaugh (1990) notes that one thing that maintains the reality of men is that masculinity is primarily considered to be a manifestation of biology and he links this to conservative thinking about manhood. Indeed, such thinking would have real implications for how the men react to other questions regarding gender relations, as would be seen in latter sections.

4.3.2 We are taught to be men

Another theme that emerged in the interviews with participants, in seeming contradiction to the foregoing one, was that masculinity is not something innate in men but is rather taught to men or something men learn over the course of their lives:

> ***Participant 8 mentioned:*** *"Masculinity is something that's taught from when one is born. I would say this whole system, right, they're constantly feeding on cultural products of masculinity which become entrenched in society laws in a way. Most men are actually born with feminine traits but they have to cut them off. So masculine society teaches you to get rid of those traits or else you'd be rendered not as a man".*
>
> ***Participant 10 mentioned:*** *"I think that it's nothing inborn; it's something that you are socialised into. I think I'm a man and I always aspire to be the man that my society idealises. So, if you fail to do that you feel like inadequate".*

For both participants, what society has termed masculinity is actually something one is born and socialised into. Segal (1992, p. 284) notes that, "Masculinity gains its meanings, its force and appeal, not just from some internalised psychological components or roles, but from all the wider social relations in which men and women participate". Segal's (1992) is made more vivid in the submission of participant 1 below:

> *"There's an internalisation of genderised differences, the situation of how men are perceived in the society and the situation of how women are perceived in the society. When you open the legs and you want to assign you fit into these two categories. And, therefore, there's a tacit social construction within which a male child or female child is fixed".*

Participants 8, 10, and 1 all seem to be suggesting a constructionist view of masculinity that has assumed hegemonic existence over time. To be sure, participant 10's suggestion that one '*aspires*' to be a man and feels inadequate if one does not achieve this status is quite instructive as he voices Kimmel's (2001b) point about masculinity as homosocial enactment, as discussed already in chapter two. Kimmel (2001b p. 275) points out that: "We are under the scrutiny of other men; they watch us, rank us, grant us acceptance into the realm of manhood; Manhood is demonstrated for other men's approval […] we want other men to grant us our manhood". This, to be sure, is laden with the fear of failure, as participant 10 observes, hence the man must always guard against such. Indeed, the submissions by these participants echo that of KP2 that the sexes are born male and female, and only become men and women through socialisation.

Quite interesting is participant 8's submission that most men are in fact born with feminine traits, which appears to counter biological standpoints of masculinity as something innate that men have. In this thinking, then, he seems not only to suggest that both masculinity and femininity are in fact taught to people, and he can choose from both as he likes, but his reasoning resonates with that of Connell (2001) who suggests that the delineation of masculinity as something that men possess excludes women from its usage, just as well as the usage of femininity on women excludes men. To be sure, the latter point reinforces the basis of sex role theory, where men and women conform to socially defined norms and behaviours (Connell, 2000a; Segal, 1995).

More personalised accounts of manhood as a socialised process by participants also indicate the extent to which societal institutions impact on men's understandings of themselves:

> ***Participant 3 mentioned:*** *"For me, the media was very influential. Also, Muslims and stuff, like, when you go to weddings and funerals men always eat first then women eat afterwards. A woman can't go to the graveyard and all that. Those were the things that shaped my manhood".*
>
> ***Participant 9 mentioned****: "A greater part of it is what society has on you, what you come across, what you see, what you learn. You can see a man carrying a baby in the streets; but in my rural area you can't see a man carrying a baby; and, if you see one then they will associate it with witchcraft...the woman trying to control the husband".*
>
> ***Participant 2 mentioned****: "I really understand myself as a man because of how I see men organise their lives. Men drink heavily, then I drink heavily; men smoke heavily so I smoke heavily…yeah… I just try and follow what other men are doing".*

What emerges from the foregoing accounts is that the shaping of the participants' masculinity appears to have been greatly influenced by one social institution or the other. It is important to note that this was true for both men who take gender studies (participants 1, 3 and 8) and the men who do not (2, 9 and 10), which suggests that many of the men believe that socialisation plays a big role in shaping their masculine identities. This, in turn, would affect how they relate to the other gender. Morrell (2001) has noted that the media plays an important role in maintaining constructions of masculinity and gender, not least as it relates to hegemonic heteronormative thinking. Also, Connell's (2000a) gender relations comes to the fore here as masculinity in this sense is understood as a configuration of

gender practice, which is manifested in societal institutions. What is interesting in the account of participant 9, however, is that he seems to have set up a dichotomy between rural and urban settings and how men behave socially and culturally in either context. In the conversations of the researcher with him, he mentioned more than once that he is a traditional man. Hence, there is no way he can be seen to be carrying a baby in public as this is perceived as emasculating him. Thus, Connell's (2000a) notion of power relations between the sexes is observable as patriarchal, masculinised cultures have socially determined that the man is the dominant sex and should be above the woman. The man, therefore, cannot be seen to be under the control of the woman even if this is connected to helping out with domestic chores or the rearing of children.

It is pertinent for this study to point is that most of the participants, who had actually argued for the position of masculinity as an essential attribute of men, also featured in the delineation of manhood as a socially learned thing. This apparent contradiction came up mostly when they were asked what masculinity is at first and later what informs their sense of individual masculinity. This somewhat complicates the picture as one wonders whether for these men masculinity is innate, socially constructed, or a combination of both. More importantly, the seeming contradiction was observed in both men who take gender studies and men who do not, suggesting that speaking about masculinity remains an issue for most men (see section on the elusivity of masculinity above), whether they have had contact with gender studies or not. An extract from participant 2 below directly addresses this complexity:

> *"The socialised…er…er…it takes place within natural spheres. Because you already begin to understand the natural space as you are socialised into a social space, at school, at home, even at college, you know".*

Throughout the interview with participant 2, who is not involved in gender, the researcher observed that he continually shifted between the terms natural and socialised and seemed confused at times in the way he used them. What became clear, however, is that social spaces that have gained hegemonic existence over time have become naturalised for participant 2 such that they are no longer social but natural. Hence, he interprets everything as natural including men getting married and men aspiring to buy Mercedes Benzes and bases his masculine identity on this natural space. KP1 believes that this naturalistic thinking is problematic since it assumes that masculinity is natural and unchanging. This discussion, while in no way attempting to undermine the masculine experience of

participant 2, suggests that what is brought to the fore, again, is the difficulty of delineating masculinity, which has perennially characterised its theorisation over time. Indeed, Ratele (2001) points out that many times the way researchers conceptualise gender issues differs from how those that are being researched understand them. Also, Brittan (2001) argues that people who speak of masculinity as an essential attribute in men are in fact confusing it with what he calls masculinism or masculine ideology. This is because "Masculinism is the ideology that justifies and naturalizes male domination […] it is the ideology of patriarchy" (53). Be that as it may, Brittan (2001) goes back to the gender relations approach of Connell (2000a) and suggests that what really is taking place is that men's domination in society is maintained and taken for granted by structures of gender relations.

4.3.3 Constructions of dominance

A common notion used to describe men is that of dominance. This assumes various forms and expressions when one is in conversation with men and includes the use of phrases like men have to be leaders, authoritative, in charge, in control, etc. Connell (1995 & 2000a) observes that this is closely linked to traditional hegemonic authority which organises and legitimises the gender order in society. The same sentiment is voiced by Whitehead and Barrett (2001) who note that socially dominant forms of being a man can be seen to provide an acceptable means through which men and boys speak about their gender and ultimately their sense of identity. In the interviews with participants, this idea was expressed:

> ***Participant 2 mentioned:*** *"The man should be authoritative. I should be dominant, I should dominate, you know, I should make key decisions. I would take it that a blind man cannot lead a man with eyes, you see. For there to be harmonious relationship between men and women there has to be a dominant and the dominated. And I think that's the way it has been created".*
>
> ***Participant 3 mentioned:*** *"Masculinity stands for power and dominance".*
>
> ***Participant 9 mentioned:*** *"I think it's an issue of saying a man is in control. Yeah…most of them they determine the course of life in society".*

So one sees that these men attach the notion of dominance as a characteristic feature of what men are or what men ought to be, which is essentially hegemonic. When participant 2 states categorically that he should be dominant and make key decisions, he brings to bear again Connell's (2000a) notion of power relations in the gender order, which is ultimately connected to patriarchal understandings. Even more thought-provoking is his argument

that "*a blind man cannot lead a man with eyes*" and, which not only presents women in the negative but also implies that they, women, have to be dominated over. More interesting is that he links this state of affairs to a "*harmonious relationship between men and women*". This somewhat negative perception of women presents participant 2 as an extreme version of traditional hegemonic masculinity. Participant 3's direct equation of masculinity to power and dominance exemplifies even more intensely traditional notions of hegemonic masculinity. The statement seems to mean that men cannot be anything else but to be dominant and powerful. This has deep implications for masculine self-understandings and gender relations in society. That is, as long as men continue to see themselves as having a natural right to rule over women and other men, the consequential scenario is an inevitable cycle of oppression, marginalisation and subordination (Whitehead & Barrett, 2001; Whitehead, 2002), especially if this natural right is threatened. And, echoing Segal (1992), this assumes a complex process of exclusion since masculinity, as power, tends to separate the boys from the men, and indeed women from men.

