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Constructions of masculinity and masculine identities among male adolescent rugby players.

By

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2012

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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

.....

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.....

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2012

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the negotiation of masculine identities among male adolescent rugby players within South Africa, using the brief of "What it means to be a young man in South Africa today". Of particular interest was the way in which young men engaged with concepts of hegemonic masculinity and how they positioned their own and others' gender identities in relation to this. A total of 14 adolescent boys participated in two focus groups with the topic of masculinity as a discussion point. The research was situated within a qualitative research paradigm which allowed for the exploration, description and interpretation of the data generated during the focus groups. Two focus groups were held, with 10 and 4 participants in each group respectively. The focus group discussions were recorded and transcribed verbatim. The data was analysed using a critical thematic analysis, in order to establish central themes within the data. Four prominent themes were indentified: the male body; aspirational role models; engagement and interaction with the feminine; and negotiation of alternative masculinities. Each theme was discussed and expanded on using appropriate theory. The study highlights how the young men actively engaged with the negotiation of their gendered identities, raising critical questions regarding the acceptance of many hegemonic or dominant forms of expression of masculinity. It was also noted that while there was engagement and debate surrounding the construction of gender identities, a rather conventional hegemonic form of masculinity was still largely regarded as the ideal. An interesting finding in the study was that while many of the young men prized a more hegemonic conception of masculinity, alternative forms were engaged and identified with, and at times were incorporated into a more fluid understanding and expression of gender identity.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The subject of gender is perhaps one the most visible and yet contested topics within the social sciences today. The past several decades have seen an increased interest in examining the concepts of gender, including femininity, masculinity and the relationship that exists between these constructs (Clatterbaugh, 1990; Morgan, 1990; Messener, 1997; Petersen, 1998; Connell, 2002). Attention has been given to the way in which gendered identities are produced, reproduced and maintained across generations. As Connell (1995) suggests, gender, and indeed masculinity, can be characterised as a structure of social practice/s. It is argued that gender follows a structured socialisation process, embedded within which are various models of gender development which ultimately shape how individuals develop gendered identities.

The adoption of a gendered identity carries with it various implications, some taken for granted and unseen, and other implications blatantly apparent. This is particularly relevant in relation to masculinity, in that the 'masculine' identity has historically been positioned as superior to the feminine in almost all aspects of society. However, the emergence of feminism/s has put "men and masculinities in a critical spot light" (Whitehead & Barret, 2001, p.3). This 'critical' examination of masculinity has led to questioning of the historical constructions of masculinity, aspects of which are still seen to be functioning within today's society. As such, men today may find themselves actively negotiating or renegotiating parts of their gendered identity, including dimensions which may previously have been considered biologically determined.

This research examines and explores negotiation of masculine identities amongst a group of adolescent boys with a view to exploring some of the implications of the critical attention masculinity has incurred both publically and academically. The negotiation of gendered identities is of particular interest within present day South Africa, given the country's socio-historical context which has been characterised by unequal gender and racial relations. This particular exploration around the construction of gendered identities is focused on a section of the population who many would consider to be likely to adopt hegemonic understandings

in their negotiation of a masculine identity, the group in question being high school boys who play rugby.

The period of adolescence is particularly important in the development of gendered identities as the young adolescent engages with various facets of gender development, including physiological and cognitive changes. The period of adolescence has also been associated with risk taking behaviours, many of which could be conceptualised as being associated with the construction of masculinity (Connell, 2002).

Sport has been found to be an important contributor in adolescent development, having both positive and negative influences on identity development (Eccles, 2004). Considering the high profile of sport within South Africa and the influence that certain sports may exert on the development of gendered identities, active participation in rugby playing was highlighted in the study, as this appears to be a particularly high profile sport within the country, both at a school level as well as within the broader social context.

Rugby appears to embody many characteristics associated with a hegemonic understanding of masculinity. As such rugby was identified as a potentially strong influence in identity development for those who actively engaged in playing during adolescences.

The participants for this study where thus selected on the basis that they were adolescents actively engaged in playing rugby at a competitive level. The research aim was to explore how these young men negotiated their gender, and particularly masculine, identities in a context within which it might be reasonable to assume they would develop a gender identity closely aligned to understandings of what might constitute hegemonic forms of masculinity.

1.2 BROAD AIMS AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

This study aimed to explore how boys, for whom rugby playing is central to their identity, experience and express their masculinity and how their gender identities appear to be constrained or promoted in making this identification.

The study was conceptualized after conducting readings focused on masculinity and following other research into young masculinities in South Africa such as that conducted by Blackbeard and Lindegger (2007), Langa (2010), Davies and Eagle (2010), Chadwick and Foster (2007) and Pattman, Frosh and Phoenix (1998). These studies highlighted the

subjectivity of masculinity in adolescent boys and the fact that masculinity is not homogeneous (Connell, 2002).

The study of masculinity is informed by and located in the broader field of gender studies. In current gender studies one focus appears to be the changing nature of what constitutes a masculine identity. Adolescent boys are at a stage in development where their gender identity is becoming more firmly established. Adolescent boys also tend to engage in a fair degree of experimentation and risk taking associated with the establishment and expression of a masculine identity. This study thus aimed to explore how a sub-group of South African boys perceive, experience and express masculinity. Underpinning the research was an interest in dominant or hegemonic forms of masculinity and how the boys position themselves in respect of this.

This study focuses on masculinity in its hegemonic form; specifically if/how hegemonic ideals of masculinity are experienced and perpetuated through playing rugby and being involved in a rugby team.

Rugby as a sport in South African is commonly seen as a purist masculine sport. By researching the role of rugby in adolescent identity formation it was hoped to gain insight into whether patterns of hegemonic masculinity are being reproduced in a society which appears to be actively seeking alternative constructions of masculinity.

In order to pursue the research aims two focus groups were conducted with boys involved in playing rugby at two campuses of a private high school in Johannesburg. One of the groups consisted of boys engaged in conventional contact rugby and the other consisted of participants who play in ‘touch’ or non-contact rugby teams. The focus group discussions were recorded and transcribed and then subject to a thematic analysis.

1.3 STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH REPORT

This introductory chapter is followed by four additional chapters. The subsequent chapters are briefly described as follows:

A review of relevant literature, including previous research findings relevant to this research is discussed and expanded in chapter two.

The third chapter of this report provides an explanation of the research methodology employed within this study.

Chapter four address the findings, analysis and discussion of the research data generated, including the discussion of central themes identified within the data. The body of this discussion seeks to examine the ways in which hegemonic understandings of masculinity are engaged with in relation to gender identity development. The themes discussed have used relevant theory in the contextualisation of the discussion of hegemonic masculinity and its implication in the construction of gendered identities, including challenges to hegemonic or dominant expressions of masculinity.

The concluding chapter offers a reflective overview and critical evaluation of the findings, including some of the possible implications these findings. Possible limitations of the study are discussed as well as possible directions for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concepts of masculinity and femininity "are among the most confused that occur in science" (Freud, 1905, p.219). Indeed the study of masculinity and femininity has formed the focus of a large body of research within the social sciences. Prolific theorists in the field of gender research have dedicated decades towards developing an understanding of the importance of gendered identities.

Whilst the field of gender research is a product of constant change, a discussion on masculinity will always infer that gender is characterised by the interplay of male-female relationships, relationships that have never historically been equal. A study of men and their masculine identities is not possible without positioning masculinity within its relevant socio-historical context nor without the acknowledgement of the role the feminist movement played in bringing a critical interrogation of masculinity to the foreground of gender research. Masculinity cannot be discussed or understood fully without first acknowledging the role feminism has played in the development of masculinity studies. Feminist theory largely provides the background and context, contributing to the understanding and assumptions with which we currently view the field of masculinity and gender studies; “these assumptions would include recognition of the importance of gender divisions as a major way of structuring social relationships and recognition of the imbalances of power in the relationships between men and woman” (Morgan, 1992, p.6). Prior to feminism, gender had been understood as largely biologically determined and in a sense 'apolitical', however, with the advent of feminism, gender and gender relations became problematized and interrogated. Although feminist studies initially focused primarily on women's experiences, over the last two decades there has been an increasing interest in men and masculinity.

Historically men in general have been positioned in a place of power, dominance and privilege at the expense of women, (and at times sub-groups of men). The 20th Century saw with it not only an economic and industrial shift but also changes in the socio-economic structuring of society. These changes led to the birth of the women's liberation movement and in essence the challenging of traditional concepts of masculinity and power (Buchbinder, 1994).

This change, which occurred in less than a century, actively challenged the accepted position of hegemonic forms of masculinity and challenged the role of men within society. The contestation of previously accepted gender roles has led to various changes or challenges in individual identities. This renegotiation of gendered identities has provided the basis for a range of research studies as researchers have sought to examine how men engage with and negotiate or renegotiate aspects of their gender identities.

2.1 POSITIONING MASCULINITY

The early study of gender, and indeed of masculinity, would appear to have been based on the assumption that these are quantifiable and solid constructs. Whilst the past theorisation of masculinity in the social sciences may have presented masculinity as a concrete and unyielding set of attributes, radical changes in society over the last few decades have seen the infallibility of masculinity openly questioned and, it has been argued, has positioned masculinity in a state of crisis. Edley and Wetherell argue that masculinity is not a biologically inherent quality; rather it is an act or set of acts; "it exists as a set of lines and stage directions which all males have to learn in order to perform" (1995, p.71). If we were to accept a solidified or fixed understanding of masculinity and gender we would, as researchers, fail to understand the latent ambivalence and ambiguity that constitute contemporary gendered subjectivities (Mac An Ghaill & Haywood, 2007; Potts, 2001). It is the study of the malleability and contextual location of masculinity, (and the implications of this for thinking about femininity), that allows for a deeper understanding of the constructed nature of masculine identities.

The concept of masculinity can be seen as ambiguous - open to different interpretations and considerable debate. However as Kahn argues masculinity could be defined as the "complex cognitive, behavioural, emotional, expressive, psychosocial and socio-cultural experience of identifying with being male" (2009, p.2). Thus masculinity is generally associated with a male-sexed, gender identity although is to a large extent a product of socio-cultural and psychosocial factors.

Connell (2000), one of the most prominent researchers in the field of masculinity studies, argued that a crisis in masculinity can perhaps be attributed to the "persistent belief that solutions to the problems of men can be found by looking backwards" (p.6). Connell

(2000) suggests that by pursuing a more essentialized understanding of masculinity society is in essence failing to take into account the changes in gendered identities which are taking place as a result of numerous socioeconomic and cultural and political developments, and seeks to continue to promote outdated gender roles which place men in direct conflict with society's current value system. Segal (1994) argues "that in an urban, industrial society the traditional pursuit of manhood via displays of physical prowess and courage seem increasingly obsolete. Mind rather than muscle, manipulation rather than endurance are the more likely attributes of men in power today" (p.130). However the abandonment of 'traditional' concepts of masculinity is not easily achieved since socialised gender roles have remained entrenched in many ways over the past few decades. In the seventies "both boys and girls were seen as smoothly learning the appropriate sex role. They internalised gender stereotypes from observing the different ways parents and nursery teachers treat girls and boys, through toys, the school curriculum, television, books, comics and countless other sources" (Segal, 1994, p.67). As such, effecting change in the way societies view gendered roles has been slow and difficult, particularly for those who were, or still are, positioned in a place of dominance or power, historically the position men have typically found themselves occupying.

Cleaver (2002) states "Women can only become empowered by men giving up power" (p.1). Cleaver's notion of a power shift is predicated on the idea that aspects of masculinity and its expression (especially in relation to dealings with women) need to be challenged and contested. Segal (1994) asserts that masculinity finds expression in various forms of power that men possess: "the power to assert control over women, over other men, over their own bodies, over machines and technology" (p.123). As suggested previously, mass social changes, including the advent of the feminist and the LGB (Lesbian Gay Bisexual) movements, have been implicated in challenging the 'traditional' "readings of gender by denaturalising gender and undermining claims that gender identities are biological states located in the private sphere of personal identity" (Ashe, 2007, p.31-32). Segal (1994) further hypothesises that the emergence of these movements and the subsequent challenging of normative gender identities has resulted in masculinity becoming "more mysterious, more perplexing and worrying. For some at least 'masculinity' has replaced 'femininity', as the problem of our time, a threat to civilisation itself" (p.60). Challenges to commonly accepted constructions of masculinity not only have implications for

individual gender identity, but also for group identities as gendered identities exist in relation to one another.

The negotiation, or in some cases forced interrogation, of a masculine identity, highlights the need for continued research into masculinity and masculine identities as "more men have begun to question whether the masculine role we learned so unconsciously is either necessary or desirable" (Pleck & Sawyer, 1974, p.1). As Connell (2000) would argue, the ability to understand the socialisation process and how individuals engage with and negotiate their gendered identities has implications for future gender identity and for the opportunities individuals have to engage with different aspects of gender in the construction of their own gendered indentify.

2.2 NOTIONS OF MASCULINITY

Perhaps one of the key developments in masculinity research has been the identification of multiple 'masculinities'. Connell (2000) argues that the term masculinities is more appropriate when referring to masculine identities as "different cultures, and different periods of history, construct gender differently" (p.10). Using Connell's conception of multiple masculinities is useful in the South African context as South Africa is a country in which many different cultures co-exist, with observable interplay between groups, for example between black and white men and between men of different ethnic identities. Furthermore given the country's socio-historical past, one could draw the inference that multiple cultural and ideologically informed conceptualisations of masculinity co-exist within the broader social context.

Whilst multiple masculinities may exist within any society, the presence of hegemonic or dominant forms of masculinity is also almost universal. The presence of a hegemonic or dominant masculinity infers that there are other masculinities which are constructed as subordinate to the hegemonic form. Often the dominant masculinity is prized, due to its relation to power, even when the dominant form of masculinity does not rest comfortably with many individuals (Connell, 2000).

Thomson (2002) argues that whilst dominant forms of masculinity continue to be promoted and validated, in some case the message can be "mixed as traditional stereotypes persist alongside changing gender relations, which can lead to confusion and contradictory messages" (p.170). The presence of mixed messages may indicate the changing nature of

gender identities and the inclusion and exclusion of certain gender characteristics as a means to consolidate gender identity ideals.

2.3 HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY

Althusser argued that "the ultimate stake of philosophical struggle is the struggle for hegemony" (1971, p.21). Althusser's argument gives us the understanding that in order for a philosophical position to survive it needs to become hegemonic or dominant in nature, allowing the position to be sustained by society itself. One can see how Althusser's understanding of hegemony gives us insight and understanding into the current gender structures of today's society, which until relatively recently were largely unchallenged.

"Hegemonic masculinity is a theory informed by radical feminism, which asserts that people will act in ways that reinforce male privilege by supporting conformity to an idealized version of masculinity even when it may not be in their best interest, in order to maintain the system of patriarchy" (Kahn, 2009, p.39).

Connell has questioned the construction of our gendered identities and has highlighted how continually reproduced gender patterns sustain hegemony across generations. "Subordinate and marginalized masculinities are seen as having no impact on the construction of hegemonic masculinity" (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p.844). The understanding that alternative forms of masculinity have not impacted on the construction of hegemonic masculinity is in line with Althusser's understandings of hegemony, as the alternative constructions lacked the political/ societal power to effectively challenge the accepted hegemony. Althusser's and Connell's theories, however, illustrate that hegemony is a constructed and not a naturally occurring phenomenon, although it may be based in structural features of a society. Thus despite the commentary on the limited power of subordinated forms hegemonic ideologies will always be susceptible to challenge.

Tolson provides a useful reflection on the impact of hegemonic notions of masculinity on the social context and individual men within it:

> Men are condemned to a quest for personal rewards which they cannot hope to realise. Bound to a hierarchal ladder of achievement, they are doomed to follow a mirage of success, an ever-retreating image of having 'made it'. (Tolson, 1977, p.13)

Any hegemonic ideology, including hegemonic masculinity in its various guises, seeks to preserve and maintain dominance. As such a man's failure to achieve the desired hegemonic attributes within any particular society is not seen as a fault or failure of the system and instead it is located within the man himself and his failure. In this way the hegemony is upheld. Hegemonic masculinity can be considered a polarized version of masculinity by means of which male dominance is supported and perpetuated within a particular society. Further understanding of hegemony requires reference to a historical situation, a set of circumstances in which power is won and held. The construction of hegemony is not primarily a matter of "pushing and pulling between ready-formed groupings, but a matter of formation of those groupings" (Whitehead, 2002, p.10). An understanding of hegemonic masculinity would then appear to be context dependent and while we may discuss hegemonic masculinity in the broad sense, it is important to note that notions of hegemonic masculinity may differ depending on the specific context. What is dominant, elevated and idealised in one context might not be quite the same as what is valourised in another context. However, what is common across societies is that some forms of expression of gender and masculinity will be viewed as superior to others.

Whilst there are different constructions and interpretations of masculinities, not all are positioned on an equally acceptable social plane. “There are relations of hierarchy, for some masculinities are dominant while others are subordinated or marginalized. In most of these situations there is some form of hegemonic masculinity that is most honoured or desired” (Connell, 2002, p.10). When we consider the notion of hegemonic masculinity in ‘western’ cultures, Connell argued that "dominant masculinity emphasizes competition, wealth, aggressiveness and heterosexuality” (cited in Kahn, 2009, p.32). Messner adds to this understanding arguing that whilst a hegemonic masculinity may often be the most desired, it is not necessarily the most comfortable form of masculinity to identify with. “Indeed many men live in a state of tension with or distance from, the hegemonic masculinity of their culture or community. Men such as sporting heroes are taken as exemplars of hegemonic masculinity and are required to live up to it strenuously, at what may be a severe cost” (Messner cited in Connell, 2002, p.11). The constructed nature of hegemonic masculinity is important to be cognisant of when we consider the context specific expressions of masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity is “criticized for being framed within a heteronormative conception of gender that essentializes male-female difference and ignores difference and exclusion within the gender categories” (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p.836).

The exploration of how dominant masculinities or masculine 'virtues' are reproduced and present within young men is imperative if we are to understand how they negotiate their gendered identity. As such, three key characteristics associated with a hegemonic understanding of masculinity within the literature are further elaborated. The discussion is clearly not exhaustive since there are other characteristics associated with hegemonic masculinity in the 'Western' world, such as heterosexuality, competitiveness and being of Eurocentric origin, however, the three aspects discussed appeared most relevant in the context of this study.

2.3.1 Achievement of Success and Status

Success in a range of domains appears to be an important indicator of an achieved masculine identity. Wetherell and Edley (1999) argue that the pursuit of success means that "no living man is ever man enough" (p.337), since success is often temporary and can always be bettered or surpassed. It is through the regulatory force of a hegemonic understanding of masculinity that the ideal of this ultimate success is sustained and reinforced from generation to generation as men engage with and identify with hegemonic understandings of masculinity in order to attain 'success'.

The idealisation of 'success' was explored by Seidler (1989) who proposed that a man's "identity often involves an externalised relation to self, in which men learn to measure themselves against individual success and achievement" (p.151). Success tends to be associated with high status in one's career (or other specific fields of endeavour, such as sport) and also with the capacity to earn well. This is perhaps best illustrated by the commonly acknowledged status attached to many occupational positions, such as being a Managing Director or Chief Executive Officer of a company, in which the very position or label comes to symbolise authority and prestige, virtues prized in hegemonic masculinity (Ricciardell, Clow & White, 2010).