An important way in which participants expressed the dominance of men is through the common use of the term 'leader' to describe themselves:

> ***Participant 4 mentioned:*** *"You know…hmm…someone who should be a leader, like, head; someone who has to provide for his woman. You should become the head of a household, you know, you shouldn't share that position with anyone".*
>
> ***Participant 9 mentioned:*** *"I see myself as a leader, especially of my family. If something happens they won't come and, like, say it to my wife or to my mother; they either go to me or they can go to my father".*
>
> ***Participant 6 mentioned:*** *"I'm socialised to take a leading role, to protect the family in terms of value, in terms of bringing food on the table and bringing everyone into alignment so that there's discipline, some certain from of order".*
>
> ***Participant 5 mentioned:*** *"As a man I've to be responsible, take charge. I can't just sit there and be a cry-baby. I am a man…yeah…taking care of those I love…yeah. If something doesn't go well then it means there's something wrong with me as a man".*

These men present themselves as front-runners in many different ways by virtue of their being men. The initial general idea that stems from their submissions is that one is not a man if one is not able to lead and be the head of the family (Lwambo, 2013; Sideris, 2004). Participant 4's statement that "*you shouldn't share that position with anyone*" clearly establishes that. The man who is a leader must protect his family, provide for them, and

care for them. Clatterbaugh (1990) and Lwambo (2013) have pointed out that this is a recurring definition of manhood especially when understood in conservative terms. Also, participant 10 follows in this thought by observing that it has become a natural law for the man to be the head and if does not fit into this model he becomes depressed, echoing Lwambo (2013) once more. Further still, the complementary role of women as child-bearers and caregivers is thus enthroned and this speaks to Connell's (2000a) idea of production relations between the genders where men are the breadwinners of the home and are work outside this domestic space while women are socialised into remaining in this space. Although it has been noted that this notion of men as breadwinners has decreased in recent times (Connell, 2005), especially with the increase of women in the workplace and a decreasing number of men (Colvin, Robins & Leavens, 2010 as cited in Dworkin et al, 2012; Edwards, 2006), many men still feel that they ought to be the main wage earners in their relationships. This has proven to be a recurring issue in South Africa where men, due to difficulties in getting employment or having low paid jobs (Connell, 2005), find it difficult to fulfil this role of breadwinners. Their inability to do this is sometimes argued to be the cause of the crisis in their masculinity (Sideris, 2004; Ratele, 2002). The consequences of the latter is that these men have become frustrated and view women as having taken over their economic positions (Dworkin et al, 2012), leading them many times to lash out violently against women and other men (Morrell, 1998).

Another relevant impression that emerged from the men's assertions is the role of the man as disciplinarian and the one who takes charge. Participant 5's point that there's something wrong with him as a man if things do not go well shows how men continue to maintain traditional understandings of themselves as maintainers of order, which women and subordinated men cannot do. Pattman (2001) highlights this when he argues that being a man is usually equated with being a spokesman for culture. Thus, hegemonic-thinking men continue to have the belief that as the dominant sex their role is to ensure the organisation and order of society. Of course, as shown already, this even extends to the realm of sexuality. Participant 6 confirms this more in the following extract:

> *"Women themselves, even no matter how educated they become, they will say you are not a real man until you are able to control the affairs of your own home. So, you'll realise that you still play the central role; you are the pivot".*

So one observes that he somewhat justifies the continual domination of men using supposed complicity of women in the present state of affairs. In fact, the complicity of

women in the way society is presently organised is an argument that comes up again and again when men are asked questions about gender. For example, participant 7 states "*Women raised men that they taught to become men and when men went out there and came back, women still expected men to be men. Although men teach men to be men, what they teach men to be is what women expect men to be*", while participant 5 suggests that "*Mothers say to their kids 'man up, you must man up' about things. So, boys get confused being told by the very same women or society about equality*". So, both participants also subscribe to this thinking of women's complicity.

Again, it is important to note that the submissions of the men concerning the issue of men's dominance do not differ significantly among those who take or do not take courses in gender. For instance, participants 3 and 7, who are involved in gender studies, expressed the same sentiments as participants 2, 4, 5 and 9 who are not. This seems to show that exposing men to gender studies or not may not necessarily alter their perceptions on how gender hierarchy in society is arranged, or should be arranged.

4.3.4 Vulnerability

Gay men necessarily fall into the category of vulnerable men or what Connell (1995) calls subordinated masculinities. This is because by not conforming to traditional male images, they are emasculated and become ostracised. But it is not only this group of men that have suffered rejection from traditional representations of masculinity: men who identify as queer have also suffered the same fate. At least one of the participants who take the course in gender studies fits into this category as the extract below shows:

> ***Participant 8 mentioned****: "Well, I identify as queer. I do have more privileges but at the same time I do not conform to the laws of masculinity; I try to destabilise it completely. And, I mean, in a way it has limited my interaction with men in general…uhm…I mean essential masculine men in society because…uhm…they say horrible things about me…they say horrible things about me".*

Participant 8, identifying as queer, appears to be a different kind of man altogether by distancing himself from traditional understandings of masculinity. Valocchi (2005), speaking about the heterosexual/homosexual binary, observes that queer theory pays attention to 'deviant' behaviour as it concerns genders, sexual practices, and identities, which do not appear to fit into existing categories of the binaries or that goes against the accepted configurations of sex, gender, and sexuality. Queer theory, in addressing

heteronormativity, defies not only hegemonic masculinity but also stresses the complexity of human nature and of gender and sex demarcations. Yet, by going against expected male behaviour, participant 8 puts himself at the mercy of men who exhibit traditional hegemonic tendencies since he is now treated as a 'deviant' case, a sissy. He admits, emotionally, during the interview that so called 'normal' men say '*horrible things*' about him, which makes him fit into the category of a subordinated masculinity (Connell, 1995). However, he is quick to move beyond this and avers that such men are just uncritical about the world and this is because they are the ones holding privileged positions. Although he recognises that it's a big struggle, he persists in his deconstructed manhood and asserts that rather than feel inadequate he would continue to deconstruct his masculine position in society.

Participant 8 recognises that he does have privileges as a man since he shares in the patriarchal dividend (Connell, 1995 & 2000a). However, by being queer, he suggests that he has set himself free from the traditional male image, which he continually tries not to conform to. One way he feels he has done this is to love and appreciate flowers, which men do not ordinarily do:

> *"The queer space is for people who are accustomed to deconstructing everyday norms of life, from masculinity to race to all of that. I've always loved flowers but the world tells you, 'no you can't love flowers because you're a guy'. So, everyday I learn about something and I deconstruct the masculinity being forced upon me. It's quite fascinating".*

Indeed, participant 8 echoes Clarkson (2005) who avers that spaces for the development of alternative masculinities ought to be continually created in order for a rigorous critique of masculinity to take place. The queer space exists as one of such possibilities. The importance of such analyses for a gender and sex understanding is that an active consciousness leads the individual towards a different way of seeing and labelling himself sexually, especially within a culture of heteronormativity. This results in an opposition to being placed within established taxonomies. Although participant 8 fits into the category of a subordinated masculinity (Connell, 1995), he also is a progressive man (Morrell, 2001) since he commits himself to gender justice and fairness. Still, he qualifies as a profeminist man and in fact tends towards the radical aspect of this (Clatterbaugh, 1990). The important realisation from this is that hegemonic masculinity is time and again contested by other forms of masculinity and by men who resist its demands. Further still, participant 8 may have spoken this way because he is one of the rare cases among men who have

internalised alternative thinking about gender as a result of exposure to gender studies. Be that as it may, his submissions show that some men do not necessarily fit into fixed categories of masculine delineation but in fact can be defined across several types. This appears to be true even if it is a rarity.

4.3.5 Summary of theme one

Current literature on masculinity continually build on the notion that masculinity is ultimately social constructed. KP2, in fact, argues, in line with Kimmel (2001b) that 'One is a male but not born a man; rather you are taught to become a man". Although the responses by participants above indicate their awareness of this point, it should be noted that the inconsistency of what being a man is remains a problem, both for theorists as well as for people who do not theorise about masculinity. The varying responses observed from the different extracts above indicate that many men express their masculine identities in several ways even though these expressions may contradict each other. Yet, it may be said that men would continually speak about their being in similar ways, despite their engagement in gender studies or not, save for a unique few.

4.4 SENTIMENTS ON GENDER STUDIES

It has been noted that very few men are interested in taking courses in gender studies. This has been described as a recurring problem in gender studies courses across educational institutions on the globe. One reason that has been given for this lack of interest is that men are afraid of feminism (Strimpel, 2012; KP1). Another is that it is doctrinal and dogmatic (Dean, 2011), while a third is that the gender discourse is limited to women and dominated by them (Joshi, 2012; KP1; KP2). Other arguments presented by KP2 are that men may lack awareness about such courses and that, in South Africa at least, many disciplines within the social and human sciences that offer such gender courses comprise more men than women. Thus, the latter sex naturally will be more inclined towards such courses and will make up the greater number. This section addresses how participants respond to the question of men's presence in studies on gender. The sub-themes addressed in the section include conventional responses, informed views, and personal experience.

4.4.1 Conventional responses

Most men have never had a contact with gender or feminism courses and most do not seem interested in such courses. Hence, by conventional responses, the study refers to

submissions by participants who are not taking courses in gender and who seem to have inadequate knowledge of what gender studies entails. The following excepts encapsulate this:

> ***Participant 2 mentioned:*** *"Uhm…I didn't take the course specifically because I thought it's gonna be dominated by women. There's an over-focus on women as opposed to men and women being viewed as an underprivileged group of people".*
>
> ***Participant 4 mentioned:*** *"When I hear gender studies the first word that comes to my mind is feminism, you know, how it has to do with females and how vulnerable they are. So when I hear gender studies most of the time I just think it's a field that wants to elevate the position of women in society".*

The comments from both participants are general responses one gets from men who do not take a gender course and confirms the argument that most men just assume it is a sphere for women (Joshi, 2012; KP1; KP2). These men also appear to have very little knowledge about what such studies are about. What is of greater interest to the researcher, however, is that these men do not seem opposed to taking a gender studies course as the extracts below show:

> ***Participant 2 mentioned****: "I think it's important to do it but only because of its utilitarian function not because I am interested in it".*
>
> ***Participant 4 mentioned****: "I regret some of my decisions not to take a course in gender studies. In my field of study, we always come across authors who talk about the workplace in relation to gender, how workers are treated in the workplace because of their gender. So, at that point, you know, I always feel left behind".*

So, one hears participant 2 referring to gender studies as important and participant 4 feeling regret that he did not take the course. What is clear in both reactions, however, is that they will get involved in gender studies only for functional purposes and not really because they are interested in gender issues. Thus, one can opine from the foregoing that some men are not necessarily opposed to taking gender studies as a course but may just not be interested in it for different reasons. KP2 suggests that some of these reasons could include the structure of the course, how it is named, negative associations of such courses with feminism, or even how the course is taught. In the same vein, KP1 suggests that sometimes one needs to be politically committed to gender issues or have it as a career goal to express a level of interest in gender studies courses. But if one considers the strong sentiments of

both of these participants in the section above on 'being a man', one may suggest that such commitment is likely not to be possible.

In the following excerpt, participant 5 appears to be completely opposed to gender studies:

> ***Participant 5 mentioned:*** *"With courses for gender studies, what I've seen is that most people who tend to do these gender courses, I'm not sure if they're already feminine or if it's these courses that make them feminine. Some just come out of it suddenly feminine; you know someone was a man or male or whatever, and then suddenly this man is now gay. I'm not sure if it's the education…I can't explain it".*

So, participant 5 appears to express deep aversion for gender studies and most especially because men who venture into the field '*come out of it suddenly gay*'. In other words, he seems to be suggesting that gender studies emasculate men who get involved in it. Thus, he does not see himself taking part in it because his masculinity could be challenged by attending such courses:

> *"I don't see myself doing a programme of that sort. You can't express yourself as much as you want; you're just scared of being chowed by these women. Yeah…I've got issues with the course".*

What stands out as interesting in the foregoing extract is that participant 5 is afraid of '*being chowed*' by the women in a gender studies class. In other words, he is afraid that he would not be allowed space to express himself and the women will just devour him. Thus, he appears to fit into the class of those who are afraid of feminism or gender studies (Strimpel, 2012; KP1), hence would rather have nothing to do with it. Be that as it may, participant 5's fear may be further explained by Kimmel's (2001b) take on homophobia. In this thinking, he is afraid, not of women per se, but of being emasculated by other men who would see him as a 'sissy' for taking courses that are considered women's courses.

The men in this section portray not just a lack of knowledge about what gender studies is about but also generally indicate a lack of interest in it. One may suggest that there are other factors responsible for this lack of interest, which these men may not have articulated here. For example, in describing their masculinities in the section 'on being a man' participants 2 and 4, apart from understanding their manhood as something inborn, also indicated that men must dominate over women. Hence, one may argue that with such views they would not necessarily want to sit in the same class as women to discuss gender issues, especially if women are seen as inferior and their problems regarded as

unimportant. All three participants, then, appear to portray traditional images of hegemonic masculinity.

4.4.2 Informed views

Although the greater number of men may never have engaged with gender studies in an academic sense, some tend to have had access to information that concern issues in gender in one way or another. Participants who fall under this category of men with informed views include those who are not involved in gender studies but appear to have some knowledge of what such studies may entail.

> ***Participant 10 mentioned:*** *"I think it just focuses on how women have been marginalised before and, sort of, find ways to bridge that gap between men and women…yeah…and also to make the world appreciate the rights of women so that there would be gender equality. Maybe also the importance of the role of women in development".*
>
> ***Participant 6 mentioned:*** *"I'd situate it within a problematique, a scenario where gender studies…the moment you mention gender studies the thing that comes to mind is women, you see. Gender studies, I understand, goes beyond women; we are looking at roles and statuses that are assigned to particular sexes whether you are male, female, transgender, bisexual…the roles that are assigned to you by society".*
>
> ***Participant 9 mentioned:*** *"I think it's a way of trying to bring women into play, specifically looking at issues where they are being segregated. So…gender studies, I think is a course which is relevant. We are saying women maybe they are trying to seek relevance".*

All three participants appear to have some appreciation of what gender studies entails and appear to suggest that it is relevant. However, participant 9's statement that women are '*trying to seek relevance*' sounds as though he has a problem with such courses. Indeed, in the researcher's conversations with him, he appears to have a real problem with gender equality, which seems to suggest that he may in fact have issues with gender studies. Participant 6 problematises gender studies and links it to social constructionist views. Hence, for him, gender studies can be a place where such constructionist thinking can be deconstructed. Participant 10 seems to appreciate gender studies from the perspective of gender equality and development, and even associates this with rights. But are these men open to taking courses in gender studies?

> ***Participant 6 mentioned***: "*I believe if you take a course in gender studies you become more knowledgeable. You'll actually have a theoretical perspective about what you practically experience about gender issues within society. The reasons which will motivate me to take it are the misconceptions which people have about gender issues. I'd be motivated to take up studies specifically to have some theoretical basis to explain what we realise in society".*
>
> ***Participant 10 mentioned:*** *"If I had time maybe I would take such a course".*
>
> ***P9:*** *"Aha…for me I don't have a problem; I don't have a problem".*

All three men submit that they have no issues taking a course in gender studies. But, again, apart from participant 6, there does not seem to be any noticeable interest in gender issues. Participant 10's assertion that he would take such a course '*if he had time*' appears as though gender issues do not really bother him. Still, although participant 6 does show some interest, he actually confirmed, like participant 2, during the interview that he would take the course only for '*utilitarian purposes*'. The reference of participants 2 and 6 to utilitarian purposes of gender studies actually contradicts KP1's suggestion that men think it is not useful to them. It appears from their submissions that it in fact serves them in their other endeavours as men. Further still, one suggests that because participant 9, with his reply, appears to have no interest at all in gender issues or even taking a gender course. To be sure, he defines himself as a traditional man during the interview and does have significant problems with gender equality. In fact, he seems to see women in a very negative light and believes gay sexuality has no place in society. Thus one may suggest that he would have a problem sitting in the same class with women and gay men discussing gender issues.