Success, in terms of a masculine identity, is characterised in a number of different contexts or appearances. At times 'success' is linked to competition or triumph over other parties, or even over qualities or attributes, which may be considered to challenge a hegemonic conception of a successful identity. Success may be reflected in terms of appearance, management of affect,

sexuality, behaviour, occupation and domination, amongst other life aspects (Ricciardell, Clow & White, 2010; Pringle, 2005).

2.3.2 The Strong Male Body

The body is a "natural machine" which produces gender differences (Connell, 1995, p.45). While a gendered identity is not directly biologically determined, one could argue that by virtue of one's genetic makeup as a male or female (as is generally the case) the gender socialisation process may appear as if it in some way mirrors or is a product of one's biological sex. The importance of the male body in understanding notions of masculine identity cannot be under-estimated. Connell (1995) argued that "true masculinity is almost always thought to proceed from men's bodies - to be inherent in a male body or to express something about the male body. Either the body drives and directs action or the body sets limits to action" (p.45).

If we are to accept Connell's understanding of how the male body and physicality impact on the development of a gendered identity we are provided with interesting insight into how the male body may have functioned to preserve hegemonic forms of masculinity and also why it may have also contributed, at least in part, to the 'crisis' in masculinity. Jeffords (1993) proposed that remasculinisation may have occurred due to the increase in status of women. He suggests that it is possible that as the women's liberation movements began to encroach on territory that was traditionally male, men may have 'regressed' to more archaic expressions of masculinity in order to preserve their masculine identity, including to focusing on the promotion of body size and strength. This hypothesis is perhaps supported by the observation that the movement away from labour intensive jobs in post-industrialised societies has meant that men have turned to other activities, such as gym, in order to obtain the physically desired male body (Pope, Phillips, & Olivardia, 2000; Wienke, 1998).

Physical appearance is highlighted as a means to validate a masculine identity, with muscularity being one of the ultimate indicators of masculinity (Pronger, 2002). The body of a top athlete embodies the ideal of physical strength, with strength still being considered an integral and necessary component in order to compete and to express masculinity (Ricciardell, Clow & White, 2010). The athletic male body is still intrinsically linked to performance and success on a professional level, a level at which one can only reach full

potential by developing one's physical body. This may perhaps account for the privileged position many athletes may find themselves in within society.

The male body has also been used as a marketing tool which in turn would appear to support its importance in the positioning of an individual as masculine. "Men's bodies are being defined as masculine in the imagery of advertising, film and news reports", as evidenced, for example, in the high profile attached to being a top sportsperson (Connell, 1995, p.50). The repeated practices that "both teach and constitute sport" (Connell, 1995, p.50) coupled with the media's representation of masculinity, and femininity, produce gendered bodies. If a person's gendered identity does not conform to the socially accepted gendered body identity the individual may find their identity in conflict with society. This is evidenced in the kind of tensions transvestites, transsexuals, and, often, homosexuals, experience in relation to their acceptance in society (Connell, 2000).

2.3.3 Restricted Range and Expression of Affect

Colloquial expressions such as "men don't cry" have existed in societies for decades and while on many occasions the expression may be taken at face value, the implications of such socialisation into suppression of affect become apparent when male emotionality is examined. A study conducted by Katz, Buchanan and McCoy (1999) on young men's life outlooks found that very few participants would talk to someone about how they were feeling, even when very upset, as they had internalised the belief that 'real men' do not show others their feelings.

“Gender characteristics are learnt at a very young age and as we grow up we learn in our everyday interactions what is appropriate for a boy or a girl: “‘boys don’t cry’ or ‘don’t be a sissy’ are common criticism made of little boys” (Thomson, 2002, p.168). These criticisms become ingrained in the young child's psyche during adolescence when gender role identification comes to the foreground. This is particularly important in the formation of a masculine identity as expressions of fear or vulnerability break the link between an individual’s overarching personal identity and a masculine identity (Pringle, 2005). Research conducted by Martino (1999), examining the politics of adolescent masculinity within school settings, highlights Pringle's hypothesis. The study found that participants were apprehensive

about expressing their feelings out of fear that they risk having both their masculinity and sexuality questioned (Martino, 1999).

Seidler (1989), exploring the implications of restricted emotional display in men, proposed that many men are often made "invisible to themselves, with a weakened sense of individual identity produced by the disavowal of emotions and desire" (p.107). In the repression of affect some aspect of self awareness is compromised or lost. Emotionality has often been considered as being in the domain of the feminine, and as such, has often been positioned in opposition to a hegemonic understanding of masculinity. This perhaps links to Pollack's (1998) argument that boys actively hide their feelings in order to 'survive', particularly in school. By displaying one's emotions certain boys perhaps position themselves as subordinate to other boys who do not display their emotions.

In not expressing emotion outwardly the male psyche is considered strong in relation to the female psyche which is characterised by emotional expression. As such the male psyche and the body in which it is given expression represent not only a physically 'superior' ideal in terms of a hegemonic masculine identity but also an emotional ideal (Connell, 1995). When there is experience or expression of emotion amongst adolescent boys and men this is often characterised in a masculine manner and restricted to 'safe' emotions, normally shared with other men in quite specific circumstances or settings which also seek to exclude women from witnessing this kind of emotional display (Frosh, Phoenix, & Pattman, 2002).

The expression of anger and aggression could therefore be considered an exception in terms of emotional display and these emotions are perhaps even associated with masculinity (Levant & Kopecky, 1995). Being angry or aggressive is in fact often seen as an unfeminine act for girls and women. However, the fact that aggression is tolerated in emotional displays by men whereas other affect expression is censored may mean that even affect like anxiety is expressed as anger.

Having discussed some of the key dimensions associated with stereotypic and dominant expressions of masculinity, aspects of masculine identity that might be considered hegemonic in many contexts, the discussion now moves to some elaboration of the literature looking at some of the transformations that are taking place in understandings of gender and masculinity.

2.4 TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF MASCULINITY

Contemporary western society has seen the erosion of patriarchy, as previous masculine virtues are now often seen as vices – part of the 'crisis of masculinity' (McDowell, 2000). There is a "broad contemporary consensus which urges men to abandon what is imagined to be traditional masculinity in order to get in touch with their feelings and develop emotional articulacy" (Mac lnnes, 1998, p.8). There are various implications for men who find themselves renegotiating their masculinity in this new climate. This renegotiation of gendered identities supports the need for continued research in the field of masculinity and gender studies, as this impetus to explore new and changing gender roles has implications for the broader social context. "The process that infers privilege on one group and not another group is often invisible to those upon whom the privilege is conferred" (Kimmel, 2002, p.xi). Transformation of gender identity ideals may highlight these kinds of dynamics, bringing into question the attributes previously associated with power and admiration. As such renegotiations of a masculine identity may at times be experienced as forced or attacking, possibly leading to direct resistance to forms of renegotiation.

Modern perspectives on masculinity suggest that there is an erosion of classically defined masculine roles. However, at the same time hegemonic masculinities have become entrenched in our unconscious and are not easily challenged (Wetherell & Edley, 1999). While some forms or expressions of masculinity may move towards a more gender neutral or balanced presentation, hegemonic masculinity generally remains at the extreme end of a masculine identity. Thus, while there is some evidence of changes to conventional or traditional forms of masculinity, for example as illustrated in the notion of metro-sexuality or the references to 'modern man' (Lertwannawit, Rajabhat & Gulid, 2010; Pompper, 2010), there is also evidence that more hegemonic or archetypal expressions of masculinity remain entrenched (Bird, 1996). There thus appears to be some contradiction in the current construction of masculinity, with some evidence of loosening of the boundaries of what constitutes masculinity and other evidence suggesting that much of what had traditionally characterized masculinity remains intact. Challenges to the expression of masculinity, as captured in notions of a 'crisis in masculinity', appear to have brought about some changes but also to have provoked the re-assertion of hegemonic forms of masculinity.

The often uneasy relationship between individual identity and a hegemonic masculine identity has led to "some male peer group cultures generating concepts of masculinity and

masculine definitions about what it means to succeed and to fail, these contribute to patterns of male disaffection and under-achievement" (Leach, 2003, p.389). It is apparent that groups and individuals are not passive recipients of stereotypes or discourses but are actively involved in the construction of, and engagement with different versions. The internalization of a masculine group identity may conflict with a person's individual identity. The uneasy partnering of contested identities may cause adolescents to take part in particular risk taking and experimental behaviours as they seek to find some balance and cohesion in their identity formation and to establish an acceptable identity in the eyes of their peers and others.

Nation building in post-apartheid South Africa has seen a shift from the previously held dominant ideologies. The South African constitution seeks to address both the race and gender inequalities of the old apartheid system. "The Constitution's implicit understanding of sexuality is premised on a figure of manhood, which is as liberal as the Constitution itself. However, the transitions in gender/power relations embodied in the Constitution have exacerbated a crisis of masculinity" (Walker, 2005, p.225). It would appear that by addressing gendered inequalities of the past, the constitution has positioned itself against dominant ideologies of masculinity, thus supporting the notion that the status previously held by hegemonic masculinity is in a state of flux and open for critique in contemporary South Africa.

The construction of South African masculinity was previously shaped a by settler mentality (Morrell, 1998). While this shaped the identity of white males in particular, given the race and class hierarchy in the country under Apartheid, this form of masculinity enjoyed hegemonic status and influenced the status of 'non-settlers' (predominately black groups of men). It is recognized that other forms of masculinity were also in existence, but for the purpose of this research, it is useful to highlight the kind of 'colonial' masculinity that brought rugby into the country. Colonial understandings of masculinity were shaped through a set of "institutions including the family, sports and leisure clubs, the military and particularly the schools" (Morrell, 1998, p.618). Whilst post-1994 South African is in many ways a radically different country to that of early colonial times, it is still important to acknowledge the latent effects of colonial ideologies which have been instilled into the subconscious of today's society. Rugby in particular appears to carry strong associations to a particular kind of gender or masculine identity, with strong parallels to colonial ideologies about gender. It would appear also that many schools continue to play an important role in socialization and identity formation, particularly for adolescents. In many secondary level boys' schools rugby playing

enjoys elevated or privileged status and appears to influence the 'culture' of the school and to influence the manner in which masculine identity is embodied or recognised.

2.5 ADOLESCENT IDENTITY

During adolescence identity formation is brought to the foreground, including negotiations of masculine and feminine identities, which are tested and played with as the adolescent seeks to find a comfortable fit. The development of a constant stable identity involves the adolescent engaging with the world in trying to establish a connection to external markers of identity, such as education and careers, as well as more introspective processes drawing upon personal history and experience; both of these sets of influences contributing to how they relate to others and develop a concrete sense of self (Sandhu, Singh Tung & Kundra, 2012).

> "Changes in the economy, in social structures and in household composition are resulting in a crisis of masculinity in many parts of the world. Examples include; the low attainment in boys' education; economic changes resulting in the loss of a man's assured role as breadwinner and provider to his family; women's increased incorporation into the labour force, the increase in proportions of female-headed house-holds and the absence of the male role model for boys in families." (Cleaver, 2002, p.3)

Cleaver's hypothesis regarding changing socio-economic and political structures appears to have relevance not only for developed gender identities, but also for developing gender identities. As adolescents engage with various facets of identity formation they turn to active models of gender identities in the world for guidance. Changes or conflicts within these models will undoubtedly have an effect on the emerging gender identity of the adolescent. When the terrain is shifting there is perhaps both a greater sense of opportunity but also more anxiety since pathways and outcomes are less clear.

An understanding of social learning theory appears important in the conceptualisation of adolescent identity formation as the theory emphasises the importance of parents, teachers, peers, siblings, and the mass media in providing models for the young adolescent as to how to behave and shape their gendered behaviour. This is achieved in large part through the punishment of atypical-gender activities and the rewarding of typical-gender activities (Galambos, 2004). The presence of male 'role models', who guide adolescents towards

behaviour that is likely to be accepted and reinforced as gender appropriate, would then appear an important dimension in terms of developing a specific masculine identity. While role models are often considered to be those that exist in the public domain, it is also important to think about familial role models, such as parents, who may be very significant in shaping gender identities.

Traditional constructions of fathering have centred around two main concepts, namely the father as ruler and the father as educator (May & Strikwerda, 1996). The role of the father has typically been seen as that of protector, provider and disciplinarian, only engaging with the male child in order to introduce various male activities to him (May & Strikwerda, 1996). Whilst traditional fathering roles may have been renegotiated to some degree, access to an 'older' male figure as a representation of a desired masculine identity still appears important within the field of masculine identity formation. "The adolescent looks most fervently for men and ideas to have faith in, which also means men and ideas in whose service it would seem worthwhile to prove one's self trustworthy" (Erikson, 1968, p.129). Thus older male figures (as well as peers) may be instrumental in the formation of identity.

The role of the mass media has also been implicated as important in adolescent identity development. Research conducted on the content of television programming found that unrealistic and stereotyped representations of male and female bodies were presented as well as stereotyped gender roles and occupational identities. (Galambos, 2004). It is likely that the mass media may also serve to promote particular role models and that these models may perhaps at times come into conflict with the adolescent's family's notions of identity development. This also represents a potential area of tension for adolescents in their gender identity consolidation.

In addition, to fathers and older males role models being influential in masculine identity development, Pattman, Frosh and Phoenix (1998) propose that male adolescent identities are often formed through a process of differentiation from the maternal attachment figure. The development of a masculine identity can thus serve as a defence against developing a feminized gender identity and allow the adolescent to develop an identity which is in some respects separate from that associated with their family, and in the case of boys, separate from that associated with the mother in particular. As adolescents begin to spend less time in their family environment and more social time among their peers, they are likely to be increasingly influenced by their peers. This peer interaction leads to exposure to a variety of

new contexts and skills, which makes the period of adolescent development particularly interesting as we are given “insight into the influences which affect moral development” (Hart & Carlo, 2005, p.225) amongst other aspects.

Adolescents who fail to develop a congruent external identity may overcompensate to the point of apparent loss of self-identity. They may attempt to socialize with the “heroes of cliques and crowds, whilst becoming clannish, intolerant and cruel towards those who do not fit within the group’s identity construction” (Erikson, 1980, p.97). Thus for adolescents whose identity is not well established or who fear potential marginalization there may be an attempt to shore up identity by aligning with dominant or popular boys and denigrating other less hegemonically identified boys. This may contribute to some polarization in adolescent identification. However, boys with a more stable or well established sense of occupying a valued identity (possibly such as first and second team rugby players), may engage with non-hegemonic boys in less defensive ways. What is apparent is that peer relations and comparison and positioning of oneself relative to others are likely to be important in the experience of establishing and living out a masculine or male identity during adolescence.

During this critical and vulnerable stage of identity formation, adolescent risk and self-destructive behaviour patterns may become prominent. Adolescent boys may even engage “in dangerous and highly risky undertakings in which death is more than a likely possibility. Such desperate actions could bring glory and recognition if successful, but self-destruction if they fail" (Miller, 1991, p.268). While such dangerous actions may lie at the extreme pole of masculinity, the performance or enactment of masculinity often entails bravado and some potential risk to self or others, for example, through experimentation with substances or engaging in physical fights.

Conflict of some form thus appears to be an integral part of adolescent development as the adolescent internalizes the “conflicts related to negotiating, between the ego identity versus role confusion” (Stevens, 2002, p.534). It is while the adolescent attempts to consolidate these conflicts that peer and family relationships are vital as they influence the final resolution of these conflicts. These conflicts directly influence the identity formation period in adolescent development and the likely outcomes of gender formations.

The changing influences on adolescent development have created an interesting context in which to study adolescent identity formations. Research conducted by Blackbeard and Lindegger (2007), and Langa (2012) in the South African context highlights the importance

of researching adolescent identity constructions as well as the risk factors associated with this stage of development. The changing context, in which each generation of adolescents finds themselves, supports the importance of research in the field as we can no longer assume that findings of previous studies on adolescent identity still hold and social influences will necessarily produce transformations in the current generation. It is also important to note that the adolescent boys of today will be adult men of the future, in turn influencing future generations.

2.6 ADOLESCENT MASCULINITY, SCHOOLING AND SPORT

In order for dominant masculinity to be recreated across generations it needs to be reproduced through social institutions; "interpretations and definitions of being masculine have been embedded in and sustained by social institutions such as the state, education, corporations and the family" (Whitehead, 2002, p.88).

Synott and Symes (1995) argued that many contemporary schools (in Britain) still retain the residue of Victorian ideals such as the "cult of athleticism which prevailed in such schools and which provided an honourable outlet for the energies of the anti-intellectuals" (p.144). Competitiveness, sport and physical success appear to produce a 'successful' masculine subject, now commodified as the idealised school subject.

Bramham (2003) argued that the prioritization of physical education in schooling, and boys' schooling in particular, perpetuates the notion that "boys must be and behave like boys, boys must be competitive, tough, physically aggressive, misogynist, heterosexual, brave and enthusiastic team players" (p.60). These prescribed 'ideals' may, however, work against other alternative forms of identity with which adolescents may be experimenting during the identity formation process. While the emphasis on sporting prowess may vary across different schools, it appears that sport is often fore-grounded in boys-only schools and in private schools in South Africa in particular (Morrell, 1998)."Many schools actively seek competitive sporting success as a source of prestige" (Connell, 2002, p.138). By acknowledging the prestige created from sporting success many adolescents may be drawn to a particular sport due to the characteristic secondary gains associated with playing the sport. This action seeking behaviour is in line with our understanding of adolescent development, as the individual looks towards activities related to identity validation.

Various studies have found that sport plays an important role in identity development, particularly in the development of masculine identities (Dunning, 1986; Brod, 1987; Hargreaves, 1987; Connell, 1990; Parker; 1996). Schacht proposed that values traditionally associated with many sports are nearly synonymous with those identified in masculine identities; "competitiveness, strength, aggressiveness, instrumentality, and often violence, are values central to sports and are also qualities strongly associated with a contemporary understanding of masculinity" (Schacht, 1996).

Athletes who demonstrate masculine characteristics, including those defined by aggression and stamina, are often seen as being of a socially elevated status by their community and peers. (Maxwell & Visek, 2009) By 'playing the game' these athletes inadvertently, and perhaps subconsciously, subscribe themselves to a form of dominant masculinity. Whitson (cited in Connell, 2002) argued that "the institution of competitive sport seems peculiarly important for contemporary western masculinities" (p.11). Sport would appear to be an appropriate platform in which displays of 'masculine aggression' are enacted. The playing field thus appears to offer a social context within which aspects of masculine behaviour, not acceptable more generally in social contexts, are expressed and in some way expected.

Gender-segregated contact sports are often used as a representation of dominant orthodox forms of masculinity. Anderson and McGuire (2010) argue that male involvement in these kinds of sports is at some level almost compulsory, through the pressure of male peer culture. The exclusion of women from the team in a sense reinforces the idea that the sport is gender specific, with female teams having less prestige and recognition when playing the same sport. This is certainly the case with rugby. The creation of gender boundaries in sport appears to validate a male only arena into which women cannot enter equally, (recognising at the same time that there are also team sports that are female dominated like netball and synchronised swimming).

Exemplary masculinities of sports professionals are not a product of passive disciplining, but as Messener (1992) notes, "result from sustained, active engagement with the demands of the institutional setting" (cited in Connell, 2002, p.12). This implies that boys and men actively choose the level of involvement and dedication with which they wish to pursue a sport, particularly competitive sports. This dedication and drive is likely to mean that this aspect of their identity becomes prominent in their lives as this may well require spending extended time engaged in this activity, for example, in sports practice as well as game playing.