From the submissions of participants 6, 9 and 10, one may suggest that they believe gender studies is not a course for men. This is in spite of their willingness to take the course, which none of them has actually thought of doing. From their submissions on male identities in the section on 'being a man', where they also exhibit hegemonic representations of masculinity, one opines that this may necessarily have an impact on their taking studies in gender.

4.4.3 Personal experiences

A small but growing number of men have developed an interest in engaging gender issues at an academic. Under this section, the first-hand opinions of participants who are involved in gender studies are explored:

> ***Participant 1 mentioned:*** *"I think I have realised that I have a better appreciation of how many people express views about gender relations than it used to be. I may say I tolerate people freely talking about their views and gender differences and similarities. I think that is one of the core things that taking the course has opened me up to".*
>
> ***Participant 3 mentioned****: "I think it's actually curiosity that made me take the course. I was lacking one of those things where I needed some sort of gender sensitivity. And, I think it's worth also in a way in my personal relationships. I think it's very important, you know, one of the most important courses".*
>
> ***Participant 8 mentioned:*** *"Gender Studies is quite an important platform for people to discuss about issues that people don't really talk about on an everyday basis. So it's a very good space to find the self and to talk about the self and ask questions about the self. So it was quite interesting, first, getting to know myself, know my political identity, and then deal with gender as a whole".*

These participants speak quite positively about their experiences of taking courses in gender studies. This personal impression is something that anyone who has not taken such a course can have. Be that as it may, it is interesting that participant 1 uses the word '*tolerate*' in his submission. This may be because he does have reservations about including sexuality issues with gender studies:

> *"I think sexuality is problematic. I think sexual orientation is a personal issue that has nothing to do with gender. And, therefore, I have always liked to discuss gender minus sexual orientation of people".*

It is in fact true that gender and sex are two separate issues but following through participant 1's conversations the impression that one has is that he has got real problems with gay sexuality. Interestingly, gay people tend to find some solace in feminist and gender studies circles. The question, then, is whether he has really moved away from traditional hegemonic understandings of masculinity, despite taking studies in gender. This question is relevant because participant 1 describes himself as a '*progressive man*' yet considers gay sexuality to be abnormal behaviour. On close inspection, he appears to be torn between hegemonic masculinity and Morrell's (2001) accommodating man. As Gough (1998) argues, such urban, educated men express their progressive natures rhetorically but maintain hegemonic models discursively and strategically.

Participant 3's submissions portray him as someone who has achieved a particular level of consciousness with respect to gender issues. This is observable from the fact that although he took the course out of curiosity, he admits that he needed 'some sort of

gender sensitivity', which he claims is useful to his personal relationships with women. Participant 3 exists as someone who is open to honest negotiation with the female gender based on his emotional relationship with them (Connell, 1995). By describing gender studies as "*one of the most important courses*" he appears to have moved from traditional hegemonic masculinity towards profeminist thinking. In fact, he describes himself as a profeminist man. Hence, he seems to be one rare example of a man whose involvement in gender studies has influenced his thinking on masculinity.

Finally, participant 8 appears as the most observable representation of someone whose masculine self-understanding has been deeply influenced by his engagement with gender studies. His linking of such studies to self discovery is quite an interesting one. As someone who defines himself as queer (discussed already) he believes that men's participation in such courses would allow for greater openness to gender issues, and perhaps the formation of new masculine identities, since these issues do not form part of everyday conversations. Yet, the question that may be asked is whether such a personalised experience would necessarily be true for every other man who engages in gender studies. Although KP1 shared personal experiences of attitudinal changes in a couple of men who have engaged in gender studies, KP2 pointed out that there is no direct link between men's involvement in such courses and changes in perceptions towards gender relations. The responses to other themes in this study of at least two of the four men who do gender affirm the latter point. KP2 suggests that this may not be unconnected to how these courses are conceptualised, which are mostly quite unfriendly towards men.

4.4.4 Summary of theme two

The different reactions of participants to gender studies indicate that they are on very different levels with respect to interest in gender issues and particularly to gender studies courses. While one cannot be absolutely sure why men do gender studies or not, one observes intersections between their submissions on 'sentiments on gender studies' and how they define their masculinities in the section 'on being a man'. In other words, there is an observable similarity that runs through their responses in both sections. One, then, can make extrapolations from these and draw certain conclusions about why those men who do not do gender studies may not be inclined to do so. This seems to be dependent heavily on how they view themselves as men and how their masculinity is, or should be expressed. In

the same vein, one may suggest that some of those who do gender studies are continually affected by their sense of manhood like their counterparts who are not involved, and this impacts on how both categories of men perceive gender relations in society, not least the issue of gender equality discussed in the next section.

4.5 GENDER EQUALITY

It has been observed that despite the strides that have been achieved in addressing gender issues, men and boys still remain the gatekeepers for gender equality (Connell, 2005). Indeed, the backlash from men in the gender transformation era indicates that many men still want to maintain the traditional gender order and are not willing to open up to a scenario where women and men exist as equals. Gender equality was included as a theme in this discussion because it is intrinsically tied to how men understand themselves, how they perceive women, and how this reflects in their decisions to be part of studies in gender. This section, thus, addresses the following sub-themes as articulated by men in the present study: equality as an intrinsic component of gender relations, equality disrupts the social balance, and gender equality is for the public space.

4.5.1 Equality as an intrinsic component of gender relations

Among the participants, there are those who consider gender equality to be an essential ingredient in the relations between men and women. This is captured in the following extracts:

> ***Participant 8 mentioned****: "I believe beings are equal. I just believe that men and women are equal and people should have equal voices on behaviours and occupy positions of power equally. We are all equal".*
>
> ***Participant 1 mentioned****: "Men and women should have equal space to aspire towards their desires, the attainment of whatever goals that they want to achieve. Society becomes a better place for both men and women".*
>
> ***Participant 10 mentioned:*** *"I think women should always be given that opportunity to exercise their rights and enjoy equal opportunities with men because I think if they are given that opportunity they are just as good as men in doing what men do".*
>
> ***Participant 3 mentioned:*** *"I believe in gender equality, but real equality. The government is doing things to empower women, especially in top positions in government. But for me it's more something symbolic than it is actual gender equality. There needs to be real, concrete equality".*

From the foregoing excerpts by these four participants, they seem to suggest that equality should be a fundamental element of how men and women live in society. This is not just because "*beings are equal*" but more importantly because women "*are just as good as men in doing what men do*". Indeed, these submissions appear as some kind of philosophical understanding of how society is, or should be organised. Hence, there are no grounds, whatsoever, to treat one sex any less equal than the other. In many ways, these men's submissions go back to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1945 where the very first article states that all beings are born equal in terms of dignity and rights.

It is of special interest that all but one of the four men who make the assertions above are taking studies in gender. One may be inclined, then, to suggest that those who do, participants 1, 3 and 8 probably make such assertions based on their contact with gender studies. Yet, if one considers that participant 10, who does not do gender studies, also speaks positively about gender equality, one wonders whether exposure to gender studies is directly linked to how men react to such an issue or not. To be sure, it is possible that men can speak nicely and academically about such issues, and appear accommodating (Morrell, 2001), yet may continue to exhibit traditional and complicit images of masculinity. Participant 1, from his submissions on other themes, does not mince words about his masculine identity and who should be in charge in society. His responses in section 4.6 below will throw more light on this. This is also true for participant 10. Participant 3, in his reference to the government, argues that gender equality in South Africa is geared more, not just towards influential women, but is also number-oriented; hence, his use of the term '*symbolic*'. His concerns are echoed by MabuyaKhulu (2005) who argues that there must be no confusion between gender equality and simplistic moves aimed at just balancing the statistics. Gender equality, then, for participant 3, must be seen to be '*real equality*' and is '*critical*'. It should be recalled that participant 3 describes himself as a profeminist man, hence would necessarily speak this way about gender equality; his responses thus far on other themes have tended to be aligned to this position. However, one observes that participant 8, the queer one, is the only man for whom gender equality is not a struggle in any way. Such a state of affairs is natural for him and this speaks to his reactions on other themes.

4.5.2 Gender equality disrupts the social balance

Masculinity affects the way society is organised. In fact, society is built on hegemonic patriarchal ideologies, which makes Connell's (2000a) gender relations approach to understanding society even more relevant. Some men, however, are of the opinion that there's nothing wrong with the way society is organised and that, in fact, gender equality moves just upsets the whole system. The following extracts encapsulate this thinking:

> ***Participant 2 mentioned****: "Gender equality is a nonsense issue. It destroys that social balance, as well as the natural balance. History plays a part; even the spiritual dimension that exists within a society has a bearing on that".*
>
> ***Participant 4 mentioned:*** *"I would say this whole notion of gender equality for me it's a westernised concept. I don't really think we have this kind of stuff in our African societies. Women were just women and men were just men with our roles set aside. It was natural".*
>
> ***Participant 5 mentioned:*** *"The moment women start making noise about this equality business I become quite sceptical. I'm not a spiritual man but I think to some extent the Bible has a couple of things, you know all that rib issue. There's no equality there".*
>
> ***Participant 9 mentioned:*** *"I'm a traditional man. I come from a rural rural background…and like to fight for, say, equality you may bring, like, confusion in the society. We might be going against the ordinary norm".*
>
> ***Participant 10 mentioned:*** *"That's how it's been made. Like, even in the Bible, I think that's where it all comes from. Even if you try to trace the history of the development of all societies, you'll see that men have always been above women".*

From the foregoing submissions, gender equality is no good to society because society has come from somewhere and "*that's how it's been made*". Gender equality, thus, "*messes up the social aspect*", is '*nonsense*', just '*brings confusion*' to organised society and affects the natural and social balance. Thus, women should not "*make noise about this equality business*". If society has been built historically and spiritually, any attempt to disrupt it is unacceptable. To be sure, participants 5's and 10's appeal to the Bible reinforce this spiritual side of things where there's definitely no equality, and participant 2 also makes the same appeal to authority when he refers to the ancestors. Also, he makes a direct link between biology, or the physical strength of men, and equality and uses this to justify why men and women cannot be equal in the social realm. Indeed, Whitehead and Barrett (2001) argue that men use biology to replicate myths of gender within a gender order where men continue to be the beneficiaries. Also, these statements that reinforce gender inequality are in line with Clatterbaugh's (1990) argument that masculinity tends to be continually

reinforced through ideals and stereotypes. It is important to reiterate the point that participant 2 continues to speak of the natural and social, as he did with masculine identity, as though they are unchangeable (Connell, 2000a; KP1). To be sure, Clatterbaugh (1990) argues that there's nothing naturally necessary about patriarchy or male domination.

So, one sees a scenario where traditionally hegemonic thinking men continue to argue for the continued present organisation of society and anything that affects this is understood as dysfunctional. Participants 2, 4, 5 and 9 do not take gender studies and their responses are not actually surprising, if one considers their reactions to other themes in this study. One, however, notices that participant 10, who does not do gender and had argued for basic equality for men and women earlier, now asserts that present societal arrangement is normal. This makes one to wonder whether he's a traditional man or whether he rather fits into the category of Connell's (1995) complicit masculinity, who wants to continue to enjoy the patriarchal dividend, or even Morrell's (2001) accommodating man. Whatever the case, he affirms Morrell's (2001) point above that men may continue to display traditional male images while speaking positively about gender issues. One may suggest that such contradiction in responses could be because enduring perceptions and habits are hard to change; hence, while he is attempting not be associated with traditional images of manhood, and wanting to be seen as moving with the times , he inevitable gets caught up in such inconsistencies.

It is interesting what participants 2 and 4 say about gender equality being western, ideas that are "*shipped from another society*". Such thinking makes gender equality '*un-African*'. And because it is not African, and Africa has its way of organising society, women should actually be asking for the right to speak and not for equality. Participant 4 cements this thinking when he points out that oppression and suppression cannot come up in addressing male and female relations in Africa. One, thus, is presented with a rather interesting picture of what African societies were and still are in many respects. The question remains whether Africans in general, and African men in particular, are unable to appreciate gender equality and whether indeed oppression and suppression are inapplicable to gender relations within the African reality. Whatever the answers to these questions are, one must point out that African feminists apply caution to the use of the terms oppression and subordination on African women. Mohanty (1988) warns against what she refers to as 'ethnocentric universalism'. This refers to the understanding that women have a shared experience of oppression and therefore can talk of a universal sisterhood. On the contrary, the sexual

division of labour within the African setting is something African women may actually take pride in. In the same vein, Oyewunmi (2002 p. 2) argues that the category 'woman' and her presupposed 'subordination' have been unduly treated as universals, which is problematic and does not account for contextual differences. As such participants 2 and 4 may be trailing the positions of these authors. Be that as it may, if one follows Connell's (2000a) gender relations approach, one notices that it is traditional hegemonic masculinity being expressed by these men, and which, then, proceeds to create a dichotomy between worlds.

Participant 9 implies this dichotomy of worlds with his assertion that gender is for "*the elite and the educated who all want to transform society*". In fact, he establishes this thinking in the following extract:

> *"I think the issue is more of saying there's modernisation and tradition at one end and now it's a fight of relevance. We the modernised want to put our own values of which the traditional system they have their own way of understanding things, which is at odds with modernisation".*

What strikes one in participant 9's assertion above is that he uses the term '*we*' to refer to himself as part of the modernised, while '*they*', the rural, are the traditional. It suffices to reiterate that he is not involved in gender studies and describes himself as a traditional man a number of times during the interview, who is from a '*rural rural background*'. So, one observes a contradiction is the way he now speaks of himself. This ambiguity, however, appears to be reduced once one appreciates his responses to other questions on equality and even in the following assertion:

> *"When we talk of gender we speak on behalf of women. If they have room, like, in voting let them show that they are after the issue of gender equality; but you don't see that reflection. And if you discuss with most of them they don't support each other…yeah…you should talk to them. They talk shit about themselves but let them talk about a man, they talk nicely about a man".*

One, then, can confidently say participant 9 displays a typical archetype of traditional hegemonic masculinity. In fact, the supposed misperception of whether gender equality is traditional or modern locates him securely in that position.

Some of the men also reinforce the prevailing gender order with their reference to and justification for patriarchy:

> ***Participant 6 mentioned:*** *"Patriarchy itself is not bad; it is how it is appropriated. Ideally it should be employed to bring about social justice and if it is used for that purpose, then I think the world would be better".*
>
> ***Participant 7 mentioned:*** *"Fundamental to understanding the context in the past is that in patriarchal societies men worked out of the society and then came back to the society. Women raised men that they taught to become men and men went out there and came back and women still expected men to be. Although men, around certain circles of men teach men to be men, what they also teach men to be men is what women expect men to be men. Women contribute to establishing cycles of patriarchy".*

So, again, one notices the justification of the present order through the reference to the complicity of women in '*establishing cycles of patriarchy*' (Whitehead, 2002). The implication is that men therefore cannot be blamed for gender inequality, at least alone, and participant 7, who is rooted in gender studies, actually argues that feminism is a failed argument because women actually do not know what they are resisting. In fact, the extrapolation would be that they are resisting something that they themselves helped to build since time immemorial. One also observes that the argument that participant 6 puts forward is that patriarchy is a good thing so far as it '*brings about social justice*'. Thus, what society should be doing is creating equity among the sexes through the bettering of social institutions. Going beyond this to talk of equality or of destroying the patriarchal order, thus, amounts to being '*extra creative*' and going against '*the African systems and traditions*', which feminism is attempting to do. So, we see two men, one involved in gender studies and the other not involved, speaking similarly about the issue under discussion and continuing to portray hegemonic patriarchal thinking even though they may seem open to gender equality.