Studies have found that participation in sports appears to be a protective factor against school dropout, and is linked to higher rates of university attendance and higher occupational attainment in ones twenties (Eccles, 2004). Whilst sport has been implicated as a protective factor in this instance, social characterisation of sport is influenced by those actively engaged in the sport. Eccles (2004) proposed that "there is a strong link between activity participation and peer group membership" (p.138). One must acknowledge the 'group identity' present in such peer groups and how this group identity may often conform to more traditional understandings of masculinity. Thus boys who embody common sport-based hegemonic masculinities are perhaps more privileged, whilst those boys engaged in alternative masculinities may be subordinated to popular sporting masculinities (Pringle, 2008).

An important point to note when discussing sport, particularly in the South African context, is the way in which sport was used to maintain and perpetuate the Apartheid system (Morrell, 1998). Competitive sport was constructed as an environment in which white upper- and middle-class males were able to sharpen their competitive skills without being challenged by alternative masculinities, which in the South African context would have been embodied in black masculinity. As such, sport became an important institution in which the superiority of hegemonic masculinity was supported and reproduced, while women and other subordinated men were marginalised by their non-participatory status (Connell, 1987).

Having discussed the influence of sport in the negotiation of masculine identities, a further discussion examining the role of rugby appears useful in light of the focus of this study. Rugby as a sport also appears to be positioned in a privileged space within South Africa and appears to still occupy a hegemonic positioning within South African society.

2.7 RUGBY

> Rugby players situationally do masculinity by reproducing rigid hierarchical images of what a 'real man' is in terms of who is strongest, who can withstand the most pain, and who relationally distances himself from all aspects of femininity through forms of misogynistic denigration. . . . Rugby, like other sporting events, is literally a practice field where the actors learn how to use force to ensure a dominant position relative to women, feminine men, and the planet itself. (Schacht, 1996, p. 562)

Whilst Schacht refers to rugby and masculinity within the United States context, the quotation gives us possible insight into how the relationship between masculinity and

rugby may have similar connotations in the South African context. If we view the game of rugby as a 'practice field' for hegemonic masculinity, we might also include in our understanding Light and Kirk's (2002) argument that "rugby has long operated as both a practice of distinction and as a means of inculcating a particular class specific form of masculinity connected to Victorian/Edwardian ideals of 'manliness'" (p.166). Whilst the Euro-centric ideals of 'manliness' may differ in the South African context, a hybridized South African form of 'manliness' may exist in connection to rugby, when we consider the impact colonisation had on South Africa and the likelihood that Victorian/Edwardian ideals would have been highly valued and integrated into settler culture, as suggested previously. However, in addition to this and to its association with many private, English-speaking schools, rugby has also been valorised within Afrikaans schools and communities and in many model C schools. Despite the fact that rugby continues to be slow to transform in terms of racial demographics it still appears to enjoy a hegemonic position in terms of sport and masculinity in South Africa.

Questions of transformation in South African rugby, as discussed in the South African media, highlight the debate around the 'whiteness' of rugby as another previous axis of racialised and gendered power. The South African Rugby Union (SARU) emphasises the need for rugby to become an increasingly racially integrated sport; representative of the South African population. SARU also notes that "bringing together a society comprising a blend of widespread and dissimilar groups of South Africans with different value sets and widely different cultures and backgrounds, is a colossal challenge" (Sport and Recreation South Africa, 2012, p.7). When considering the hegemonic position rugby holds within South African sporting culture it should not be surprising that challenges to the status quo have been met with resistance. In light of these challenges it would be interesting to note if there are similar challenges to transformation at a school level. Considering that the crucial stage of adolescent development occurs during one's high school education it is not surprising to note that SARU are investigating an extensive plan for transformative participation in schools (Ray, 2011). The contemporary location of rugby playing boys in schools will thus be interesting to observe. In the case of the present study the focus will be on private school boys, since this is a context in which rugby playing has been entrenched and valourised over a considerable period of time.

As mentioned previously, rugby as a sport tends to emphasize values associated with aggressiveness, strength, toughness and competitiveness. The use of the words physical, pain,

blood, pride, rough and hard, are often used to describe play within a rugby game, highlighting the importance of physicality and indeed triumph over obstacles in order to succeed (Schacht, 1996). Rugby can be seen as conveying a certain kind of masculine ideal to boys, including boys in South Africa. "Here our masculinity is tested in immediate physical competition with others. Moment by moment, our performance is measured in relation to others. Both in winning and in losing, the masculine role exerts strong influence" (Pleck & Sawyer, 1974, p.3). The male body is thus tested on the field, with those succeeding further cementing their masculine identity and those failing becoming subjugated in the process (Pringle, 2005).

Whilst the influence of fathering and the mass media have been previously discussed it may be useful to note the influence rugby may exert on role modelling. "Boys learn about the behaviour of men which, in most cultures, is synonymous with being physically and emotionally strong, competitive, dominating and controlling others" (Thomson, 2002, p.168). These attributes are likely to be found in the game of rugby, and may themselves influence the way in which both individuals and the media engage with the topic of the game, especially in the South African context, where rugby still enjoys a privileged and honoured status.

Connell (2008) has argued that engagement in sport involves a "level of physical confrontation and legal violence which are seen as tests of manhood" (p.140). The notion that masculinity or manhood is achieved on the field has formed the focus of several research studies (Pringle, 2005; Light & Kirk 2000). By nurturing and shaping hegemonic masculinities on the field, rugby engages with the concepts of dominance, aggression and ruthless competitiveness (Light & Kirk, 2000).

As such the rugby field may not only provide a space in which young men can test and shape their masculine identities, but also may allow an older generation of men to re-experience or indentify with these qualities which may no longer be valued in other situations or contexts. The Light and Kirk study (2000) found that many of the participants spoke about the 'good old days' in which traditional or hegemonic forms of masculinity were not openly questioned, providing the sport with an uncontested privileged status. In Pringle's (2005) study of high school rugby players in New Zealand many participants highlighted the importance of rugby as a means to achieve social acceptance amongst their peers, with one participant who had relocated from the UK to New Zealand noting that his acceptance into the rugby team aided

in his general acceptance into the school, which previously had been difficult for him. The identification of rugby as a channel via which social acceptance can be achieved may again have implications for the South African context and the transformation polices currently active within South African rugby and may also help to explain why there may be some resistance to change.

Finally while it may not be a conscious intention, rugby may serve to "reproduce the ideology of male supremacy because it acts as a constant and glorified reminder that males are biologically and thus inherently superior over females" (Kane & Synder, 1987, p. 77). Although there are female rugby teams, on the whole rugby is seen as a sport requiring a particular kind of physical resilience, stamina and strength that precludes women playing this dangerous game. The biological determinism inherent in assumptions about who can and who should or should not play the sport may also explain why rugby may appear as a refuge for hegemonic masculinity in times of 'crisis'.

2.8 CONCLUSION

Since the construction or negotiation of a masculine identity appears to be influenced by many factors, including amongst others one's family, schooling, the media, sport and the socio-historical context, one cannot predict an individual's gendered identity with any great certainty. The formation of a gendered identity involves each person's unique engagement with various activities which seek to shape their identity (both implicitly and more consciously). In addition, it is increasingly accepted that gender identity may well not be stable over time, even if there is some sense of a coherent identity. At times expression of identity may conform to a more hegemonic gender representation whilst at other times individuals may engage with more alternative forms of masculinity and gender.

Thus masculinity can be considered a variable construct, one which is present in all societies, be it in different forms. While different societies may express masculinity in different forms, it is almost universal that the masculine gendered identity will contain elements of dominance, privilege and honour. Considering South Africa's socio-political past it is of interest how certain patterns of masculinity may continue to be reproduced and how alternative forms of masculinity are engaged with and incorporated into gender

identity. This study aims to look at the experiences of a particular sub-group of boys in contemporary South Africa in respect of their understanding and expression of masculinity. The research explores the experiences of rugby-playing boys, noting that they are likely to occupy a somewhat valourised or hegemonic position within their social worlds, and seeking to explore the ways in which this might enhance, shape and possibly constrain their understanding and expression of being male and masculine.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 AIM OF THE RESEARCH

This study was interested in exploring the identifications and experiences of male adolescents with respect to masculinity, through the lens of male high school rugby players. The study was focused primarily on the negotiation of masculinity, as evidenced within the content of rugby playing boy's discussions, emphasising how they appeared to position themselves in relation to different forms of masculinity, including dominant/ hegemonic and alternative forms of masculinity, within the South African context.

Literature on masculinity suggests that since hegemonic and alternative forms of masculinity exist side by side within societies individual negotiations and identifications with masculinity may vary. The research therefore sought to explore notions of masculinity amongst a particular sub-culture of boys, i.e. rugby playing boys, who colloquially might be understood as hegemonic in their positioning. The research, sought to examine the way in which these boys, who may be anticipated to occupy a dominant position relative to other boys of their age, negotiate their masculine identity in relation to hegemonic and alternative masculinities.

3.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Several inter-related questions framed the study:

1. How do rugby playing boys engage with masculine aspects of their own and others' identity/ies?
2. To what degree do rugby playing boys' identities appear to conform to notions of hegemonic masculinity?
3. How does rugby playing appear to enhance and/ or constrain their sense of themselves as masculine or gendered?
4. What forms of counter-hegemonic or alternative expressions of masculinity are acceptable or available to rugby playing boys?

3.3 THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

Considering the complex positioning of masculinity within different societies it is appropriate that the theoretical orientation used in this research is able to address and comment on the subjective and constructed nature of masculinity. The study is thus located primarily within a social constructionist framework. A combination of an interpretive approach, based in a more realist epistemology, complemented by social constructionist framework, was used to critically analyse the collected data. It was hoped that this kind of critical analysis would "allow for the demonstration of the constructed character of the dominant discourse and practice, the otherwise hidden ideology thereby sustained, and the resulting impact" (Gergen, & Gergen, 2008, p.173), in this instance with reference to masculinity.

An understanding of hermeneutics also appeared useful as it "provides a theoretical framework for interpretive understanding, or meaning, with special attention to context and original purpose" (Patton, 2002, p.114). A constructionist perspective can complement the hermeneutic approach in that it allows the research to comment not only on the individual's perception and interpretation, but also on the apparent influence of society and culture as a whole (Patton, 2002).

This approach to the research appeared fitting in that the data collected reflected both the individual participant's created or negotiated understanding of the research topic as well as allowing the researcher to position the participant's understanding within the wider social construction of masculinity, particularly in the South African context.

Analysing the data using a 'critical' thematic analysis appeared to consolidate these theoretical orientations, which allowed for a fuller understanding of how social discourses appeared to have been taken up by the participants and how they positioned themselves in relation to these.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCEDURE

3.4.1 Description of Participants

In order to meet the research aims purposive sampling (Durrheim & Painter, 2006) was used in the selection of participants. This was done to ensure that sufficiently rich data was

generated from participant groups relevant to the specific research aims (Walker, 1988), namely to explore the negotiation and expression of masculinity amongst male adolescent rugby players. Two focus groups were conducted in which adolescent male rugby players attending private schools engaged in discussion around the research topic.

Initially several schools were approached to gain permission to access their student population. As a result several schools granted permission for the researcher to approach their respective student bodies in order to recruit participants. It is noted that while several schools and teachers expressed interest in the research, student responses to volunteering to take part in the research were initially less encouraging. After approaching several student bodies, a group of 10 participants volunteered from a private high school in the Johannesburg area. Later an additional 4 participants volunteered to participate from a second campus of the same private school. Whilst the second participant group consisted of 'touch rugby' players, as opposed to full contact players, it was thought that exploration of their negotiations of masculinity would still be appropriate within the research objectives and would provide further data, possibly allowing for the findings to be strengthened. Participants for this study thus consisted of young male adolescents, between the ages of 14-17 years, in grades 9, 10 and 11, who are actively involved in school level competitive rugby.

The first focus group consisted of ten students, nine white students and one black student. The second focus group consisted of four students, all white. Although pupils of all race groups were invited to take part in the study, the racial composition of the groups reflects both the geographical location of the schools and also the fact that they attract almost exclusively middle class students. The participants were all actively involved in the schools' rugby program, including attending practice sessions and playing in inter-school rugby matches.

3.4.2 Data Collection

3.4.2.1 Focus Groups

Data was collected by means of conducting two focus groups. Wimmer and Dominick (1987) suggest that focus groups are useful in conducting research as the responses found within these discussions are often less inhibited than individually generated responses and have a tendency to stimulate discussion and debate on the topic. Furthermore the notion that

masculinity and indeed hegemonic masculinity is produced and reproduced in social contexts, meant that the focus group could be seen as a microcosm of this social context. Connell (2000) has argued that the negotiation of masculinity is often done through a process of socialisation, thus being able to observe participants in interaction was intended to yield useful collateral information which may not have been possible in individual interviews. Some of these interactional aspects are commented upon in the analysis.

The use of focus groups allowed access to the inter-subjective experiences of the participants. Eliciting group discussion allowed for further "understanding of differences between people whom we might have previously thought to be part of a homogenous group" (Kelly, 1999, p. 304). Accessing this aspect of experience was particularly important when considering the subjective nature of gendered identities.

It should also be noted that the first focus group of ten students was larger than originally intended. Patton (2002) suggests that focus groups typically consist of, between, six and ten participants. As such the first focus group size was still appropriate for the research, although at the outer limit of the acceptable size. The reason for the relatively large group was due, in part, to the researcher needing to accommodate the students' limited time availability as several students needed to attend other sporting commitments, were not be able to wait for a second group and were unsure of a possible future date.

3.4.2.2 Organising and Running of the Discussion Groups

Students willing to participate were given information letters detailing the nature of the research as well as the relevant assent and consent forms. The students were asked to take or select five photographs around the brief of what they felt represented; "What it means to be a young man in South Africa today". This auto-photographical aspect of the design was intended to stimulate discussion, and not to form the focus of analysis. An auto-photographical approach to data collection has been used in research conducted by Noland (2006) and in the South African context by Blackbeard and Lindegger (2007), Langa (2010), and Davies and Eagle (2010).

The first focus group consisted of ten students. Students in this group chose not to take or select from their personal photographs and instead each student brought five images they found online which they felt best represented the brief. It was felt that this deviation from the

original research design did not alter the context of the discussion group in any significant way and as such the focus group continued. The participant's images did not form the main focus of discussion, with participants only making reference to their images in the first few minutes of the discussion. The second focus group was advised of these changes and was invited to do the same should they wish. However the second group choose not to bring any graphic aids and instead chose to go straight into discussion of the topic in the group setting.

The two focus groups were held at the respective school's of the boys in a private class room. The focus group of ten participants was conducted after the school day had ended and the second group of four participants took place in the first period of their school day.

It is noted that during the first group's discussion, after about 40-50 minutes of discussion, six of the ten students requested to leave the group before the discussion ended as they needed to attend other sporting commitments. Whilst this was not ideal in terms of data consistency it was observed that the data generated during their attendance, and subsequently after their departure, was rich in content allowing for successful data analysis, (see section from Focus Group 'B' in Appendix). It also did not appear that the nature of the group discussion changed substantially after their departure, although in a small group there is more room for participant engagement. The latter part of the group discussion took about 30-40 minutes. The second focus group consisted of four boys who were present for the full duration of the group.

The researcher's role within these discussion groups was primarily that of a facilitator and he avoided active engagement in the discussion. When the researcher interjected into the discussion this was to insert a new prompt when discussion had been exhausted or to ask participants if they could expand on their thoughts.

At other times the researcher would engage in the discussion to clarify a statement which may have been interpreted ambiguously. This was done in an effort to avoid misinterpreting the data during analysis as such misinterpretation would not accurately or fairly represent the participant's thoughts or feelings on the subject matter, although it is acknowledged that how material is heard and interpreted will not always represent what was intended by the speaker.

The audio recordings of the discussion groups were transcribed by the researcher, with attention given to the content, tone and interactions between participants. In addition hand

written notes were also taken during and immediately after the focus group to facilitate in the transcription of the recorded audio data and to note significant non-verbal interactions.

3.5 METHOD OF ANALYSIS

Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Kelly (2006) suggest that "the key to doing a good interpretative analysis is to stay close to the data, to interpret it from a position of empathic understanding" (p.321). Bearing this in mind, and as was previously noted, this study used a critical thematic analysis to interpret the collected data.

The initial analysis of this research data was conducted using the qualitative hermeneutic research program Atlas.ti which allowed the researcher to code data into themes digitally, i.e. by means of a computer aided system.

3.5.1 Steps in the analysis

Thematic analysis has been described as a method of analysis which allows for the identification, analysis and reporting of themes within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Considering the close relationship between a thematic analysis and content analysis the steps in the two kinds of analysis may appear simple and at times almost identical. However, thematic analysis tends to look at larger units of analysis and is more qualitative in emphasis than a strict content analysis which is often more quantitative. The analysis of data collected for the purpose of this research followed the procedure suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006) and is outlined below:

1. ***Immersion with the data***

Both Braun and Clarke (2006) and Terre Blanche, Durheim and Kelly (2006) support the notion that in order for a successful analysis to occur the researcher needs to have a firm understanding of the collected data. This familiarisation with the data is achieved by multiple reading of the text data as well as formulating possible analyses when reading the text. In the context of this research, the researcher achieved this by reading and rereading the focus group transcripts. Potential hypothesis were generated with the reading of the text and were

explored further with each rereading of the text in order to gain a fuller understanding of the text and the participants' intended meaning.

2. Generating initial codes

Once the researcher has developed a firm understanding of the collected data as well as developed several hypothetical themes or codes, it is possible to apply these codes to the text data. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that this level of coding is influenced by two factors, namely whether the codes are influenced by the content of the data or by the theory used to understanding the data. The later form of coding is particularly useful in exploring the latent content of the collected texts. Initial codes were generated from the data using Atlas.ti, which allowed the researcher to generate unique codes relevant to the context of the study. In this instance themes were largely data generated, with theory used to comment on this material.

3. Identifying themes

In the third phase of analysis the researcher considered how different sets of codes or the collection of codes may have represented an overarching theme present in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Whilst there are several methods which could be used to link certain codes to an overarching theme the use of the Atlas.ti software allowed the researcher to view these links post coding. This was done by allowing passages of text to carry multiple codes. The identification of themes involved the consolidation of several codes into an over arching theme. The consolidation of these various codes thus allowed for the creation of stronger and more encompassing themes, which are those that are discussed in the analysis.

4. Reviewing themes

Once the data has been fully coded and potential themes identified the researcher is then able to review these themes. Often one finds that a potential theme links to another theme or could be incorporated into another theme to develop a stronger theme which links to the relevant theory. As Terre Blanche, Durheim and Kelly (2006) suggest, this stage of analysis allows the researcher the opportunity to “revise the coding system, either in small ways or drastically

(p.326). By doing this the researcher is able to consider "the validity of individual themes in relation to the data set" (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This is done to confirm the accuracy of the intended meaning within the text. The generated themes were identified as being pertinent according to the prevalence of the theme's identified codes, as well as being informed by the current body of literature on the topic and relevance to the research aim.

5. Defining themes

During this phase of analysis the researcher is concerned with defining the appropriate parameters of the theme. As Braun and Clarke (2006) state; "It is important that by the end of this phase you can clearly define what your themes are and what they are not" (p.92). By developing the appropriate themes the researcher is able to define relevant sub-themes present in the overarching themes as well as discern whether the themes are appropriate to answer the proposed research question. Themes which thus appeared related to hegemonic masculinity were explored in relation to the participants construction of their gender identity.