4.5.3 Gender equality is for the public space

This final sub-section deals with how the participants link gender equality and development, and how this ultimately impacts on their masculine identities. This is important because while some men appear not to have issues with gender equality in the public space they tend to dichotomise equality in this sphere from equality in the private sphere. It is admitted that development is a perennially contested term (Adelman & Morris, 1997; Brohman, 1995; Pierterse, 2000) and, like masculinity, lacks a definition that cuts across all disciplines, theorists and contexts. Be that as it may, as long as one considers development in a holistic sense, most especially to include both the sociocultural and socioeconomic aspects (Midgley, 1995 & 1998), then one at least has some reference point

to begin from. While the articulations of some participants indicate that equality is good for development many tend to separate it from the social sphere. In this sense, gender equality should only be reserved for the public sphere of work. The following excerpts present gender and development in a good light:

> ***Participant 1 mentioned****: "Gender equality, gender transformation project and agenda are a development tool rather than a destructive tool".*
>
> ***Participant 6 mentioned:*** *"Gender equality is important for development. We cannot deny it, it leads to development. Women are the centre of development".*
>
> ***Participant 10 mentioned****: "I think if we take development as that multidimensional concept, achieving gender equality is development on its own".*
>
> ***Participant 3 mentioned:*** *"If women aren't put at the centre of development, then for me there's no authentic development. I think it's critical, it's central".*

All four participants above submit that gender equality is essential for development and doing otherwise suggests that society is not ready to develop to its full potential. As an observation, participants 1 and 3 do gender while their counterparts, 6 and 10, do not suggesting that engagement in gender studies or not does not appear to affect how they think about gender and development. Participant 6, points out that it goes beyond equality for only women but must also include equality for all marginalised groups and people. Participant 10 presents a rather interesting point that gender equality is not a means to development but is an end in itself. Thus, he appears to be speaking about development from the social development perspective, which attempts to effectively harmonise social and economic policies for development (Midgley, 1995 & 1998; Patel, 2005). Despite these positive articulations, however, some participants appear to have limited the extent of gender equality and development:

> ***Participant 4 mentioned****: "That's equality on a professional level. But, work through development from 8am to 5pm and after that you go back home, the equality I don't think it applies there, you know. No, no, no. Development is now tampering with our households".*
>
> ***Participant 1 mentioned****: "If I try to carry my authoritative powers from the home to this office, then it tends to undermine her authority. She also, if she's not careful, she'll carry her authority from here home…spill over. So gender authority and space spill over is problematic".*

Participant 1 was referring to a scenario where a woman is the CEO of a company. His point is that her professional authority cannot '*spill over*' to the home, which is the domain of male authority, while a man's authority should also not spill over to the office where the

woman may be in charge (Segal, 1992; Whitehead & Barrett, 2001). Participant 4 makes the same claim when he asserts that development cannot tamper with '*our households*' because it is reserved only for the professional space. Both participants, 1 involved in gender studies and 4 not involved, draw a clear line between gender equality in the workplace and in domestic spaces, again showing that involvement in gender is not a direct passport to changing perceptions. Both seem open to gender equality but this must have its limits. In this regard, they seem to fall into Morrell's (2001) category of accommodating masculinities.

4.5.4 Summary of theme three

Many of the participants seemed keen on endorsing gender equality as a good thing. This was true for both men who do gender studies and those who do not. However, as their articulations have shown, they do this in various ways and on different levels, and one observes that despite their seeming positivity most of them continue to be torn between their masculine identities and their openness to gender equality. This makes it difficult to conclude what kind of masculinities they really portray. Be that as it may, the varying submissions of these men on the issue indicate that this impacted on how they view their involvement in gender studies.

4.6 CHANGE

One of the objectives of this study was to explore whether men are changing or are open to change in light of gender transformation in society. Segal (1992) has already pointed out that even though change is possible, this is happening as a pretty slow pace. This trails Whitehead's and Barrett's (2001) point that change in the gender order would have taken place anyway in the presence of political, economic and technological advancements around the globe. In light of this, it was pertinent to know what the participants think about men changing their attitudes in the present scenario of gender relations. Sub-themes that are explored include affirmative views on change, rigid attitudes towards change, and nuanced responses to change.

4.6.1 Affirmative views on change

Some of the participants indicated that with the way the world has progressed on gender issues, change is required on the part of men. The following excerpts capture this:

> ***Participant 8 mentioned:*** *"Instead of trying to suppress the whole gender equality movement they can actually engage in a discourse on gender by removing themselves from their privileged position. So, they might actually challenge tradition and begin to deconstruct the sexes".*
>
> ***Participant 10 mentioned:*** *"I think they should change their perception of masculinity, femininity and all issues around gender equality because there are some men who cannot appreciate gender equality".*
>
> ***Participant 3 mentioned:*** *"I think you just need one person to take the stand and people will follow. If we cannot start with ourselves how are we going to tell someone else?"*

One hears these men express a confidence that change in men is necessary. Participants 3 and 10 echo Segal's (1992) point in her book *Slow Motion* that change 'will be very very slow' and needs time. It is interesting that participant 3 thinks that such change may happen only after his lifetime. But he suggests that change ought to begin with the individual and then extend out to the collective, a submission he shares with both KP1 and KP2. This invokes the argument about whether change is possible only among individual men or with men as a political category. MacInnes (1998) and Seidler (1994) have argued that useful change can only take place at the level of structures while Whitehead (2002) opposes such change among men as a political category and argues that it is only possible at the personal level. Be that as it may, participant 10 opines that gender equality is a political issue hence change needs to be politicised through social movements that lobby for women's rights. For him, change can only be achieved and make sense to society at this level.

Participant 10 raises a relevant point that some men cannot appreciate gender equality and one connects this to his earlier argument that gender equality can only be appreciated in a society where patriarchy has been overturned. Indeed, he trails the arguments of radical feminism in this thinking (Campbell & Wasco, 2000; Friedman et al, 1987). Further still, one thinks that by saying that men need to change their perceptions about femininity and masculinity, he is considering a scenario where such terms do not necessarily define the sexes anymore and are impervious to value judgements. Participant 8 challenges men to rid themselves of their privileged positions and deconstruct their present understanding of self. This, again, comes as no surprise to the reader as this 'queer' participant, who does gender, has referred to deconstruction time and again; thus change in men would be essential for him. The need for change, as voiced by participant 3, who is also involved in gender, was

predictable as, one recalls, he defines himself as a profeminist man and would necessarily speak in this vein. Participant 10, who does not do gender, has also attempted to distinguish himself from his counterparts who are also not engaged in gender by continually speaking positively about gender issues in other themes, as he does now with the question of change. Yet, one must not forget that his submissions on his masculinity may still limit how far he is ready to go with gender issues. Perhaps, time will tell whether he only speaks of these issues academically and wants to be seen as pro-gender issues or if he is truly committed to altering the present gender order in society.

It is important to note that one of the participants is of the opinion that men are already changing:

> ***Participant 1 mentioned:*** "*Men are changing. I would refer to myself as a progressive man. I would be discriminating in my attitude towards women as the need arises to protect them. I would be using positive authority because that is progressive authority for me".*

So this participant actually thinks men have begun to respond to change and proceeds to outline three classes of men with respect to the question of change. He refers to himself as a progressive man, again, who uses '*common-sense*' and *positive or progressive authority*' to discriminate against women '*as the need arises*' in order to protect them. This is quite interesting because participant 1 has the predisposition to consider women as weak whose natures '*disadvantage them*'. Although participant 1 is involved in gender, one realises that he has really not shifted very far from Clatterbaugh's (1990) biological conservative man whose role is to protect and provide for women, even though he considers himself a progressive man. Yet again, this goes to suggest that doing gender does not necessarily change perceptions.

Finally, another participant, while recognising that change among men is necessary, somewhat problematises it:

> ***Participant 5 mentioned****: "I think what should happen is that men should be sensitive to gender; just treat the other person as you'd want to be treated. But things should be changed at the level of households. You find situations where mothers say to their kids 'man up, you must man up' about things. So, boys get confused being told by the very same women or society about equality and change".*

Participant 5 does not do gender yet advocates that change must begin from domestic spaces. But women, again, are part of the problem of male identity-formation thus must stop confusing boys (Whitehead, 2002). This is the only way men can become sensitive to gender. This participant continually points out the complicity of women in maintaining patriarchy in society (Whitehead, 2002). One wonders, however, whether he really is committed to change in the gender order or if he is simply attempting to point out loopholes in talks about gender. His submissions on other themes suggest that he is not ready for an overhaul of the present gender system, at least not just yet.