6. Final Analysis

"It is important that the analysis provides a concise, coherent, logical, non-repetitive and interesting account of the story the data tell - within and across themes" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 93). In essence the final analysis should serve to consolidate the themes in the data with the research question/s and argument using the appropriate literature to express how the presented themes are relevant to the current body of research and literature. In this instance the final analysis sought to explore how young adolescent males engage with and negotiate notions of masculinity.

3.6 COMMENT ON METHODOLOGY

Whilst it will be evident that several unforeseen departures from the proposed methodology occurred during the data collection phase it was felt that these changes did not negatively impact on the outcome of the research, in that rich and relevant data was generated despite this.

The deviation from the proposed auto-photographic approach, whilst unforeseen, did not appear to alter the focus of the discussion on masculinity in the group. The first focus group, who choose to bring images found on the internet, made mention of their images but did not rely on them during the discussion. Instead this focus group appeared to follow a more traditional approach to a focus discussion group in which the researcher interjected a few prompting questions when discussion points appeared exhausted. The second focus group chose not to bring any visual aids to the discussion and the focus group spontaneously generated discussion on the topic of young masculinity; including hegemonic and non-hegemonic expressions.

Consideration should also be given to the, possibly unconscious, implications of holding the focus groups at the student's respective schools. Furthermore the influence of the two, male, teachers who helped to facilitate the arrangement for the focus groups may have had an influence on the students' participation. Whilst these considerations are important to bear in mind, particularly in light of the research topic of masculinity and will be considered in the evaluation of the research, for the purpose of this study the data generated during these discussion groups appeared useful and appropriate in addressing the proposed research questions.

It should also be noted that some validation of the themes was introduced by requesting the supervisor of the project to read the transcripts and some mutual discussion about which themes appeared most prominent in the data.

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Participants were informed of the broad research purpose and methods to be used in the study through information letters written by the researcher which were distributed to them by their teachers. Those boys who volunteered to take part were asked to sign informed assent forms and to have their parents or guardians sign informed consent forms in order for them participate in the research, with the understanding that the boys could withdraw from the research at any stage unconditionally (see Appendix for documentation). Participants were informed that all information would be kept confidential, securely stored and used purely for research purposes, limited to viewing by myself and supervisor.

It was emphasized at the beginning of each focus group that no identifying information would be used in the research report. Furthermore group confidentiality was discussed in terms of each participant acknowledging and agreeing to keep the content of the discussion confidential between them as far as possible. Boys were also asked to respect the views of others in the discussion. The participants were reminded that the discussion groups were to be audio recorded prior the audio recorder being switched on.

Participants were informed that they could request a summary of the research report findings should they be interested, and could do this by emailing the researcher.

Additional information regarding participant and parent/guardian documentation can be found in the attached appendix.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter examines the four central themes identified by the researcher which pertain to negotiations of hegemonic masculinity and identity construction, based on a close reading of the focus group transcript material. Embedded in the four themes are various sub-themes which are used to further expand on the overarching themes found within the data.

Prominent themes identified in the focus group interview transcripts were: the male body, aspirational role models, engagement and interaction with the feminine and negotiations of alternative masculinities. A table illustrating the prevalence of the codes used to generate each theme can be found in the appendix. The table is derived from the computer aided text analysis discussed in the previous chapter.

Identifiers were used for each participant in order to ensure confidentiality and the protection of their identities. As such each group was assigned unique identifiers, the first group being 'FCR', standing as a signifier for 'full-contact rugby', whilst the second group were given 'TR' as identifiers, standing for 'touch rugby'. It should be noted that these identifiers do not reflect any significant age difference between the boys in the two groups but is merely used to distinguish within which group the material arose.

The following table depicts the participant's age, grade, race and rugby team in the two discussion groups. It is suggested that the information presented in the table be held in mind when reading the material generated in the discussion groups. These characteristics may provide a lens through which a further understanding of the boy's positioning is generated.

Discussion Group	Number of Participants	Ages	Grades	Race	Teams
'FCR' Group	10	16 years (2) 17 years (8)	Grade 10 (2) Grade 11 (8)	White (9) Black (1)	1st Team (6) 2nd Team (4)
'TR' Group	4	14 years (2) 15 years (1) 17 years (1)	Grade 9 (3) Grade 11 (1)	White (4)	Touch Rugby (4)

4.1 THEME ONE: THE MALE BODY - TOUGH AND STRONG

Discussion around physicality and body image emerged prominently in both focus groups, with participants indentifying these aspects of identity as being key indicators of masculinity. While it is important to caution that the emphasis placed upon physicality and body image may be due, in part, to the age of the participants as well as the initial focus of the research, which clearly identified rugby-playing as the window through which to explore constructions of young masculinity, nevertheless it was quite striking how much group discussions focused on aspects of physical being.

During discussions both groups of participants felt it was important to distinguish body image from ‘performance’, that is, there was some indication that the boys perceived body appearance as not necessarily synonymous with how the body operates in action, and in many instances placed greater weight upon the latter dimension. At times the differentiation between these two concepts in the text is apparent and in other instances appearance and performance appear more enmeshed. This perhaps represents the ways in which the boys themselves are still negotiating and understanding the distinction between the two and positioning themselves with respect to both how they look and how they are in action.

4.1.1 Discussion of Theme

Whilst the two focus groups represented young men engaged in playing rugby on different levels both groups appeared to express uniformity in their understanding of the importance of physicality as a prominent characteristic of being a 'Man'. Participants highlighted the importance of physical characteristics when they first began discussing the brief, "what it means to be a young man in South Africa today". The following quotes provide examples of how quickly the participants linked masculinity and physicality in the first few minutes of the discussion groups. Group 2 appeared to make this link in relation to playing rugby, whilst Group 1 emphasized physicality as a standalone characteristic of masculinity:

TR2: Your body stays better as well.

...

FCR1: To be strong and fit.

Strength and fitness were raised as key dimensions of masculinity throughout the discussions. The following conversations, which occurred in both groups, articulates the importance of physicality in negotiating a masculine identity:

> *FCR9: I think nowadays the biggest thing for males, specifically teenage males our age, is gym.*
>
> ...
>
> *FCR5: If you spent a day with us, you would see the amount of times we speak about supplements, steroids, gym, how much we bench the day before, how long we train for, how much we weigh, like you'd honestly be so shocked about how often we speak about that stuff because it's something that means so much to us.*

Although the participants in the second group differed from those in the first group, in that the group consisted of touch rugby players as opposed to full contact players, material indicating the importance of physicality was equally prominent in their conversations:

> *TR2: I think men try and be muscular and more built and like, cos, attracted to women and that's like kinda what a man lives to do, is to attract women, get the women. So a man will spend hours and hours in the gym rather than hours and hours studying...*
>
> ...
>
> *TR2: What comes along with gyming is also strength, so if you gym to to, look, attract a girl, say like okay not like now, now you don't really have to protect anyone cos obviously our parents pro...protect us and it's not like we have to protect our families. But now, if you gym now, most of that muscle will stay with you if you carry on gyming and then that kinda, as well as impressing the girl, gives you the strength to defend yourself, and say, your family, and so can protect you as well as your wife, or your children or whatever.*

The above material not only illustrates the importance of physicality in relation to a masculine identity but also its functional importance in fulfilling certain 'masculine' roles. The value placed upon the male body as a function of a masculine identify was highlighted throughout the group's conversations. However, whilst the participants' focus on physicality tended to favour a more traditional concept of the 'real man', this perhaps represented an ideal

image of masculinity, rather than an absolute, when considering the role of a strong, able and powerful body in developing or identifying a masculine identity.

Physicality was thus linked to several important roles the participants felt men should be actively involved in, as illustrated by TR2's above statement. These roles included being able to provide for and protect a family, succeeding in the business or corporate world, giving one an advantage over others, and developing a sense of integrity and responsibility.

The identification of men and masculinity as being associated with protecting and providing for others, particularly their families, suggests a strong link to a hegemonic understanding of masculinity. Physicality was seen as being a proving ground, the primary function of which was for the participants to learn the 'skills' needed to perform their masculinity well at a later stage in life. The material gathered suggests that the participants still strongly identified with an understanding of masculinity which positioned men as having to be leaders, breadwinners and successful.

Identifications made by boys in both groups suggested that physicality and male body performance is at times seen as a proving ground within which to establish a masculine identity, conforming to a more hegemonic understanding of masculinity. While the above material represents a general understanding of the importance placed upon being physically able, the role of sports, in this instance rugby, plays a particularly important role in the development of an 'idealised' masculine identity:

> *FCR8: When I walk off the rugby field, or the next morning, I like to feel hurt because I feel like I've done something, feel like I have achieved. I have put my body on the line. I think a lot of people don't understand what that means to a rugby player.*

While the sports field served as a springboard for developing masculine identities, participants also reflected how lessons learnt on the field could be translated into life lessons later in life:

> *FCR4: I think it helps you face your challenges, so if you, so you know with rugby because I'm like, make a big tackle on you and you sort of hurt your shoulder you're required to get back up and carry on with that same hurt shoulder. You're weaker than you were before... if you learn to overcome the pain and everything like that to still do your job, you can still do that even if you're in a corporate situation.*

...

FCR10: I think it teaches us valuable life lessons, for me at least. Like, like pain is only temporary... Like losing isn't always that bad. That you can learn from a loss, it can motivate you.

It would appear that by engaging in physical activities with a certain kind of attitudinal stance the boys felt the experiences could be applied to other aspects of life:

TR2: Cos touch rugby is on the field, there are only six of you. So like you kinda have to play as a team, you have to talk like that's the bi...like one of the biggest things in touch is communication. So it does teach you to be a lot more social and that can also help I suppose...

It would be interesting to know how much this kind of 'life lesson' talk may be part of the motivational input of trainers and coaches, however, even if this is the case it appeared that the boys had certainly internalised this idea that the conduct on the field might reflect a kind of template for their behaviour in other situations in their lives, particularly in their later expression of an adult male identity.

The role of physicality appeared not only to influence the boy's personal conceptions of a masculine identity but also how they positioned themselves in relation to what an 'ideal man' might be within this context. The pressure felt by the boys to conform to certain physical 'ideals' became apparent during the discussion groups:

FCR5: Strength and size has become an obsession and I think all boys at this age, it is because you want to be, you want to run onto the field and have the other team go, oh look at that oke, I don't want to run into him, um you want to have the self-confidence to know that you are bigger and stronger than that guy next to you.

...

FCR3: ... a man should be fit, should be physical.

The way in which the above material was presented perhaps indicates how the boys position themselves in relation to this ideal. Speaking about these ideals the boys did not use language that indicated that they had attained the physical ideal, instead it was an ideal that needed to be pursued and was still to be obtained. This is further demonstrated by FCR5's suggestion

that 'strength and size have become an obsession'. The pursuit of this ideal suggest that the physically ideal man, as a concept, exists in a somewhat privileged or honoured hegemonic state, in that many strive to achieve such a state and status, but by no means all will succeed.

As mentioned in the introduction to this theme, a particular point which the boys felt it was important to make concerned the distinction between physicality as a representation of body ideal and physicality as a functional ability, i.e. the ability to perform on the sports field. The differentiation is perhaps linked to the former appearing to emphasise a preoccupation with body image which may have been associated with a more feminine stance or positioning in recent history, whereas the latter body attribute is seen to be the result of functional ability, involving effort and demonstration of prowess in activity. Their emphasis on ability seemed to perhaps serve to justify the investment in their self image:

> *FCR9: I think you can definitely see a difference in the athletic ability, if like you look at someone, like just goes to gym to look good and like have a gym body it's a different type of athletic ability to a, let's say, a rugby player generally for instance.*
>
> ...
>
> *FCR5: ... If I go out and I walk around and laugh at some oke who walks past me and I'm like haha I am bigger than you, people are going to be like well, you're a juiceboy, you've got charisma about you and ja. On the rugby field you have that respect of, you met some small oke and he is gonna put you back ten metres when you run into him. Like you have the respect of people around you.*

Further exploration of this physical identity theme indicated that it was not only the ability to perform which represented a masculine ideal but rather the ability to perform whilst withstanding and overcoming 'attacks'. The source of these ‘attacks’ was often other men, thus suggesting that part of a successful masculine identify is the ability to overcome and triumph over other men (in this instance at a physical rather than intellectual or material level).

> *FCR2: It's that toughness I think, like when you get klapped you got to get up and keep going.*
>
> ...

FCR1: ... running straight and you will maybe run into him just to show him like you there or whatever.

The ability to triumph physically over another man or boy is not only dependent on the skill players are able to demonstrate on the field. Both groups tended to emphasis the role of physical size as being a vital component in the physical identity of being a man.

FCR9: It's that physical ability. I mean for like rugby I know like, if, they say that size doesn't matter, but in actual fact it does kinda sort of matter. If you not like physically like strong enough to play a full rugby match then you are going to struggle and it's going to be sore.

...

FCR8: It really starts playing mind games with you, um and to get over that you wanna be bigger.

...

FCR10: It's like a guy that is good and big at the same time always beats another small...

...

FCR5: There will be a guy bigger than him and that guy will probably see guys bigger than him and there's always gonna be that feeling of not being as good as someone and I think we all just need to deal with that.

The concept of bigness was not confined to physical attributes on the field. At times the boys would make references to size in other situations or contexts. However the implications attached to references to size or 'bigness' normally indicated a power relationship in which one individual would try to excerpt some form of dominance over another. The following material illustrates examples in which size was mentioned as being used in establishing a dominant style of interpersonal relating:

TR2: Bigger man in the handshake...

...

TR2: He wouldn't be as intimidated as of a guy with big muscles...

The mention of size in relation to body image indicates the importance of the male body in constructing or negotiating a masculine identity. The contestation between a somewhat narcissistic investment in the body versus the body being viewed as a tool used to perform masculine activities resulted in an uneasy positioning of the body at times. The boys were very cognisant of the media's perception of men, which at times was reflected upon as offering both a negative and positive axis against which to gain different kinds of valuation in being a man:

> *FCR9: Underwear advertising and stuff that gives the perception that a man is, a true man is gonna be ripped and he is going to have a good muscle tone, but it's like completely wrong perception of what a man is. A man can be a fat man, like no muscle tone whatsoever, but can still be a proper man.*

The following material represents a discussion the boys engaged in after the researcher asked the group if they feel the media or society expect them to act or portray themselves in a certain way:

> *TR2: Definitely.*
>
> *TR3: But I don't think it's negative though.*
>
> *TR1: I feel a lot of the time you can only have one of the two, either brains or muscles.*
>
> *TR3: Ja, but it's not negative though, you have to, you have to build yourself, unless you do it in a bad way like steroids, but it's all positive it will help you become healthier, it will help you get confidence...*
>
> *TR1: Ja, it's good for your lifestyle...*
>
> *TR3: So it's not, you don't only see it as getting for the girls. You also do it for yourself, it will help you in life.*
>
> *TR4: I think society has also taught us to judge people that are not um...*
>
> *TR1: Built...*
>
> *TR2: Built, so that you know fat people, you know that you always see them being teased in the movies, the nerdy kids don't get the girl, always that kind of stuff. We've*

always been brought up like that. We've always wanted to be that guy who can get the girl, you know who is good at sport and is big...

The differentiation between the kinds of physical characteristics presented in this kind of dialogue refers to a seen and unseen hierarchy, against which men in general, including the participants, position themselves. Although the boys are quite thoughtful about the way in which certain body typing is associated with greater or lesser masculinity and status, they nevertheless indicate that they tend to subscribe to or feel bound by these prescriptions.

TR2: Also being at the top, most guys that are at the top that are physically built and all that have usually got a girlfriend...

FCR9: ... If you go to gym and you get big, your personality also changes because you see yourself as bigger and more masculine than someone else.

Although it is evident that one of the reasons cited by some of the boys for being able to live up to male body ideals might be to attract girls, this aspect of the discussion appeared secondary. It was very evident that male body exhibition and demonstration of prowess were predominantly about impressing other men, living up to other men's expectations and positioning oneself in a reasonable place on the male hierarchy. For these adolescent boys their relationship to their bodies appeared vital to their self-esteem and personal identities irrespective of whether this meant they were attractive to girls. However, it was apparent that one of the benefits in being physically potent might be the potential attraction of 'a mate' via a women or girl's attention, however, this issue will be returned to in a subsequent section of the discussion.

Throughout the discussion notions of physicality, and at times body image, were used to illustrate or express ideas of dominance or power. The male body was thus used to demonstrate a form of masculine identity which was heavily reliant on the physical and, by implication, perhaps on genetic inheritance, although it was recognised that physically able bodies had to be 'worked on'. However, their notion of masculinity bordered on being biologically determinist in this respect.

There also appeared to be some negotiation in the discussion groups concerning 'strict' definitions of masculinity, which included discussions on men being fat and yet still masculine and acknowledgement that smaller men are able to perform on the rugby field

against larger men. However, attached to this acceptance of a 'different' male body are other hegemonic values, such as success, determination and responsibility. Thus one can only deviate from a more idealised male body type and retain one's masculine identity by demonstrating this in some compensatory form.

In essence it is perhaps best to describe the participant's engagement with the topic of physicality as fluid, in the sense that they recognised that there were other characteristics present in a masculine identity that were significant beyond physicality, however great value was still placed on a boy or man's ability to achieve the idealised male physicality and body image. For these particular boys, physicality was central in the expression of their masculinity.

4.1.2 Theoretical Contextualisation

Within the larger body of literature on masculinity there is substantial evidence to indicate the importance of physicality, body image and the role of sport in relation to constructing masculine identities (Connell, 1995, 1995; Segal, 1994; Smith, 2007). Connell (2000), in particular, has argued that the body needs to conform to the accepted socialised concepts of a person's gender in order to be accepted. This is of relevance in the South African context when we consider the great value and pride placed upon sporting teams, in particular rugby teams. Failing to identify with the 'socially accepted' gendered identity, as represented in the 'right' kind of body, can result in alienation. However by indentifying and engaging with the most desired form boys and men can gain prestige and privilege. The need to conform to accepted gender identities is further influenced by the way in which the media depicts the idealised gendered identity as a means to attain love and a mate, and the boys talk appeared to reflect some awareness that this was another gain to be made by achieving a hegemonic or desirable physical identity and embodiment. Failing to achieve this ideal may maintain a social desire to be amongst the few who can attain and maintain this identity (Simpson, 1994), suggesting perhaps why rugby playing boys may be popular amongst their peers.

Connell (1995) argued that the body is a vessel, on which an identity becomes imprinted. While 'body' in this instance is used to refer to the more general human body, his observation reflects just how important an indicator of gender the body may be and how the body is used in the development of a masculine identity. The boys in the study appeared to value the fact

that they inhabited a role in which their body identities were validated and enhanced. Although they experienced considerable pressure to live up to and maintain the kind of strength and toughness to play rugby, they were willing to expend effort in doing so, in part at least, because they appeared to recognize how this enhanced their masculinity and provided them with a secure foothold on the male hierarchy. They appreciated the implications of having a body which 'fails' to meet the desired masculine virtues, and while they were somewhat sympathetic to those with ‘fat’ bodies and those who were small in stature, they appeared to see themselves as fortunate not to be in this position.