4.6.2 Inflexible attitudes towards change

In the present sub-section, the views of men who are completely averse to change are presented as shown in the following extracts:

> ***Participant 9 mentioned:*** *"I hate that word and you can't convince me by hiding behind the word change. What change? Whose change? Who are you trying to appease? Why are we talking of change and not talking of maintaining the status quo? Are we saying progress in society or life is all about change?".*
>
> ***Participant 2 mentioned:*** *"I don't think men should change. The natural space is that there should be a dominant and a dominated; even cows know that this one is the bull and this one is the cow. So, why do human beings not know that? By trying to reverse this organisation, by trying to impose a new structure is now making things unnatural".*

In the foregoing extracts, one comes in contact with men who believe the present gender order ought to be maintained and men should not change their attitudes in any way. Participant 9 insinuates that the call for men to change amounts to an imposition from outside. One recalls that he had already equated the issue of gender equality to be a contest between tradition and modernity. Africans, then, must not '*get carried away*' but should strive rather to maintain '*what we have*'. Participant 2 had established in earlier sections that the way society is structured is based on historical and spiritual dimensions. Thus, if men attempted to change, this would only be making '*unnatural*' things that are already natural (Segal, 1992). Human beings, then, cannot reverse this functional arrangement where the dominant and dominated are naturally occurring (Clatterbaugh, 1990; Whitehead & Barrett, 2001) for '*even cows and bulls know this*'. However, it has been argued that so called African culture is sometimes invoked to perpetuate the abuse of women and the sustenance of inequality in African societies (Mazuba, 2013; Okome, 2014). The important

argument that is been raised is whether the concept of human rights is subject to differing interpretations across cultures, most importantly as it concerns women. Be that as it may, one observes that participants 9 and 2, who do not do gender, continue to portray traditional hegemonic representations of masculinity in all of their submissions and appear to be unwavering in this regard.

4.6.3 Nuanced reactions to change

Some of the participants appear to have qualified reactions to the subject of changing attitudes in men. Thus, on the one hand they are open to men changing; on the other hand, however, this change must only affect certain areas in men-women relations in society and ought to be negotiated:

> ***Participant 4 mentioned:*** *"Men should change their attitudes with regards to women in the workplaces. But, they shouldn't change the ideal, like, how they see women, like, in the broader society. When it comes to core African ways, clearly there's no alternative".*
>
> ***Participant 6 mentioned:*** *"Men, where their attitudes are negative towards women, yes, there's need for change. But this change should be negotiated and should not just be imposed from certain quarters. It should be progressive and gradual so that men identify with that change".*

Participant 4, in line with his submission on gender equality, believes that change in the attitude of men towards women should only be in relation to professional or public spaces. However, men cannot lose their '*Africaness*' in the name of change; in fact, just like gender equality should not affect our households, change too cannot affect our '*core African ways*'. Indeed, he illustrates his point by pointing out that in the African setting, men and women do have roles and it is the role of the woman to take care of kids (KP1). Participant 4, who is not involved in gender, thus, continues to dichotomise the worlds of Africans and non-Africans, worlds which should not overlap because there is the African notion of things as well as the Western notion of things. Also, one may suggest that his restricting of change to the workplace, coupled with his responses to other themes, indicates that he is also a man not yet ready to see a different gender arrangement in society.

Participant 6, who is also not involved in gender studies, advocates that change is necessary among men, not just towards women but also towards other men who are

marginalised. In this thinking, he recognises with Connell (1995) that masculinities can also be subordinated and marginalised. However, he cautions that change must be negotiated and not imposed from '*certain quarters*'. Bringing up the latter, he actually follows participants 4 and 9 in suggesting that change cannot be imposed from outside since it disrupts local societies. Change ought to be accepted by men themselves and should be gradual. The question that arises here is why this participant thinks that for change to be useful it must be accepted by men. He appears to be saying that since men are the ones in charge they can still decide what should happen and what cannot happen. One wonders then if, for him, change in men is something that should be demanded and should affect every facet of society or whether women and other subordinated groups should just accept whatever little changes they see. One observes that participant 6 does not take into consideration that men may actually reject change since they remain in positions of privileged power (KP1). This, again, brings to fore the question of at what level change should take place. One realises that the answer to this question is not a clear-cut one but Burr (1995), KP1 and KP2 believe that change must be both at a personal and political level since the one informs the other, and structure and agency cannot be separated.

4.7 CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The participants react differently to the issue of change among men, as they do to other themes, and one observes that different reasons are given for these varying reactions. It is observable that both categories of men i.e. those who do gender studies and those who do not, speak almost along similar lines on what should constitute change among men, which tends to be quite limited, save for a few (especially participants 3, 8 and 10) who think change should be a massive enterprise. It is not out of line, then, to suggest that men will always rationalise in a multiplicity of ways about how they behave. The responses by the men to the four themes discussed above show an intersection between what they say about themselves and other gender issues, and how this affects their participation in gender studies or not. Reading through the scripts of participants 2, 4, 5, 6, 9 and 10 i.e. those who do not take gender studies one may suggest, in a tentative sense, that they would necessarily not have taken a course in gender studies. This is because they mostly maintained traditional hegemonic masculine expressions in their submissions on all four themes in spite of a few positive reactions here and there. Yet, this is not to suggest that the men who took gender did not portray hegemonic masculinity. For, participants 1 and 3 did not reveal reduced levels of traditional male images despite being part of gender studies. It

may be argued that only participants 3 and 8 displayed any possibilities of non-hegemonic tendencies even though the former may have shown this in a couple of places. Hence, their involvement in gender studies appeared to have been borne out of genuine interest in seeing a changed gender order This discussion, thus, avows that the men's reactions to the themes above, in very many ways, will lead them to decide to be part of any gender project or not. In this study, the focus has been on men's perceptions of their involvement in gender studies; their reactions, as observed in the various extracts above, reinforce the argument that men are not a single category. Researchers, thus, must aim to continue to speak about men's identities in plural forms, or as masculinities.

CHAPTER FIVE

MAIN FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This study set out to explore how male, Humanities postgraduate students perceive gender studies and to examine how this coincides with their masculine identities. In order to help the researcher answer his research questions, the views of the participants on expressions of their masculinity, gender equality, and change were examined.

5.2 MAIN FINDINGS

The study reveals that most of the participants do not seem to consider gender studies as an important area where men would purposefully want to be involved. This is substantiated by the fact that the decision to be part of gender studies by those who enrolled for it ranged from curiosity to insignificant submissions that border around genuine interest in it. Those who did not take such courses also saw the sphere as a domain for women while others were afraid and felt that their views as men would be suppressed. Still, others did not think it was relevant for the degree programme they are engaged in and were not interested in finding out about such courses. Although many of the men who did not take gender studies courses appear not to have been involved in it out of sexist notions, one conclusion that can be drawn is that their articulations about their masculinities, gender equality and attitudes towards change seemed to impact on their decisions to be involved in gender studies. Indeed, such an extrapolation can be made especially since many of the masculine expressions of the men tend towards traditional hegemonic male representations.

Following from the above, the attitudes of the men indicate that there is no real interest towards re-ordering or changing the prevailing structure of gender relations. In other words, most of the participants, in their articulations, favour the present organisation of the gender structure. This was observed in the submissions of both men who do gender studies and those who do not. For example, at least two of the four men who do gender studies still held on strongly to traditional hegemonic views about gender equality while only one thought any change in the present order may not happen in their lifetime. Also, among the six men who do not take gender studies, two appeared to be inclined towards restructuring the gender order while the other four maintained hegemonic ideals. One can draw the conclusion that while there is no direct relationship between exposing men to gender studies and changes in perceptions of how gender in society is organised, the same

argument can be made that not engaging directly in gender studies does not necessarily mean one cannot be progressive about gender issues. The submissions by most of the participants suggest that a change in attitude towards the present gender hierarchy is not something they are prepared to tolerate, at least for the present.

In the narratives of the men, it was discovered that most of them oscillated between different images of masculinity; thus many were ambiguously placed. For instance, some who displayed apparent progressive masculinities in one instance but made traditional hegemonic articulations in another, which made them seem to 'hang' across male images. Also, the lone subordinated man, who is queer, appeared to fit in positively in the model of a progressive and profeminist man, which may not necessarily be true for all subordinated men. Although the masculinity literature would locate these men within specific images of masculinity such as complicit, accommodating, progressive, and defensive, the study appears to reveal that one cannot be absolute in locating men within any fixed male image at all times. This is reinforced by the fact that many of the men spoke contradictorily about themselves as individual men when asked different questions about their masculine social identity, as well as in relation to the other questions of the research. This was also evident in what they thought about men in general and almost all of the men did not realise this contradictory ways of speaking. This, in fact, highlights the masculinity definition problematique. Despite the foregoing, however, a couple of men expressed images of manhood that diverged from hegemonic understandings, which seemed relatively stable. Hence, there was at least one clear representation of subordinated masculinity and another one that portrayed strong profeminist orientations.