Speed, strength, power, muscularity, fitness, athleticism, acceptance of injury, warrior mentalities and lack of empathy for others, (Bramham, 2003; Davidson, 2000; Drummond, 2003; Gard & Meyenn, 2000; Hickey, 2008; Parker, 1996; Pringle, 2008) are common hegemonic masculine characteristics, all of which are commonly found in the sporting world to some degree. The continued idealisation of these characteristics results in many sports remaining masculinist in nature, as women, and in some cases differently abled men, are unable to meet the hyper-masculine level of ability to compete. As Brittan (2001) would argue, this allows for the continued dominance of the sporting world by men and allows for the maintenance of a patriarchal hierarchy that is based in large measure, or certainly self-evidently, on physicality. Although such a valuation on physical prowess amongst men may not be universal, it appears prominent across a range of cultural settings and seems to remain true across various groupings in South African society.

4.2 THEME TWO: ASPIRATIONAL ROLE MODELS

During the group discussions it became clear that one important aspect of the participant's negotiations of masculinity centred around their identification with aspirational role models and the inherent success implied in taking on a similar identity. Role modelling in the context of this discussion appeared to suggest both the importance of identification and disidentification. A separation or disconnection with non-masculine qualities by implication meant that the participants choose not to identity with what they termed 'over emotional expression'.

While the form of this 'success' was presented as salient and present in different contexts, the importance of one being ‘successful' and what this might entail was a strong theme which

was carried through in both discussion groups. Within both groups boys very easily identified male figures who they understood to represent an ideal form of masculinity.

Coupled with their notions of success were traditional depictions of masculinity and male functions within society. The importance of emotional regulation, the role of fathers and having a high profile within the popular media were all used to illustrate this kind of success. It was apparent that those viewed as successful in terms of embodying desirable masculine attributes tended to epitomise largely hegemonic expressions of masculinity.

The discussion of this theme is structured under two subheadings, the first addressing ideal role models and the second addressing the regulation and expression of emotion, which as just indicated, also appeared related to desirable portrays of masculinity.

4.2.1 Discussion of Theme

4.2.1.1 Aspirational Role Models and Attributes

The groups tended to focus their discussions on role models along two main lines; namely, firstly, role models as represented in the image of general society or the media and secondly, more personal role models in the form of their father's or their family's representations of being a man. The role of rugby was again noted as a valued precursor to developing a particular type of masculine identity:

> *FCR9: ... I think it's also like for some people it's a lifestyle. Like for me, for my family, my dad was playing rugby, my brother played rugby and now I'm playing rugby and we all play the same position...*

In this quotation FCR9 suggests that he is living out a kind of family legacy that allows him to positively identify with his father and brother. In his assertion that this is a ‘lifestyle’ choice he suggests that rugby playing defines many aspects of their family tradition and identity and one can feel some sense of pride or ‘rightness’ as he refers to playing even in the same position as his personal role models. While the above example illustrates the importance of family placed values in playing rugby, there were several instances in which the participants referenced popular rugby players when discussing role models and success:

FCR5: ... The Beast, endorsed by Bic, and like they show him as, they want people to basically piggy back on his perception of being a man...

...

FCR7: ... Frans Stein demanded five from, to go to the Stormers, now they couldn't accept that offer because they couldn't afford...

...

FCR5: ... Francois Hougaard has an S3, R8...

The references to specific rugby players above were used to illustrate not only their success on the field but also their ability to translate this sporting success into general success. FCR5's indication that the Beast is used as an exemplar form of masculinity, in that marketing campaigns have commodified his masculinity in the promotion of products which may 'help' others achieve the Beast's desired masculinity, is a case in point.

The other two examples make reference to Stein and Hougaard's financial value and the fact that a form of hyper-masculinity is prized by society and is handsomely rewarded. The example of Stein further adds to the understanding that such skill is not achievable by or accessible to all, and as such is a highly coveted commodity. The quotation below indicates how the internalisation of these values may be understood:

FCR6: Sports in general gives you a lot of life lessons, with team sports you learn how to compromise, you learn how to be there for someone else you know. So it will help in the corporate field.

FCR6 later endorses this comment by expanding on the difference between sportsmen and non-sportsmen:

FCR6: You can tell, like people who don't know how to work in a team, people who aren't good at following instructions from their peers, you can see the difference, they haven't been exposed to sport.

FCR6's emphasis on sport or sportsmen as appropriate role models perhaps indicates that other non-sporting role models do not provide the same 'ideal' or valued virtues and as such are not as highly prized in terms of developing a gendered identity. There is an inference that such men have lost out on something important and are almost handicapped in this respect.

Here there is an inference that team sport players have advantages beyond the field and that this experience may help to position one in a positively masculine aligned way. The implications for further identity recognition and development were expanded on by FCR4:

> *FCR4: ... you can sort of see like the stature of people you know that you, I don't know if it relates to all sports, but if you sort of do shine within your sports, you might walk around with a little bit of confidence, not arrogance, but confidence, you walk up tall...*

While FCR4 is sensitive to needing to distinguish arrogance from confidence, he clearly suggests that sporting prowess is associated with a particular kind of self-esteem generating identity. Sport appeared to be used in the discussion to create some form of separation between identities; those that are highly prized and those which appear to 'lack' the virtues valued by the boys and associated with more hegemonic positioning. Discussions about the importance of sport, and indeed rugby, as predictors of future success and idealised identities, permeated the group dialogue. A useful illustration of this is found in FCR4's comment cited below, in which the kind of unity and perhaps even conformity instilled on the field is used as a metaphor to describe successful achievement more generally:

> *FCR4: A rugby scrum for example, because if it's not cohesive then its dead and we are not achieving.*

Whilst this comment was consciously made in relation to a rugby scrum, it is perhaps useful to consider how it may relate to more symbolic understandings of hegemonic masculinity. If men are not cohesive, as in subscribing to a common understanding of a masculine identity and backing each other in this, does it perhaps mean men in general are not achieving all they could be?

This question is perhaps answered in FCR10's statement:

> *FCR10: People don't understand nowadays what it takes to be an elitist, what it takes to be extra normal, what it takes to be a leader nowadays.*

While there may be some distinction in thinking about achievement as something generated by the group as opposed to something generated by the individual, in both instances it is suggested that it is a kind of masculine striving and discipline that ultimately produces results or leads to success. Interestingly, for these boys engaged in a team sport it was important to

negotiate both individual striving and group identification in their talk about desirable masculinity. It is perhaps interesting to think about how this aspect of the discussion might have been somewhat different amongst boys engaged in more individualized sport, such as athletics or tennis playing.

One's sporting ability was viewed as a good marker of likely success later in life, as a man, with 'team sport' being given a particularly elevated status. This is not unexpected given their own identification as boys who play a highly masculine identified team sport. While the value placed on this particular kind of sporting identity and practice may not initially seem to necessarily be an indicator of a hegemonic assertion, it is in the way others are subordinated in relation to this that indicates that within the group this aspect of male behavioural practice conforms to a more hegemonic concept.

Perhaps equally important in pursuance of a desired masculinity were the instances in which participants felt challenged by inferences of limitations in themselves and their identities:

> *FCR10: For me personally if somebody says I can't do something I feel compelled to do it just to prove them wrong.*
>
> ...
>
> *FCR5: I'm stubborn like that, if someone say to me you can't, I'm like I will show you I can.*

The above comments perhaps make reference to the participants' feeling that their masculinity can be challenged in particular instances. Thus experiences of masculinity may involve transcending or overcoming certain challenges. Failure to do so may result in a 'weakened' masculine identity and perhaps be construed as a form of vulnerability, a characteristic not normally associated with masculinity.

The importance of fathers was raised in both groups, with participants indentifying certain qualities of manhood in their fathers which they would like to live up to or embody as they begin to develop their masculine identity. Interestingly whilst the participants spoke of 'unconsciously' wanting to live up to certain images of manhood they were able to speak openly about the intrinsic and extrinsic qualities of masculinity which impact on their development:

TR4: We all have this unconscious thing that we want to live up to our, you know, to our father's way. We will always be like that. There's a Greek saying that says; "Be a better man than your father" and I think like that, like shows that, you know, everybody wants to be like their dad, everybody wants to live up to the name, and become a man, that's what your father is, he's a man.

...

TR4: I think the media depicts more like, you know you always have to work and you always have to, like just certain attributes, you have to have to become a man in, order to become a man in your father's eyes, you have to look after your family, you have to, you know, know what's going on with your life. You know they are two very different and to be honest I would rather impress my father's version of a man then let society judge me.

The participants highlighted the need to 'honour' their father's masculine identity. The participants spoke positively about their fathers, perhaps idealising them to a certain degree. The degree to which the participants identified with their father's version of masculinity may in part be an attempt to gain recognition and approval from their father. The participants relationships to their fathers may however, be particularly characteristic of these sporting boys and may differ from relationships other kinds of boys have with their fathers. It is conceivable, for example, that rugby playing boys were more easily able to win approval from fathers because of their performance in an area which their fathers could take 'male' pride in.

By identifying with their fathers' conception of manhood the participants largely accepted traditional gender roles in their negotiation of a masculine identity. This was evidenced in the way in which they spoke about men playing a protective role for women, being able to provide for their families and displaying a restricted range of emotion.

In addition, however, they also appreciated the need to engage with a more diverse representation of masculinity than that represented in their fathers, particularly that represented in the media's portrayal of 'a man'. When asked if the media's representation of 'a man' was realistic the participants responded by saying:

TR1: ... I wouldn't say it's realistic, but if you can live up to that standard...

TR2: You'll be seen as more of a man by everyone, not just your father.

While the participants highlighted the importance of role models they look to in developing their gendered identities, several comments made during the discussions indicated that they themselves wish to 'pass down' their understanding of masculinity to the next generation. In this respect they seemed to assume that they embodied something desirable or of value that others might wish to emulate. Again these kinds of comments suggest their identification with a hegemonic status as young men amongst their peers and juniors. A comment made by one the participants about 'passing on traditions' and respect for rugby illustrates this concept:

FCR9: And they gonna keep handing it down, handing it down...

Understandings of hierarchy were used throughout the discussions to illustrate the importance of maintaining aspects of a masculine identity and the importance of being able to 'leave a legacy' or blue print for the younger generations. At times the participants appeared dismayed when referring to the younger generation, and indeed members of their own generation, in not recognising the importance of such a hierarchy:

FCR5: ... In the school you can see like the people who don't play a sport, like say the Grade 8's for instance they don't have that sense of hierarchy, like say [student's name] is the first team captain, like when he walks around the school we respect him because in a way he is our leader and like the Grade 8's and those that don't play sport are those that don't have the respect that they should.

The disappointment expressed in the above example may be unique to the participants who engaged in contact rugby. A comment made by a participant in the group of touch rugby players presents different positioning in relation to a valued hierarchy:

TR2: If you look at a school with proper rugby, the hierarchy say the soccer players, the rugby players are usually by the girls, are looked at more higher in the hierarchy because they are tougher, more manly.

While the non-contact rugby participants may not have positioned themselves in as privileged a space within a hierarchical structure as contact rugby boys they were still able to relate to a hierarchical ideals system in which they would like to be positioned in a space of honour and privilege:

TR3: ... It's like an invisible one...

TR2: No one says anything...

TR3: You don't think about it, it's just kinda there...

TR2: Ja, and no one says anything about it....

...

TR1: ... I think just because we wanna fit in, we, that's another reason why we don't notice it because you see this person as cool and you wanna try to be them but you dunno why, subconsciously, so that's hierarchy.

TR2: Because he's always got the hottest girlfriend, cos he's got the biggest muscles or whatever and that's why you like him and the hierarchy and that's why he's cooler then you.

What is evident is that these boys recognise the operation of a hierarchy and perhaps even that this has insidious effects, but nevertheless subscribe to hierarchical evaluations themselves and recognise their positioning within this.

4.2.1.2 Regulation and Expression of Emotion

The way in which emotions were expressed was raised as an important indicator of manhood and the demonstration or inhibition of affect in key role models was observed and commented upon. Interestingly the boys sought to define their accepted version of masculinity as allowing for the incorporation of some emotions, even emotions related to the expression of pain and disappointment. Initially discussion of emotions centred around the sports field:

FCR4: The fact that you play with your heart makes it... it's difficult to control your emotions some days in severe circumstances.

(Group agreement)

TR2 adds to this further his expression of how aggression is accepted on the field:

TR2:... You get rid of a lot of, more so in rugby, you get rid of a lot of like anger...

In this instance it is clear that expression of distress is legitimated by one's commitment to and passion for the game and emotion stemming from this commitment is almost valourised. The expression of emotion is further expanded on when participants relate examples of the expression of emotion by role models they have observed. The following example illustrates how the expression of anger or aggression is facilitated through physical violence and almost accepted as normative in this setting:

FCR8: Like we look up to them and watch games and see a fight...

FCR1: Ja...

FCR8: And that like we would almost want to start a fight in rugby...

Having the ability or licence to express aggressive tendencies is perhaps sanctioned in this reference to the behaviour of athletes to whom the participants look for the provision of role modelling. It may also provide an explanation for why anger and aggression are 'safe' emotions for men to display as they are not intrinsically linked to 'weakness'. The possible demonstration of certain emotions on the field may be seen as a by-product of the game and as such validated by the nature of the game being played.

The ability to experience emotion through physical activity is again noted by participants when speaking about exercise and gym:

FCR10: Obviously you do release endorphins when you gym, so that creates happiness.

The expression of emotion through a physically tangible activity appears to support hegemonic conceptions regarding displays of emotions amongst men and when these may be acceptable or appropriate. The discussion groups all made reference to traditional concepts relating to men and emotional display:

TR4: Men always work, men always, they always out there, they always the emotionless ones...

...

TR1: ... Back to the masculine topic where boys aren't supposed to cry...

Around this topic there did appear to be some debate amongst participants. Whilst one participant commented that he felt comfortable to cry when upset he added to this statement by saying that it did take a lot to make him cry and he would not simply cry over 'nothing':

> *TR2: ... I cry, obviously not like I will go and sit there and cry about really nothing, it does take quite a bit for me to cry but ja I cry. I don't kinda, like when I cry I don't think, 'oh like you are not a guy' or 'you are a guy you can't cry'. If I feel like crying I will cry.*

This statement was reflected on again later in the discussion with the participants suggesting that it was perhaps easier to display emotion in a less conventionally masculine context:

> *TR2: ... If I was having a down day and someone asked what was wrong I wouldn't hide it in, like I would speak about it ...*
>
> *TR3: But I think in conventional rugby, I think ah, they wouldn't share their feelings...*
>
> *TR2: Cos they meant to be the big...*
>
> *TR3: Ja, they want to be stronger and show that they are better then, everyone wants to be better then, ah, the rest of their team mates, so I don't think they will show their weaknesses.*

Whilst the first group did not speak as openly as the second group about emotional display the following comment indicates that they perhaps do feel stereotyped or pressurised to present themselves in a certain manner:

> *FCR5: ... People that don't play rugby think about rugby players as being big macho people, like they don't see what's behind them and that they actually people.*

The fact that the boys were able to talk about these stereotypes and their impact indicates that there is some active engagement with their gender identity formation and that they may feel a pressure to conform to certain pre-existing stereotypes. Although there are gains to occupying a hegemonic identified masculine position there are also costs.

4.2.2 Theoretical Contextualisation

There is a large body of literature indentifying the fact that masculine identities involve a detachment from emotionality, as well as elaborating the role of socialisation in reproducing patterns of hegemonic masculinities (Tolson, 1977; Morgan, 2001; Buchbinder, 1994; Pleck, 1995; Seidler, 1994). The boys in this study were perhaps somewhat less conventional in some of their understandings with regard to the expression of emotion and it might even be suggested that one dimension of their enjoyment in sport was the 'permission' to express strong emotions, even if these were primarily emotions of aggression and secondarily emotions associated with pleasure, happiness, disappointment and pain. In addition, the boys made a large number of references to the social and external context as influencing their behaviour and as representing a kind of 'audience' by whom their behaviour was scrutinized. In this respect they did appear to appreciate the place of 'socialization' in shaping their identities and guiding their behaviour.

Kriegel (1979) offers the following conceptualization of masculine identities; "To be a man is to carry a tape measure by which you measure yourself in relation to the world" (p.34). The boys appeared to appreciate that their worth was tied to this kind of self and other assessment against various parameters and people and that there was a hierarchy within which men are positioned and positioned each other. These adolescent males appears to measure themselves against not only the external world, and in particular sporting and rugby heroes, but in addition, they also measured themselves against their fathers .

In adolescence young men are primed to develop a gendered identity. Considering that this identity is largely, if not entirely, a product of socialisation, one's socio-historical context is significant in influencing this construction (Luncente, 1996). The socialisation of gender roles is likely to be evident in male adolescent subscription to 'traditional' conceptualisations of masculinity, which in the past have included the restriction of affect other than aggression. Findings in a study conducted by Luyt (2003), exploring rhetorical representations of masculinity in South Africa, found that many of the all male participants indentified with this line of thinking, in that it was not seen as a desired masculine quality to express ones emotions outwardly. Rather 'men' tended to experience their emotions internally where they were not observable. This form of thinking creates a distinction in the way men and women are generally 'allowed' to express themselves (Jaupcak, Salters, Gratz, & Roemer, 2003). Although there was some evidence of a willingness to depart from this stereotype about expression of emotion in its more narrow form (as in it is acceptable to cry sometimes) the

boys in the study still seemed to subscribe to the notion that expression of emotion was legitimate within very specific confines and contexts. However, it was interesting to see some departure from convention in this regard in both groups.

Aspirational role modelling amongst the participants also appeared to conform to Connells' (1995) theories on masculinity, men with the most 'desired' largely normative, masculine qualities being identified as role models. This modelling inevitably results in a hierarchical structuring of masculine virtues, which is then largely recreated across generations, ensuring that the same masculine virtues remain prized or desired with little change over time. This notion appears to have been internalised by the participants in the sense they still wished to conform to rather traditional gender roles. In keeping with many others, Walker (2005) observes that men are usually seen to be those taking on the role of protector and provider. This understanding and appreciation of the masculine gender role permeated the discussion group's conversations, even when it was introduced in terms of the valued outcome of the 'training ground' of rugby playing.

4.3 THEME THREE: ENGAGMENT AND INTERACTION WITH THE FEMININE

Some mention of women and also of aspects related to femininity were made during the discussion groups, however these sections of the discussion did not focus on femininity as a distinctly different point of interest. Rather femininity was spoken about in relation to masculinity. This may be, in part, due to the nature of the brief and research topic which focused the conversation on masculinity and this may account to a large extent for the manner in which femininity was spoken about and addressed.

While the previous theme explored emotionality in relation to role models, this theme examines the expression of emotion in relation to femininity. As such, whilst both themes explore emotionality they differ in the contextual application of emotional expression and how this affects the construction of a masculine identity.

4.3.1 Discussion of Theme

During the discussion groups women were referred to in a manner which suggested that access to and recognition by women was seen as an important indicator of a successful masculine identity. As such women and femininity appeared to exist as complimentary objects in relation to masculinity, i.e. they were largely identified in contradistinction to masculinity and men. The participants' engagement with 'the feminine' was evidenced in three different kind of focuses in the discussion. The participants engaged with the feminine in discussing gendered qualities in relation to themselves, in positioning women and in positioning homosexual boys and men.

The following phrase, said in jest by one of the participants when asked what makes a man feminine, perhaps best represents how the boys positioned femininity against masculinity:

FCR5: When you don't act like jocks

The participant's characterised being a 'jock' not only in a sporting sense, but also in terms of behaviour off the field, which included limited emotional expression.

Femininity was seen as being separate from masculinity in that the participants tended to speak in a manner which 'othered' all things feminine, implying that the feminine could not easily be incorporated as part of their gendered identity. This was evident when one participant began speaking about femininity in relation to sports.

FCR1: ... Like soccer is also a guys sport but it's, you also get girls soccer, so it's like, I dunno.

The above comment perhaps indicates the difficulty some participants felt about positioning themselves in relation to femininity by playing certain sports. It was clear within the discussion group that rugby was undoubtedly a masculine sport, however positioning of other 'lesser' sports became difficult in terms of gendering the sport and its players, particularly those that allowed athletes of either sex to compete on a relatively level playing field.

This difficulty in 'gendering' sports presented some participants with difficulties in trying to position themselves:

TR1: Ja, like I can't picture myself in a leotard.

TR3: I could picture myself in a leotard.

TR1: Do you do ballet or something?

TR3: I do tap dancing.

TR1: You have to wear a leotard for that?

TR3: No.

TR1: Then why do you picture yourself in one?

TR4: Because he sometimes has dreams.

(Laughter)

...

TR2: I wouldn't do ballet.

TR1: Ja, exactly.

TR3: Why wouldn't you do ballet?

The questioning of group members' position in relation to ballet and dance appears to place TR3 in a somewhat challenged and challenging position. This may due to TR3's active involvement in dance, a 'sport' or activity which the other participants had labelled as feminine. TR3's questioning may indicate that he disagrees with dance being labelled as feminine or that he is comfortable in embodying characteristics associated with femininity without bringing into question his masculinity. TR3's positioning is not shared by the rest of the group who respond with some apprehension about identifying with feminine activities as evidenced both in their questions and their laughter.

A participant from the first group offered his thoughts about femininity when the point was raised in their discussion group:

FCR5: I think we all have our own feminine qualities.

Some participants were willing to divulge their participation in some activities which they felt may be judged as being feminine:

FCR9: ... Like sometimes if a guy straightens their hair they are automatically seen as feminine.

...

FCR9: ... The person that straightens their hair can't be looked at as differently as a person who doesn't straighten their hair.

...

FCR5: Like I shave my legs for example and a lot of people say 'ah no that's gay'...

Interestingly whilst the participants acknowledged that some may find these activities feminine in nature they were unapologetic in performing them and argued that individuals should be allowed to engage in activities that feel right to them and should not worry about the feminine gender associations to these behaviours. However this being said, during this discussion the participants who did confess to engaging in 'feminine' activities were meet with a fair amount of laughter from the other participants, possibly indicating that whilst these activities are accepted they do not form part of normal masculine practice. Another point to consider in this matter would be the role of rugby as serving a protective function in the participants' identity perhaps more easily allowing them to explore other identify practices outside the conventional realm of masculinity, since their masculine identity is well secured in their rugby playing status.

The previously presented material appears to relate to how the participants personally engaged with introjections of aspects of femininity whereas the following section of the discussion focuses on their positioning of actual women and girls in relation to femininity and masculinity.

Throughout both discussion groups women were referred to in a manner which suggested that access to and recognition by women was seen as an important indicator of a successful masculine identity, a complementary kind of commodity that enabled a particular kind of recognition of masculinity. There was little engagement on the topic of women in terms of their experiences as individuals or as a group, except when girls and women appeared to offer a lens through which to approach some aspect of the participants' masculine identity. The discussion of women thus focused almost exclusively on what the 'having' of women meant in relation to men. This was illustrated, for example, in discussion of how having the 'right' girlfriend could elevate ones masculinity:

TR2: The media would kinda look at it like, you got a hot girlfriend or something, okay he is a man, like they look at crap like that and not, they look at what you have and not what you are.

Although TR2 seems somewhat critical of the notion that status is measured by a girlfriend's 'hot-ness' he and the other boys recognized that a desired masculinity is associated with being able to lay claim to women who would arouse other men's envy. Sport was seen as a means to attract the 'right' girl. The participants spoke about how girls may value the same characteristics of masculinity as they did. This perhaps also meant that by achieving these characteristics the boys would be able to attract the 'right' girl to them, as well as having their gendered identity validated:

> *FCR4: ... If you play in the first team or the most respected team for your age group you, um, you would also sort of be at the top of the food chain you know, in the hierarchy and girls who like confidence and like your physical attributes and you are more, sort of, you know who you are, more confident in who you are, because you are accepted by your fellow sportsmen girls are attracted to you.*
>
> ...
>
> FCR7: *I think they are also attracted to like the pride and that, like when we go up on stage and they say first team and you get your scarf and your shirt and everything.*

Again body image was mentioned in relation to masculine qualities prized by girls:

> *FCR9: For polo players, well like, because they are so flippin ripped okay. (Laughter) Chicks are generally attracted to them.*
>
> ...
>
> *FCR5: ... Like say you go out and meet a girl and you say, 'no like I play rugby and stuff' and she is like 'ah no that's cool'.*
>
> ...
>
> *FCR6: I think it does attract a lot of women. I know last year with FCR4, when he scored that try against (school name) all of a sudden it was like, some people didn't even know his name but they knew what he did.*

The importance of a successful masculine identity in relation to the feminine becomes apparent in the way the participants speak about success and the feminine. In order for one's masculine identity to be successful one needs the approval of girls/women for validation. The approval of other men is not sufficient to establish an admired masculine identity. Access to

women as partners was seen as being necessary in determining whether or not one had succeeded at being a man. This 'yard stick' also encapsulated ideals the participants indentified in women. For example, it was conveyed that an appropriate partner would be someone who would value the participant's masculine identity. Female partner attractiveness was viewed as important in determining male status, as is relatively common in social discourse. While a lot of discussion of female partners involved projection into the future rather than being related to boys' current experience, there was some mention of girlfriends and dating.

A noteworthy point of interest in this research is that only one discussion group engaged in extended discussion around homosexuality and it's positioning in terms of masculinity. This may in part be due to the group's own positioning and the possibility that this second group of boys felt they may be viewed as less masculine than other rugby playing boys because they do not engage in traditional full contact rugby:

> *TR2: Usually we are seen as, like, the moffies kinda thing...*
>
> ...
>
> *TR2: ... It's kinda like chicks' rugby, so people will look down on it and say, well you guys are too scared to play the real rugby.*

In these statements the boys indicated how the language associated with homosexuality ('moffies') and with the feminine ('chicks' rugby) is used to lower their position on the male hierarchy in relation to the 'real' rugby players. However, they still placed themselves in a reasonably secure, valued position on this hierarchy relative to boys who do not play rugby at all and relative to other forms of masculinity. While the group acknowledged that their form of rugby was not as highly valued in terms of being masculine, they themselves positioned homosexuality as in conflict with traditional notions of masculinity:

> *TR1: Ja, it's the opposite of things that make you a man, ah... I know this is like a touchy subject but I also think that if you are um, like not straight, you also get frowned upon in society and get seen as less of a man...*
>
> *TR2: But that's because they are more feminine in that sense, that they, very more, they more open about their feelings, they kinda, they like, they will go and cry cos something silly, whereas a man, ja they will cry but won't cry easily and like a man is*

seen as feminine when he, I mean you can see by the way he walks, the way he talks, the way he holds his cup or you can see it and usually feminine men aren't built as much, I mean obviously of course there are some, um, I'm just generalising but usually have thinner arms, they not like as, their shoulders usually aren't as wide because they aren't interested in that gyming that building to attract girls.

...

TR2: ... I think rugby is kind associated with that manliness with that, like a gay guy playing rugby wouldn't really go down to well. Because it's known for that manly sport. So like a gay guy, even if he liked rugby, wouldn't necessarily join the team. For the reason that he would probably be teased or beaten or whatever the case. It doesn't suit the criteria of rugby.

The othering of gay men in the above passages appears to be more prominent than the othering of women. For example, it is quite striking how TR2 moves from reference to being 'teased' to reference to being 'beaten' and in the process almost infers that this might be an expected or common response to a gay man who came into a hegemonic masculine space as exemplified in rugby. This may be linked to traditional notions of masculinity which position homosexuality as a 'threat' to traditional hetero-normative concepts of manhood. It is apparent that homosexuality is understood not so much in terms of same sex object choice but rather in terms of a more feminine presentation that includes a greater emotional expressivity and a different kind of embodiment.

Gay men are described as holding different ideals and as not meeting the 'criteria' associated with a rugby playing identity. By not meeting the traditionally defined masculine qualities gay men are positioned closer to femininity in term of valued identity characteristics.

TR1: ... I think it's only like for straight guys, because if you're not straight then you won't want to be that.

There is an assumption that homosexual or gay men would not be interested in playing rugby, again indicating some conflation between gender identity and sexual orientation. Gayness is used to refer to feminine identified boys rather than necessarily to boys who might desire same sex relationships. Interestingly somewhat later in the discussion there appeared to be some attempt to move away from stereotypes concerning gayness and almost to do some reparative work in terms of reclaiming a form of masculinity for gay men. Whilst

homosexuality was positioned as being separate from traditional masculinity the participants felt that a gay man could embody certain masculine qualities and in this respect could still be seen as a man:

> *TR3: ... You can be strong and protecting and gay at the same time, it's not either or...*
>
> ...
>
> *TR4: It's not impossible to you know, I know a lot of gay men, you know football players in America that have come out as gay you know, they still men. They still provide for their family, they still provide for their partner you know.*

It would appear that while a man's sexual preference was perceived to have implications for his gender identity the participants felt that gay men could still be considered men if they subscribed to other 'important' virtues of masculinity, which included being physically strong and able to protect others, as well as being able to provide for family and partner. In this respect gay men were expected to subscribe to very conventional gender roles in order to retain their masculinity. Interestingly though, if one party is providing for their partner in a masculine sense what gender identity does that leave their partner embodying? This was not an inference with which the boys engaged in their assertion that gay men can adopt masculine identity positions.

4.3.2 Theoretical Contextualisation

Schacht (1996) argues that the subjugated, including women and non-hegemonic men, exist as forms of real estate on which hegemonic "men construct, exercise and prove the significance of their being" (p.551). The boys' talk reflected an appreciation of this kind of relationship between the feminine and the masculine and between men and women in general. Schacht's statement would appear to support other theories regarding the positioning of women in relation to masculinity.

Women's relationship to men, in the context of hegemonic masculinity, is viewed as predominantly oppressive, such relationships being largely focused on the pursuits and ideals of the man. Donaldson (1993) argued that "women provide heterosexual men with sexual validation, and men compete with each other for this" (p.645). Again, the boys in both groups

appreciated that masculine status, as associated with masculine potency in the sporting arena, gave men access to desirable women. It was also apparent that the boys assumed that girls and other men would share this admiration of well built, sporty, rugby playing, 'jock' type boys. Donaldson (1993) argues that "women may feel as oppressed by non-hegemonic masculinities, may even find some expressions of the hegemonic pattern more familiar and manageable" (p.645), suggesting that the boys' assumptions may be valid in terms of female expectations of men. Donaldson's conceptualisation may help explain why women position themselves in relation to men in conventional ways and how women may be complicit in the role of providing validation of a successful masculine identify. As Schippers (2007) would argue heterosexual desire marks both the difference and complimentarily needed to establish a relationship of dominance and submission. In sexually objectifying women, notions of hegemonic masculinity confirm the need to obtain the desired partner (Bird, 1996).

The above understanding of the positioning of the feminine in relation to hegemonic masculinity may explain why the positioning of homosexuality in relation to masculine identity may potentially present as difficult. Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2002) suggest that homosexuality appears as a high profile topic in heterosexual culture. Homosexuality's association with effeminacy indicates that homosexuality can appear as being neither masculine nor feminine, allowing homosexuality to exist in a constantly repositioned space in relation to both masculinity and femininity (Donaldson, 1993). This may account for some of the difficulties expressed in the second discussion group when participants tried to position homosexuality in relation to both masculinity and femininity. It was evident that while the boys initially made certain assumptions about gayness as being necessarily non-masculine and by inference then feminine, they later engaged with the maleness of gay men and suggested that their masculinity might be retrieved by the performance of conventional male roles. In this respect gay men appeared to occupy a kind of liminal space for them.

4.4 THEME FOUR: NEGOTIATIONS OF ALTERNATIVE MASCULINITIES

Whilst the focus of the discussions tended to highlight more hegemonic concepts of masculinity the participants did engage in some debate around 'alternative' masculinities. For the boys in the two groups these alternative masculinities took the form of engagement in cultural activities, valuing of academic prowess and also engagement in some activities that might traditional be considered feminine in terms of traditional gender roles. Although

interest in these kinds of pursuits and activities was often raised in contrast to investment in sport and rugby, there was some entertainment of the idea that they might have intrinsic value or merit.

4.4.1 Discussion of Theme

Whilst the participants were generally apprehensive about the prospect of engaging in non-masculine activities there were several participants who felt that men could push the boundaries in this respect, particularly if they were involved in a highly valued masculine activity prior to engaging with this activity. Thus engagement with alternative masculinities appeared to revolve around ideas of individual choice and a sense of a strong internal value system. Many of the participants were able to acknowledge that pursuing certain activities was difficult as they had concerns over how others would judge these activities in relation to masculinity:

> *FCR9: ... You go to glee auditions, then you like, why are you playing rugby or why are you going to, ja, so I think when you start, when you are playing rugby, when you are a rugby player you have an image, you have a, it's an image that people expect you to be, so let's say we all like, to all play rugby, and they have this image of us all as being like, being these big macho guys running around the field and beating the crap out of each other, you know what I'm saying. It's completely controversial, it's just a big image.*
>
> ...
>
> *FCR4: Think it comes down to who you are. People always say that you shouldn't care what people think, but you know hiding in the back of your mind, we do to some extent and whether you play rugby or you don't play rugby, and you don't care what people think you will go to glee auditions and you will do, [student name] for example, you will do things that may seem out of the ordinary.*

The above passage reflects FCR4 and FCR9's difficulty in reconciling different components of identity (including what seems to be an interest in dramatic art as exemplified in the 'glee' auditions) with an overall masculine identity. This is perhaps reflected in FCR4's speech pattern which at times appears disjointed as he attempts to understand his position on the

matter. FCR5 perhaps provides a middle ground in trying to position different aspects of identity relative to each other. He suggests that being a rugby player may act as a protective factor when experimenting with alternative masculinities, due, in part, to the privileged position that rugby players occupy in terms of masculine identity:

> *FCR5: ... One of the best rugby players in the school and people admire you and you went to glee auditions, people would maybe do that as well. Like try to follow in your footsteps if you like the main oke of the school...*
>
> *...*
>
> *FCR1: ... There was a flank and a prop who were in the choir and like, chicks also digged that because it was like, they nerdy in a way or like cultural but also got that first team rugby behind them to, it's like a balance.*

In the above statement there is some recognition that girls may admire somewhat more androgynous men, men who can sing as well as play rugby well. However, it was ever apparent that the rugby playing identity was that which was most prized. Rugby may in theory act as a protective factor whilst the participants engage in activities that may be considered alternative, but several comments made during the discussions indicate that expressions of alternative masculinities are still judged by fellow rugby players to some degree even if in a jovial manner:

> *FCR9: I do design.*
>
> *(Laughter)*
>
> *...*
>
> *TR1: Play chess, just do it manly.*
>
> *...*
>
> *TR4: If we come to school the next day and say we play trumpet, you won't be teased at touch rugby, you come to school and say you do ballet, you won't get shi... you won't get teased at touch rugby.*
>
> *TR2: You probably will though.*
>
> *TR3: Ja, but only like a little bit.*

TR2: But even if it wasn't touch rugby, if you if a guy came to you at school and said ja, no, I do ballet, I think everyone will tease him.

Speaking about his decision to take design as a subject FCR9 admits that it was a difficult decision:

FCR9: ... I second guessed that decision very, and I do drama so it's like a big, it's all cultural, a lot of cultural stuff for a sportsman to be playin-doing and I definitely second guessed that because of my sports.

FCR9's slip in using the world 'playing' when discussing design as a subject may indicate how entrenched the role of sport is in his identity. He also speaks quite openly about the fact that he felt that taking 'design' might 'spoil' his rugby playing identity and that he found it difficult to reconcile these two aspects of himself into a coherent (masculine) identity. It would appear that the participants felt 'social' pressure attached to occupying a public rugby identity but ultimately felt they needed to also look towards their own internal value system when constructing their identities, as exemplified in FCR9's description of his resolution of these tensions.

4.4.2 Theoretical Contextualisation

Investigations into alternative masculinities have formed the focus of several local research studies (Blackbeard & Lindegger, 2007; Davies & Eagle, 2010; Langa 2012). These studies, whilst investigating alternative masculinities have noted the somewhat fluid interchange between masculine ideals and how these ideals can be incorporated in both alternative and hegemonic masculinities.

Segal (1994) notes that cultural and social shifts affect the definition and positioning of traditional masculinities. It would appear that as noticeable shifts occur in the global economy and in socio-political relations throughout the world, shifts are also noticeable in the construction of gendered identities. As society begins to place value on activities which are not normally associated with masculinity, the very construction of what is masculine appears to be shifting as well, even if these shifts are very gradual. Connell (1995) argued that in recent history it is evident that "masculinity as a whole is reshaped to fit corporate economy and its tamed culture" (p.165). Given quite how entrenched many traditional aspects of

masculinity appear to still be, it could even be argued that alternative masculinities are being explored in a rather contradictory way since they may well be co-opted and in fact used to validate and preserve traditional concepts of masculinity. For example, men's increasing interest in aspects of body image may well represent an expansion of male vanity into an arena in which male interest in appearance can be used to sell more products and increase consumerism.

4.5 CONCLUSION

The themes discussed in this chapter highlight the negotiation of masculinity in several respects. Participants appeared to actively engage with their own negotiations and positioning of masculinity, while at the same time acknowledging both positive and negative aspects of a more hegemonic masculinity. Physicality appeared to be a dominant theme throughout the discussion groups and perhaps represents an easily recognised masculine ideal, providing a clear separation between masculinity and femininity. This being said, participants were also open to some form of engagement in activities which may be considered non-masculine. Engagement in such activities was however validated by performance in other activities with a strong link to masculinity. The participants identified role models as important influences in their negotiation of masculinity. By looking to role models for guidance in the construction of a masculine identity, patterns of hegemonic masculinity may be largely reproduced across generations, although there were also some indications of shifts in this respect. The themes discussed in this chapter have explored the ever changing construction of masculinity through the lens of the discussion group participants.

Although not unexpected, given the selection of participants for the study, it was nevertheless striking just how prominent rugby was as seen an indemnity marker. It seemed that the lens of rugby playing and the kinds of qualities valourised in this arena was extended into many aspects of life, including amongst others, preparation for occupational roles, carrying family value, ability to attract women and demonstration of determination and stoicism. The boys also generally appeared to appreciate the security and esteem associated with being a recognised rugby player and the positioning this allowed them on the ladder of male

hierarchy. However, they were also eager not to appear complacent or arrogant about this, as they recognised their good fortune relative to many other non-rugby playing boys.

The recognition of this 'good fortune' is perhaps evident in the second group's acknowledgement of their positioning within a masculine hierarchy. The differences between the two discussion groups indicated that while both groups subscribed to more traditional understandings of masculinity, the first discussion group could be consider to occupy a higher hierarchical positioning to the second group. This positioning was in fact commented on by the second group in the discussion.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

This study sought to explore the constructions of hegemonic masculinity among a group of young men who could be considered hegemonic in their positioning. The negotiation of their masculine identity was therefore explored and examined in order to gain an understanding of how hegemonic forms of masculinity may influence their identity development as well as their understandings of masculinity in general.

5.1 CENTRAL FINDINGS

The findings from this study indicated that traditional constructions of hegemonic masculinity are actively engaged with and used in the negotiation of a masculine identity. However, whilst forms of hegemonic masculinity were used to negotiate a gender identity the participants engaged with these aspects in a somewhat critical manner.

The four themes indentified and discussed in this study; the male body, aspirational role models and attributes, engagement and interaction with the feminine and negotiations of alternative masculinities, highlight the ways in which the participants critically engaged with the various elements of hegemonic masculinity and the expression of a masculine identity. While the participants engaged critically with elements of hegemonic masculinity, a hegemonic positioning was still preferred to an alternative or feminine positioning.

A noteworthy findings in the study concerns the role of men's bodies and physicality and the role of sport, in particular rugby, as a protective element when engaging in activities which are generally not considered masculine. The role of sport was seen as important in defining and developing a successful masculine identity. As such the participants felt that if a person was involved in 'masculine' sports, engagement with 'non-masculine' activities was seen as acceptable and easier to engage with as involvement in a sport had to some degree confirmed their masculinity.

The attention given to physicality and body image perhaps represents both a traditional and contemporary construction of masculinity. A man in his physical peak was historically

considered extremely masculine, as his body had developed to embody the principles of masculinity; being strong, protective and powerful. The boys' embraced this understanding of the relationship between physicality and masculinity but were also aware of more contemporary body practices such as the use of steroids, hair straightening and hair removal. In larger measure these rugby playing boys appear to subscribe to quite conventional understandings of masculinity, combining appreciation of toughness, dominance and aggression with team playing and respect. However, it was also interesting that in many instances the boys' appeared to appreciate the socially constructed nature of masculinity and to engage in discussions about stereotypes, over-generalizations, the possibility of embracing more androgynous expressions of gender identity and the role of the media in perpetuating specific images of masculinity. In this respect they appeared to have some sense of a non-essentialized version of masculinity. While this kind of insight did not necessarily translate into alternative expressions or embodiments of masculinity, it is possible to infer that more pervasive social interrogation of gender construction has had some impact on their thinking and everyday experience.

5.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Consideration should be given to the demographic makeup of the sample used in this research. The discussion groups represent a somewhat select section of the population within South Africa, and whilst the findings of this study are in line with other research studies conducted in the field of masculinity research, a broad generalisation of the findings is not possible. The sample used in this study represents a group of young men who have had a somewhat privileged upbringing. As such their positioning in terms of masculinity may be very different to other young men in South Africa who do not come from the same socio-economic background. Furthermore the participant's school may have further influenced their attitudes and negotiation of masculinity as the school represents itself as a progressive co-educational institution.

The use of focus groups also played a role in the type of data generated by the study as participants as there is always a degree of group pressure operating during the discussion groups. Participant's responses may well therefore have varied if individual interviews had

been conducted instead of group discussions. However, in the case of this study it was felt that the benefits of using a focus group method outweighed the detractions and it was apparent that the boys engaged quite easily in discussion with each other and the researcher.

Finally consideration should be given to the fact that this study was conducted as a master's level research report and as such presents findings of a limited scope. Masculinity as a research topic presents researchers with a broad field of study that is constantly changing, as such continued research in the field may render different results in the future.

It is suggested that future research could examine the influence of sport in the negotiation and positioning of masculinity among boys from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.

The role of the media in influencing constructions of masculinity was noted quite frequently by the participants. As such, further research examining the portrayal of men and masculinity by different forms of media may yield interesting findings.

5.3 REFLEXIVE COMMENT

While this study explored the subjective understanding of masculinity among the research participants the role of the researcher as a subjective being needs to be considered as a possible influence on the study.

During the discussion groups the researcher attempted not to influence the discussion groups views or opinions. However, by virtue of the research topic the participant's may have inferred certain understandings about the purpose of the study and engaged with discussion in a way which they felt might address the needs of the researcher. In this regard the age of the researcher (mid twenties) should be considered as the some of the participants tended to engage with the researcher on a peer level while others engaged with him as they would one of their teachers. While no questions were directed towards the researcher regarding his positioning, sporting background or understanding of masculinity, participants seemed to assume a common interest in and knowledge about rugby and sporting activities. As a tall, quite large boned white male it is quite possible that the researcher's physical being also led the boys to assume a common interest in sport and a reasonably common understanding on

masculinity. It was observed that although respectful, the boys seemed to feel relatively unselfconscious in the presence of the researcher.

During the analysis of the generated data the researcher made a concerted effort to limit the influence of personal opinions, understandings and beliefs which may have skewed the analysis and missed the original intended meaning.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: PREVALENCE TABLE OF CODES USED TO GENERATE THEMES

Theme	Group 'FCR'	Group 'TR'	Total Mentions
Physicality	53	19	72
Stereotype	24	26	50
Body Image	26	13	39
Denigrated	17	14	31
Belonging	11	19	30
Relationship to Women	12	17	29
Size	23	5	28
Success	21	6	27
Responsibility	11	15	26
Role Model	17	7	24
Mentality	14	9	23
Team	18	5	23
Mention of Feminine	11	10	21
Hierarchy	12	8	20
Alternative Masculinity	11	8	19
Culture	13	5	18
Emotions	3	12	15
Misunderstood	15	0	15
Homosexual mention	1	14	15
Honour	12	0	12
Family	3	7	10
Intellect	4	4	8
Pain	8	0	8
Aggression	5	2	7
Money	6	0	6
Faith	4	0	4
Tradition	4	0	4
Elitist	2	1	3
War	2	0	2

APPENDIX B: INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

School of Human and Community Development

Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, Johannesburg, South Africa

Tel: (011) 717-4500 Fax: (011) 717-4559

Email: justin@driversa.co.za

Cell: 082 685 4922

Dear Student

My name is Justin Stephenson and I am conducting research for the purpose of obtaining a masters degree in Clinical Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. My area of focus is masculinity, in particular on how young men who play rugby view masculinity at this point in South Africa. I am interested in what young South African men think about their own identity and masculine identity in general and I would like to invite you to participate in my research study as I think your ideas would be interesting to explore.

Taking part in this research will entail two things, namely creating a portfolio of five photographs which depict, for you, "What it means to be a man/boy in South Africa", as well as participating in a group discussion on this topic. For the portfolio you are welcome to use your own camera or cellphone camera, alternatively a disposable camera will be provided for you and processing of the film will be done at no cost to yourself. Some of the photos that you take may be printed in the final research document. All the original photos will be returned to the respective photographers after the interviews have taken place.

The discussions you will be asked to attend will last between 90 minutes to two hours and will focus to some extent on the photographs that you and other participants have taken. The group discussions will be at a time and a place convenient to yourself. With your permission this discussion will be recorded and transcribed for later study. All the participants in the group will be asked to sign an agreement to keep the content of the group discussion confidential. However I cannot give you a guarantee that participants will absolutely abide by this agreement although they will be strongly encouraged to do so.

Participation in this research is voluntary and no person will be advantaged or disadvantaged for their choice to participate or not. All of your responses will be kept confidential, and no information that could identify you will be included in the research report. While some direct quotes from the discussion may be cited in my research report this will be without any identification of the source of the comment. The discussion material (tapes and transcripts) will be kept in a safe location and only myself my supervisor and a transcriber bound by confidentiality will have access to them. You may refuse to answer any question and you may choose to withdraw from the study at any point. There will be no financial compensation for participating in the research, but I will provide something to eat and drink during the discussion groups. I do not imagine that the discussion will be upsetting in anyway, but if for any reason there is something that troubles you, you are welcome to speak to me or contact me after the group and we can discuss what options there might be to help resolve this.

The results of my research will be reported in a research report and possibly written up in a psychological journal. The research report will be available in the WITS library once finished and you may request a summary from me by email. If you choose to participate in the study please contact my via the email address of telephone number given above. Your participation in this study would be greatly appreciated.

Kind Regards,

Justin Stephenson
Cell: 082 685 4922
Email: justin@driversa.co.za

Prof. Gillian Eagle
Telephone: 011 7147 4528
Email: gillian.eagle@wits.ac.za

APPENDIX C: PARENTS' INFORMATION LETTER

School of Human and Community Development

Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, Johannesburg, South Africa

Tel: (011) 717-4500 Fax: (011) 717-4559

Email: justin@driversa.co.za

Cell: 082 685 4992

Dear Parent/s

My name is Justin Stephenson and I am conducting research for the purpose of obtaining a masters degree in Clinical Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. My area of focus is masculinity, in particular on how young men who play rugby view masculinity at this point in South Africa. I am interested in what young South African men think about their own identity and masculine identity in general. Since this seems to be changing over time.

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

Participation in the research is on a voluntary basis and there will be no negative repercussions for those who do not volunteer or who volunteer and then withdraw at any stage thereafter prior to submission of the report. Taking part in this research will entail two things for him, namely creating a portfolio of five photographs and then participate in a group discussion on this topic. A disposable camera will be provided to him, should he not wish to use a camera of his own, for the purpose of the portfolio. The discussions your son will be asked to attend will be between 90 minutes and two hours and will be at a time and a place convenient to the boys who participate. All participants will be asked to sign a confidentiality form at the start of the group discussions. Further, nothing which could lead to any participant being identified or associated with an idea will be reported in the study.

The results of my research will be reported in a research report and possibly written up in a psychological journal. The research report will be available in the WITS library once it is finished and you may request a summary from me by email.

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

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

Kind Regards,

Justin Stephenson
Cell: 082 685 4992
Email: justin@driversa.co.za

Research Supervisor
Prof. Gillian Eagle
Telephone: 011 7147 4528
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APPENDIX D: FOCUS GROUP 'FCR' TRANSCRIPT

Researcher: Well thanks guys, I guess the first thing that we can talk about is what did you think or some of the thoughts you had around the topic of what it means to be a young man in South Africa?

FCR1: To be strong and fit.

FCR2: Well what I have here is strength, knowledge, motivation, determination and acceptance of defeat.

FCR3: Sir, I think it's two sides, there's responsibilities on the one hand and I think the image, like B1 said, a man should be fit, should be physical, I think a man should also take responsibility for his actions, be a family man, a role model, stay away from drugs.

FCR4: I think one thing a man should have is um, integrity, and definitely a strong faith, whether it's in a religion or something greater than yourself that you believe in.

FCR5: I said honour, success, and the same strength and fitness and stuff.

(Laugher)

FCR6: Alright guys, I said a man should be a leader, someone who is supportive, someone who commands respect, um, someone who is a teacher, and yeah.

FCR7: I think being athletic is quite a big part in it.

(Group: yes, nodding heads)

Researcher: So athletic in general or are their specific sports that would be more in line with being a man?

FCR8: Well, like in school there are obviously sports that are above others, but you wouldn't say it, but they are.

FCR4: So if you do archery is that athletic? Would it be? *(Directed at researcher)*

Researcher: Well, I mean, what do you think?

FCR1: I think it is...

FCR4: I dunno.

FCR9: There are certain aspects.

FCR1: You don't need to train as hard, like muscular, for archery but you still have to, it's like a man kind of sport.

FCR4: If you think of athletic you think of a good muscle tone and someone who works out quiet often. I dunno if archery would fit into that category.

Researcher: So it sounds like there's something about being psychically at your peak with the sport, not just...

(Group: agreement)

Researcher: So you said that there are some sports that you would rank above others, I mean what would you put, in school, as the top sport.

FCR9: I think at this school it's definitely rugby.

Group: Rugby and water Polo.

FCR9: Rugby and water polo are probably the top two sports.

FCR1: But, like soccer is also like a guys sport, but it's, you also get girls soccer. So it's like I dunno.

FCR5: In terms of less...manly sports?

FCR1: No I'm saying that it's maybe less masculine. I dunno, you don't need to be as big for soccer because its less contact.

Researcher: What is it about rugby and water polo, that makes it, that those two stand out?

FCR4: The demand it has on the body it think *(Group agreement),* because for water polo you literally swim half the practice it's just fitness whereas rugby, we sort of focus on fitness in our own time, but it's the same kind of thing, you should be really fit.

FCR5: I think the physical intensity of both rugby and polo, I mean I haven't played much polo in my life if I'm honest *(laughter)* but one can go around in break and play with a soccer ball but I think coming off a rugby field, coming out from water polo is just a completely different level of tired and physical ability.

FCR9: Ja, it's that physical ability. I mean for like rugby I know like, if they say that size doesn't matter, but in actual fact it does kinda sort of matter. If you not like, physically, like strong enough to play a full rugby match then you going to struggle and its going to be sore.

FCR4: But that's, that's what it's about and it's not just the fitness.

FCR9: Ja, if you're not physically, like, able to handle the contact then and you come off, then its sore.

FCR1: Ja, but if you small and strong...

FCR9: Ja, it's a different story, if you have like the mascu...

FCR1: Like little B8 over there.

FCR9: Ja, even little B8 *(laughter),* well not little FCR8 anymore...

FCR10: I think it's about mental strength as well, to get through the hardships of training, the game, like swimming lengths in the pool, pushing yourself to the limit every single time.

FCR2: It's that toughness I think, like when you get klapped you got to get up and keep going.

FCR5: And like when there's ten minutes left in the game and you just want to lay down, just to keep going.

FCR9: It's something about having to rely on the others on the field and not wanting to let them down at the same time.

Researcher: Does that mentality of being on the sports fields carry into being a man in the world?

FCR4: I think it helps you face your challenges, so if you, so you know with rugby, because I'm like, make a big tackle on you and you sort of hurt your shoulder your required to get back up and carry on with that same hurt shoulder, your weaker than you were before and if your mental state is and if you learn to overcome the pain and everything like that, to still do your job, you can still do that even if you're in corporate situation.

FCR5: And so it's hard to teach life lessons like honour and integrity. It's easier to learn that on a sports field than just life in general.

FCR1: I think it also requires, polo especially and rugby, requires a lot of thinking power, it's not just the training and the intensity behind these high intensity sports, it's like, if you don't out smart your player, he's going to tackle you, so you step him to outsmart him. Same thing in polo, if you just go up on a tackle, you one on one with your opponent, if you don't do anything the guys going to swim up to them, you not gonna score a goal because he's just gonna get the ball and turn over the ball so it's just gonna be like up and down all the time.

Researcher: So I mean it sounds like it's something about the risk? Putting yourself out there?

FCR1: Ja.

FCR6: I just think it gives you, like, sport in general just gives you a lot of life lessons. With team sports you learn how to compromise, you learn how to be there for someone else, you know. So it will help in the corporate field.

Researcher: With that you think there's a difference between men or even young men who played sports and who don't? Can you see a difference? Is it a different type?

FCR9: Ja, I think you can definitely see a difference in the athletic ability, if like, someone, like just goes to gym to look good, and like, have a gym body, it's, like, a different type of, like, athletic ability to a let's say a rugby player generally for instance. So I definitely think there's a difference in your physical appearance. If you athletic or just gyming in general.

FCR6: I think there is a difference and not just in your physical stuff but like the mentality. You can tell like people who don't know how to work in a team, people who aren't good at following instructions from their peers, you can see the difference they haven't been exposed too sport.

FCR4: And also, um you can sort of see like the stature of people you know that of you, I don't know if it relates to all sports, but if you sort of do shine within your sports, you might walk around with a little bit of confidence, not arrogance, but confidence, and you walk up tall. Just in the way you present yourself you can learn, you can learn that from sports.

FCR3: I also think that sports like polo and rugby and those that include intensive training provide an outlet, like you see the kids with like anger problems and problems at home, I think it's a way for them to get like it out of their systems and I think it's the perfect way too. Instead of getting into street fights, getting into narcotics.

(laughter)

FCR5: And just in the school you can see, like, the people who don't play a sport, like say the grade 8's for instance they don't have that sense of hierarchy, like say *[Name of student]* is the first team captain, like when we walk around the school we respect him because in a way he is our leader and like the grade 8's and those that don't play sport are those that don't have the respect that they should.

FCR1: I think what FCR6 said about listening to other people and that there's also that thing about team work and that also applies when you out of school and you working in the office and stuff, if you don't listen to people and work with people it's always gonna, I dunno, back fire on you and you just gonna, have to work in the office environment with people in general.

FCR2: I think it's also like trust, when you go onto a field you got to trust like everyone you play with and everything but some of these people that, I dunno, if they do like debating or something that they do by themselves they don't trust anyone to do anything else for them, they just, ja.

FCR5: I think there's also a difference between team sports and...

FCR1: Individual

FCR5: Like what FCR2 said you rely on yourself to do things and you don't rely on anyone else, so that won't benefit you when you older.

Researcher: So you saying there's something about learning to trust in a team and work together.

FCR5: And relying on others for the better of everyone and not just yourself.

FCR7: As much as we go on about how it's a team sport we also need to kinda have that sense of trust in alliance and team members. The team is at its best when every man is doing their best, I don't think it's our team I think its everyone has a responsibility.

FCR4: Ja, I think that comes through especially in like you know a rugby scrum for example because it's not cohesive then its dead and we are not achieving.

Researcher: Okay thanks guys, I just want to run through a couple of questions here, obviously if you guys want to throw in anything else as we go along just go for it. So I think the one question we have discussed a little bit already but what does rugby, playing rugby mean to you individually?

FCR?: Everything.

(Laughter)

FRC9: Ja, I think it's also like for some people it's a lifestyle. Like for me for my family, my dad was playing rugby, my brother played rugby and now I'm playing rugby and we all play the same position. So I think it's also a bit of genetics and you just you just for me I just feel that I should be playing rugby, it's a lifestyle for me.

FCR4: Mmm, I'm a bit like him in that sense, I feel proud to be part of something that's a lot bigger than myself. And I am proud to trust people next to me, even if they make a mistake or they do their job to the best that they can. I feel proud to be a part of that and that they trust me to be exactly the same.

Researcher: So a sense of belonging?

FCR4: Yes...

FCR6: For me, it has allowed me to bond with people I wouldn't normally bond with at school so that's why I play quite a few sports so I get to hang out with people who I may not have classes with or anything.

FCR10: I think what FCR6 is saying when you go onto the field it's like going onto the field with your mates and it's like a battlefield with your mates and you get to experience with your mates is a lot better feeling than just doing it by yourself or anyone else.

(Group: That's nice)

(Laughter)

FCR4: I think you, I think you also sort of experience your friends at their like most, um, they're really vulnerable in those situations. you are there when they are hurt when they are down you are there and you can see it and you can help.

FCR9: You are there for their best times and worst times as well so you can see who your true friends are.

FCR1: It's also nice going into a game, and like you playing from a small school, you playing like a school that's like ah one thousand and five hundred students and you're a bit nervous before the game, you not know, you're not sure what the outcome is going to be but like when you start the kick off there's like that adrenaline and stuff and you know everyone is going to be fighting for each other and you actually pull through the game and have a, its quiet a thing to watch and quiet an enjoyable game.

FCR5: And also like when you meet people, like say you go out and meet a girl and you say no like I play rugby and stuff, and she is like ah no that's cool.

(Loud Laughter)

FCR5: It's just that pride and honour in something that means so much to so many people around the world and like if you play a sport, like tennis, when you on your own it's not as big in the world and people don't recognise it as much because it's not a team sport and we saw at like the soccer world cup sport can unite a country and it's just great to be part of something like that.

FCR9: Also on top of that, something like for instance if, let's say there is a South African tennis player or South African golfer, Like Ernie Ellis for instance, he plays golf as a profession but he doesn't play for South Africa, he plays for Ernie Ellis. If you play for a sport like rugby you playing for your nation and not for yourself, so you not only playing a sport because you like it but you playing for someone else and for a whole nation.

FCR2: I also think it's a great opportunity for new, um, role models, and guys for us to idolise you look at guys like Frans Stein and Quade Cooper and you see them often it's something to look forward too.

FCR10: I think it teaches us valuable life lessons, for me at least, like like pain is only temporary. Um, Like like loosing isn't always like bad. That you can learn from a loss, it can motivate you.

Researcher: When I think, I know we all laughed but with the comment about girls finding Rugby players attractive, do you think there is something about being a rugby player that does appeal to girls more do you feel they are attracted to you because of that?

Group: Ja, Yup *(Nodding)*

FCR9: Not even rugby though, *(FCR1 makes to talk but gestures FCR9 to continue)*For polo players well like it's because they are so flippin ripped okay *(Laughter)*. Chicks are just like are generally attracted to them. So playing the sports is like it doesn't only, it's not just the perception that being a rugby player he's like so like good at rugby or whatever it's the physical like appearance as well so if you play rugby you gonna be strong, you gonna go to gym and stuff and you gonna be looking good. So, well, ...unless you're a prop *(Laughter)* Um, but like still you just generally have like physical attraction to chicks.

FCR4: When you play rugby it's like, if you play in the first team or most respected team for your age group you would, um ,you would also sort of be at the top of the food chain you know, in the hierarchy and girls who like confidence and like your physical attributes and you are more, sort of you know who you are, more confident in who you are because you are accepted by your fellow sports men girls are attracted to you.

FCR7: I think they are also attracted to like the pride and that, like when we go up on stage and they say first time and you get your scarf and your shirt and everything. *(Laughter)*

FCR6: I think it does attract a lot of women, I know last year with FCR4 when he scored that try against *[Name of school]* all of a sudden it was like, some people didn't even know his name but they knew what he did, you know what I mean, it attracts people and also when they come down for games they see who you are and I mean you might not be the smartest guy in class but on the sports field when they come to see you and you can show people what you are best at then it also attracts people to see you.

FCR1: I also find that um rugby compared to soccer, um I mean I know that soccer has quite a lot of money involved in the sporting world and I would like to earn that type of money but you find Rugby players go through a lot more then soccer players and the sports a lot more physical and more contact and they don't get paid as well as soccer players but are, I think they should be paid more cos like it's more demanding from your body and more strenuous and you have less recovery time because like there are so many tournaments that come after each other it's like Super 15 then a break then Tri-nations then um Super 15 again and then like Currie Cup so ja, I feel that rugby players should get um *(Group: Recognition)* Ja, and they should be paid more.

FCR6: The only reason soccer players are paid more is because the shares and stuff, and cos its international, because all the best rugby players are from the South and the exchange rate isn't as great as it is in the North so you can't, like Dan Carter gets paid as much as a, I dunno, if he played in Europe he would get paid at least thirty million Euros.

FCR5: Sonnybill Williams gets paid five million in six months

FCR1: Sonnybill is going to Japan *(Group: Exactly why?)* And Japan hardly has any rugby talent but they pay well so that's why I think rugby players have to improvise and go to like French clubs or European clubs or play in Japan and get paid so that they can at least get some money out of it while they are at their peak.

FCR6: You look at what rugby players in SA get compared to soccer players and then that's a fair comparison. You realise that they actually do get paid well compared to soccer players.

FCR5: I mean they not exactly battling right Francois Hougaard has a S3, R8 *(Laughter)* I mean they not exactly battling.

FCR3: With why I think soccer is also because it's a lot more accessible, you can pick up a soccer ball and have a soccer game but rugby you need a coach you need equipment you need a field so I think maybe that's why as soon as facilities start improving I think a lot more

people will play rugby, and like ah 50 years ago soccer players weren't getting what they earn today, like it's all about the public eye and guys are owing oil rigs and shipping companies that become club managers and I think rugby could go that way as long as they develop it and get the facilities around the world.

Researcher: Sorry you were...

FCR4: I was gonna say something but I forgot, I think it was what he said earlier.

Researcher: Well with that do you think rugby is elitist then? Or as a sport more elite then soccer to enter into?

FCR7: Well like they said I think the demand that it takes from your body and recovery times, like it is incredible how soccer injuries like I know it's around your ankles and it is more fragile but like rugby players can like have, you think the guy has like lost his shoulder after a game and he's back next week so I think there is that toughness and they do deserve a bit more, um, recognition for that. However soccer players are like completely over paid and therefore they make that comparison. I don't think rugby players are paid badly and I know that Frans Stein demanded five from, to go to the Stormers, now they couldn't accept that offer because they couldn't afford so he went to the Sharks and he is on about seven and a half and that's decent money you know, nice house, nice car so I think it's a bit of greed...*(inaudible)*

FCR6: I think in this country it's like, um, I will watch a rugby game and a soccer game but it's like when you see the Springboks play, even on BBM or twitter, you see statuses constantly about the coach about the players and then you see like Bafana play, if it's not a huge tournament you will see the usual two or three people you know. I think in this country and the support there is always at least thirty thousand twenty thousand fans at a rugby game, like for Super 15 but soccer you could literally play in like front of empty crowds, playing premier soccer, so I think in this country rugby is way ahead of other sports.

FCR1: Definitely.

FCR7: Ja, to add on to what FCR6 has just said I think like if you see a soccer star from South Africa just walking past like half the people wouldn't recognise him but if you see like François Stein, and then you would be like Oh...

FCR5: Ja, and like the pride people have like every Monday we get to school and everyone says oh our team beat your team, they speak about them. In any class at break or like walking through the corridor or anywhere people are always just speaking about the game and I don't think you really get that, well you get that about soccer, but not in South Africa more on an international basis.

FCR2: I just wanna add to what FCR7 said, all of us who are soccer fans support ah, teams in the premier league, and like La Liga in Spain, but with the standard of South African rugby we sport a team, nobody that lives in Gauteng supports the Lions I will be honest *(laughter)* but we try to support another team in the country. Which is very important.

FCR6: Like with rugby when we have like Friday games, when we have like in the canteen students will try to get their teachers to let them go, It doesn't matter what teams playing they just wanna be there to watch the rugby and like be present in that time, you know what I mean.

FCR1: And bunk class *(Laughter)* No I'm joking.

FCR6: I think it is because rugby is at its best level it can be, it's like soccer to England.

Researcher: Um, one question is do you feel people expect rugby players to behave in a certain way?

Group: Ja, yes *(Nodding)*

FCR5: Ja, I think like what FCR9 was saying with the physical conditioning, you don't expect to go out and see a rugby player to be getting drunk...

(Laughter: FCR6 trying to open a bag of peanuts bursts the bag open onto the floor)

FCR7: I think because of it being like physical capability and image and strength, um, I think I mean a rugby player could go hit up a bar if he wants too because of his strength but because he has a responsibility, like you often hear reckless stories about soccer players even golfers getting completely smashed and I think rugby players try to carry that bit of responsibility, like try to keep it to a beer in the night you know.

FCR5: But there is also that stereotype of Afrikaans people, you know like Brandy and Coke. *(Laughter)*

Group: The guy who tunes you. *(Laughter)*

FCR4: Also I don't think you should um, really sort of demand rugby players to, at the top level of the country, so you play for SA rugby. I don't think you should ask them to act any different from a normal person because to me it seems like you know you play in a team and you act a certain way, it's not like that, special set of talents that make you who you are.

FCR9: And like my, one of my friends he doesn't play much sport or anything, everyone knows *[Name of student]*, but like he keeps telling us like rugby always like go up to him and like trend like they are stepping him or whatever but it's like a mental thing, we so used to playing rugby we so like, we like the sport so much that we doing it in the corridors and like in classes and stuff so I think it's like back to genetics and habits and like it's in our blood to play rugby.

Researcher: So do you think people miss understand rugby players sometimes?

FCR9: Ja, definitely. *(Group: yes).*

FCR8: It's just like a different way of thinking, for a rugby player, for a Prop, if there's something that's high up you just gonna be like, come here to your lock and then you just like

lift him and picked it up and everyone is like ah they showing off, but that's just how you think because you used to it, doing it thirty times a game.

FCR4: I dunno if it's only to do with rugby, if you, it's people are exposed to different things if it's what you carry with you every day or every second day you gonna think like that and act like that. If you do archery everyday or every second day then you gonna think a certain way act a certain way as well, not just rugby players.

FCR6: I think the problem is like that, rugby players that they get, like they love it too much, like on the field rugby players play with their hearts and not with their minds and they get so arrogant and so like it's just *(Group: murmurings)* I just think there are unnecessary fights that happen when like the ball is gone and someone will still tackle you afterwards *(Group: Ja)* and that kind of thing, I don't understand.

FCR4: I don't think it's arrogance...

FCR7: I think you just in the game and...

Group: Mindset...

FCR4: But rugby is, rugby is, if you want to be good a rugby squad, you have to sort of play it like it's your passion you know, soccer players, you know I find that very hard to believe FCR6, like you can compare arrogance with rugby players and soccer players are down all over the place demanding money to play at certain clubs...

FCR6: Okay, who is the best rugby player, for you?

FCR4: In the world?

FCR6: Ja,

Group: Dan Carter, Sonnybill.

FCR4: That could be on position

FCR6: Okay, well Sonnybill is all flashy and tattoos...

FCR10: Okay Dan Carter?

FCR5: But that's tribal tattoos.

FCR6: Okay but clubs, cars and women and stuff.

FCR4: I get you.

FCR6: No, I'm just saying like with all sports you get your arrogant people but I think on the field um, rugby players kinda lack that sense of sportsmanship. you kinda over do things.

(Inaudible group murmuring)

FCR9: Ja, but like it's also adrenaline, like someone is gonna run me I am going to tackle them and afterwards, I am gonna like, I am gonna do something because my adrenaline is pumping so much that the...

FCR5: Ja, but that's not...

FCR3: You also try to get under their skin in a rugby game...

FCR4: The fact that you play with your heart makes it *(Group: yeah)* it's difficult to control your emotions some days in severe circumstances.

Researcher: Sure, Ja. *(gestures to FCR7 with hand up)*

FCR7: Ja, the passion gets so severe and I am not going to name schools but like where there are huge fist fights, conflict between parents and people getting thrown down stairs *(laughter)* and you not saying it's right but there is just so much passion around at a rugby game.

FCR1: I think it is also just the because ah rugby only starts getting intense from about like Grade 10 from most schools, like, proper intense rugby until like after school, pools and Springboks, it's like you only you only play rugby up until about thirty five or maybe forty but at the latest.

Group: Forty?

FCR9: Ja, there was an Argentinean that was forty.

FCR1: Um ja so there is a lot of like, you still adolescent and like you there is a lot of adrenaline and and like you get angry quickly and you just want to show the other guys in the team like, if you ball runs and you still running straight and you will maybe run into him just to show him like you there or whatever.

FCR8: I think also that professionals do that...

FCR1: Ja.

FCR8: Like we look up to them and watch games and see a fight.

FCR1: Ja.

FCR8: And that like we would almost want to start a fight in rugby...

FCR1: Mmmm.

FCR9: And also spectators also demand so much, like I know for me when you on the side of the field kicking a ball like trying to kick it out or something, about ten parents off the field will shout at me, don't try go too far cos then I am not going to get it out and then they gonna turn it over. So it's very like spectators are very influential on how you play the game.

Researcher: Sorry you had something? *(Gesture towards FCR3)*

FCR3: Coming back to FCR6's point earlier I don't think that rugby is quiet as influenced in terms of politics and the money, like for example soccer players are earning, like good premier league player earns between ninety and one hundred and twenty thousand Pounds a week and I am going to be honest if I was earning that and I was told that if I didn't go down when I was lightly nudged in the box, I would when you are earning that kind of money. Rugby players are paid respectively and also there is so much more control on the actual field I don't think it is as influenced and I don't think there is any corruption, I am there are some questionable referees...

Door opens - student coming to call those students playing soccer

Researcher: Thanks guys, Okay one other question was is there anything in school, sports anything you can't do because you are a rugby player?

Researcher: Thanks guys.

(FCR3 and FCR6 leave the group)

FCR4: I think it comes down to who you are. People always say that you shouldn't care what people think but you know hiding in the back of your mind we do to some extent and whether you play rugby or you don't play rugby and you don't care what people think you will go to Glee auditions and you will do, *[Name of student*] for example, you will do things that may seem out of the ordinary.

FCR9: Ja, I think it's like just an image thing like you just, when you play rugby you are seen as like the big, the big boys or like you seen as like if you play rugby and you go to Glee auditions then you like why are you playing rugby or why are you are going to, ja, so I think when you start, when you are playing rugby, when you are a rugby player you have an image you have a, it's an image that people expect you to be so let say we all like to all play rugby and they have this image of us all being like being these big macho guys running around the field and beating the crap out of each other, but they not gonna see someone like that go for a Glee audition, you know what I am saying. It's completely controversial it's just a big image thing.

FCR5: In a way if you, like say you want one of the best rugby players in the school and people admire you and you went to Glee auditions people would maybe do that as well. Like to try and follow in your footsteps if you like the main oke of the school or something like that.

Researcher: So you saying there is a bit of a role model attached to it but also I am wondering do you guys do anything that you feel comfortable talking about now that maybe you thought twice about because you were worried about what people would think? or...

FCR9: I do design.

Researcher: Okay.

(Laughter)

FCR9: And at first I thought like it's going to take up so much time and it's like not one of those subjects someone would take as a sportsman but I just did it because I was into it like, that's like what I do I really like designing things. So I second guessed that decision very, and I do drama so it's like a big it's all cultural a lot of cultural stuff for a sportsman to be playin-doing and I definitely second guessed that because of my sports.

FCR4: I also, I ah I take my religion quiet seriously and I go to sort of Bible talks every Thursday after school and I did second guess it in the beginning and then I realised that you know I don't really care what people think it's my life so I will do what I ja.

FCR1: I, um, heard that at [*Name of school*] some guys in the first team but it's more like Grade 11's and Matrics that are playing cos the school is a lot bigger and you obviously have a wider variety to pick from and guys are a lot bigger, like the Props are weighing like one hundred and twenty instead of like ninety and um some of the guys like, there was a Flank and a Prop who were in the choir and like chicks also digged that because it was like they nerdy in a way or like cultural but they also got that first team rugby behind them so it's like a balance.

Researcher: So I mean if maybe they were someone who was just in the choir and not playing rugby they would be seen differently?

FCR1: Ja.

FCR9:Ja, definitely definitely.

FCR5: I think it is how people perceive you.

FCR9: But there could be that person that's in the choir, could or have the opportunity to play rugby they could have the same physical appearance as a rugby player and ah the strength to be a rugby player but obviously doesn't have the decision to play rugby. Like now in Matric there is this huuuge guy in Martic who we all want to play rugby but he's not playing rugby cos he plays the piano and he can't injure his fingers. So there is like that there is a sort of sporting ability in him but he just chooses not to because he has a dedication to piano.

FCR1: I also wanted to say that when I went to Loftus the one time it was just about um, I don't know how to put it but about how people see rugby and soccer. Like I watched a Bulls Lions game and there wasn't that many people there must have been like four maybe five thousand people there at Loftus and then we went like two weeks after that and there was a Kaiser Chiefs Pirates match there and like the whole stand was full and that's the same thing like with um like between rugby and soccer even if there's a European soccer club that like I don't really know the difference Championships and stuff but like the lower teams, not like Man U and stuff if they playing the crowds will be full like if a French Euro rugby team is playing like no one really knows about them it's not really streamed on TV. So I don't think they get given as much like, they don't get shown as much and to the public and ja.

FCR4: Sorry to interrupt Sir but we have to excuse ourselves for water polo.

Researcher: Sure.

FCR9: Shit it's like half of us going.

FCR1: Must we hand these in *(Consent forms).*

Researcher: Ja, thanks and if you can take one of these for your parents to sign.

FCR1: I think we must take for FCR3 and FCR6.

FRC9: I'll take one for them.

Researcher: Ja, please leave what you have. Thanks for coming guys.

FCR1, FCR2, FCR4 and FCR7 leave for water polo practice.

FCR5, FCR8, FCR9 and FCR10 remain.

Researcher: There are just a couple more questions we can try and shoot through if you guys are okay with that?

FCR1: Thank you sir. *(Still leaving)*

Researcher: Thanks very much for coming. Okay so the one is what do you think about the media's perception of men?

FCR9: Of men in general?

Researcher: In general.

FCR5: I think everyone has their own press set like ideas on how a man should be and I think the media has changed the way people see men in a way over the years like particularly sportsman. They have made it seem like there are specific media groups that make it seem like rugby players are a bunch of animals running around the field and like there's always different perceptions to how people are seen so the media could influence that a lot.

FCR9: Ja, like in terms of advertising and like and for instance underwear advertising and stuff that gives the perception that a man is a, a true man is gonna be ripped and he is going to have good muscle tone but it's like it's a completely wrong perception of what a man is a man can be, there can be a fat man like no muscle tone what so ever but can still be a proper man but that's the way the media like like FCR5 said has influenced other people's perceptions of so we watching TV and stuff, watching these adverts of all these like muscle toned, ripped men that are advertising underwear give the perception of ah strong, a man ah a man will only be as strong person he will have the right posture and he will have class or whatever, whatever the advert is. So I think the media definitely influences people's perceptions of what it's, all it is.

FCR5: And like you see all like the big sportsman getting endorsed by big brands and stuff. Like I know all the big one's like the Beast endorsed by Bic and like they show him as, they want people to basically piggy back on his perception of being a man, like how they see it

and like oh Beast shaves with this I will do it so like to try and be in line with his stature in a way.

FCR8: I think a lot of people judge every, every man in the world by one man's actions. So for instance if one man commits a crime and it's ruthless I think a lot of people would or women would think that most men are ruthless like don't have heart that kind of thing and that's how the media would be.

FCR9: On top of that like I know in the school um if a guy treats a group, one of the girls in a group of girls badly. That whole group of girls perceive every guy in the whole school does what that one guy just did to that one girl and it's very generalistic like they will say all of you guys do this and that's exactly the same thing. People think like if ah like a famous person or politic...politician would like do something really bad or like would kill someone or something people automatically perceive like men politicians to be like that. So like for me I see Zuma like completely screwing up this country and I and when I first see this I automatically assume that black male politicians are like that, but then again I look at Obama and how he is creating this whole America, like American world, American Dream. So it completely like if two politicians do the same thing then there will be a different story but because Zuma is doing this and Obama is doing this I think it controversies it a little bit.

FCR10: There's Yin and Yang there is always bad in the world and there is always good. It balances itself out. So for every bad that you have you have good. For every bad rugby player you have a good rugby player. For ever man, our perfect conception of a man you have another bad perception.

FCR5: But like if, like I know one of the chicks spoke to me a couple of weeks ago about rugby and how they see it in the media like Quade Coopers one tackle on Berrick Barnes and got banned for it. Chicks come up to me and are like, you see that's why you shouldn't play rugby because you just getting hurt and like they don't see how much good can come out of it they only see or heard about that they don't watch a game and see the tries that are scored, how the fans interact there, they just saw the bad thing. So that's also media like influencing the perception.

FCR9: And on top of that, on top of what they both just said there's something like that tackle which Qaude Copper made on him, that was a very bad thing but then yet again a couple of years ago Quade Cooper throws a backhand pass perfectly to ah one of the players, so for every bad act that someone does there is always going to be a good, or for every good for this instance Quade Coopers that glorious pass is going to be a bad so it's exactly what he has just been saying.

FCR8: I think in this instance if you are not a rugby player and you have never played rugby you won't understand what it means to, to take the hits just to be