The discourses of the men predominantly presented images of the man as the naturally dominant sex, who is a leader and provider. In a multiple of ways these representations were maintained through various discourses on gender equality, change, and gender and development. The implication of this for development is that men continue to see themselves as being in charge of society and the way it is organised. The submissions by these men indicate that such thinking continues to permeate how men speak about their identities, both within the private and public spheres; hence, to re-echo Connell (2005), men remain the gatekeepers for gender equality and this in turn will have a huge impact on the role women play in development.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY

Reflecting on the findings of the study, the researcher observed that more in-depth research needs to be done with university men with respect to how they understand their masculine identities. This is even more necessary as there is little literature that directly address this category of men. As observed in the rationale, studies tend to focus more on men who fall into categories such as professional, rural, oppressed, unemployed, sexually aggressive, etc., mostly leaving out university men. This presents a limitation to fully appreciating the multiplicity of masculinities and the consequent diversity of responses to the changing gender order. Although this study is a contribution to such an enterprise, more research work needs to be done with this category of men if the masculinity field is going to make more instructive conclusions about men's identities within the context.

The study recruited postgraduate men only from the Faculty of Humanities to be part of this research. It is recommended that future research extends such an examination to university men beyond the social and human sciences. This will be important to establishing points of convergence and divergence about how men within the Humanities field and those outside of it express their masculine identities. Also, it would be interesting to know how undergraduate male students within the context will speak about their masculinity if such a study were to include them.

One important theme that came up during the data analysis is how a number of the men reserved gender equality for the public sphere and excluded it from the private. It would be important for future research to build on this as this reality has deep implications for how the gender hierarchy continues to be organised in society. It would be interesting to investigate more the links between how young educated men speak about their identities and how they view women, especially within the transforming gender order. Indeed, it would be important to explore further whether men's exposure to academic gender courses lead necessarily to attitudinal changes with respect to gender relations in society.

Finally, it is recommended that future work on masculinity within the context continue to treat masculinity in the plural and be cautious of assigning men to fixed masculinity types. This recommendation is made based on the realisation that the men in this study, despite their small size, expressed their masculinities in so many different ways and contradictorily, such that none really fits into a single masculine identity.

5.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The overriding thrust of this study is that the 'masculinities' thesis is affirmed as hinged on social constructionist thinking in spite of the biological assumptions of some of the men. Thus, discovering masculinity remains on the pedestal of interrogation and will be there for a long time as gender relations in society continue to evolve. In light of this, research must continually move away from often taken-for-granted identities of men. Finally, an all-important question to ask at this point is whether men's participation in gender studies necessarily results in changed or changing attitudes towards the present gender order. Although KP1 reported that such attitudinal changes have been observed in a couple of men who do gender, the observations by both KP1 and KP2 that there is really no direct relationship between men engaging in such studies and changes in perceptions appears to be affirmed. Be that as it may, one may suggest that this does not make gender studies less useful or men's involvement in such courses any less beneficial. For, if one takes seriously Segal's (1992) point that change among men will necessarily be slow, due to entrenched attitudes, then, whatever little gains that have been made thus far are a step in the right direction.

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APPENDIX A

SOCIALLY DEVELOPING THE MAN: EXPLORING THE PERCEPTIONS OF YOUNG, MALE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN RELATION TO GENDER STUDIES

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Good day,

My name is Leo Igbanoi and I am a postgraduate student registered for the Masters degree in Social Development at the University of the Witwatersrand. As part of the requirements for attaining the degree, I am conducting a study into the perceptions of male university-attending students in relations to gender studies. My hope is that information from this research would lead to a fuller appreciation of how men perceive their masculinity, in order to enhance better understandings of their attitudes towards global gender transformation.

I therefore wish to invite you to be a participant in my study. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you will not be disadvantaged in any way should you decline to participate. Your agreement to partake in the study entails one individual interview. This shall be arranged at a time and place that is suitable for you. The interview will last approximately one hour. You may withdraw from the study at any time and you may also refuse to answer questions that you find discomforting.

With your permission, the interview will be tape-recorded. Access to the tapes will be limited strictly to my supervisor and me. The tapes and interview schedules will be kept in a locked cabinet for two years following any publications or for six years if no publications emanate from the study. Please be assured that your name and personal details will be kept confidential and no identifying information will be included in the final research report.

Should you have any queries concerning the study, please do not hesitate to contact me on 073207 0107, or my supervisor, Dr Edmarie Pretorius on 0117174476. We shall answer your questions as best we can. If you wish to receive a summary of the research results an abstract will be provided to you on request.

Your consideration to be part of the study would be greatly appreciated. Thank you!

Sincere regards

Leo Igbanoi

APPENDIX B

SOCIALLY DEVELOPING THE MAN: EXPLORING THE PERCEPTIONS OF YOUNG, MALE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN RELATION TO GENDER STUDIES

CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY

I hereby agree to be interviewed for the research project. The purpose and procedures of the study have been explained to me. I understand that:

- My participation is entirely voluntary
- I may refuse to answer any particular question (s) I am asked
- My identity will be kept confidential
- I may withdraw from the study at any time and without any negative consequences
- A copy of the summary of the research results will be made available to me on request.

I agree/do not agree to the interview being recorded.

Name of participant: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX C

SOCIALLY DEVELOPING THE MAN: EXPLORING THE PERCEPTIONS OF YOUNG, MALE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN RELATION TO GENDER STUDIES

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR STUDENT PARTICIPANTS WHO TAKE GENDER STUDIES

1. Can you please tell me a bit about yourself?
2. What are your views on gender studies?
3. Could you share with me why you are taking the gender/feminism course?
4. What are your thoughts about gender equality?
5. In which ways have taking the course impacted on your understanding of men?
6. Share with me your understanding of masculinity?
7. What are your thoughts when thinking about yourself as a man?
8. Could you share with me your thoughts on external factors that inform your perception of yourself as a man?
9. In which ways do you think gender equality is affecting men's understanding of their identity?
10. Share with me your thoughts about gender equality and development?

APPENDIX D

SOCIALLY DEVELOPING THE MAN: EXPLORING THE PERCEPTIONS OF YOUNG, MALE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN RELATION TO GENDER STUDIES

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR STUDENT PARTICIPANTS WHO DO NOT TAKE GENDER STUDIES

1. Can you please tell me a bit about yourself?
2. What are your views on gender studies?
3. Could you share with me if you would consider taking a course in gender/feminism?
4. What are your thoughts about gender equality?
5. Share with me your understanding of masculinity?
6. What are your thoughts when thinking about yourself as a man?
7. Could you share with me your thoughts on external factors that inform your perception of yourself as a man?
8. In which ways do you think is gender equality affecting men's understanding of their identity?
9. Share with me your thoughts about gender equality and development?

APPENDIX E

SOCIALLY DEVELOPING THE MAN: EXPLORING THE PERCEPTIONS OF YOUNG, MALE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN RELATION TO GENDER STUDIES

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR KEY INFORMANTS

1. Can you please tell me a bit about yourself?
2. Could you share with me what you think are the greatest impediments to men's participation in gender studies courses?
3. What are your thoughts about the way gender studies courses are structured?
4. What are your views about men's involvement in gender studies impacting on attitudinal changes towards gender equality?
5. From your experience share with me your views on the progress made in gender equality thus far?
6. What are your thoughts about masculinity studies?
7. Share with me the most important factors that inform men's understandings of themselves?
8. What are your thoughts about men experiencing an identity crisis in light of prevailing gender transformation?
9. Could you share with me your views on the usefulness of masculinity studies to the gender equality discourse?
10. Share with me your thoughts about gender equality and development?
11. In which ways is masculinity studies important for development?

Research Office

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)
R14/49 Igbanoi

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER H13/07/09**
PROJECT TITLE	Socially developing the man: Exploring the perceptions of young, male university students in relation to gender studies
INVESTIGATOR(S)	Mr L Igbanoi
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	Human & Community Development/Social work
DATE CONSIDERED	19/07/2013
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved Unconditionally
EXPIRY DATE	15/08/2015

DATE 16/08/2013 **CHAIRPERSON** (Professor T Milani)

cc: Supervisor : Dr E Pretorius

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Secretary at Room 10003, 10th Floor, Senate House, University.

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee. **I agree to completion of a yearly progress report.**

_____ _____/_____/_____

Signature **Date**

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES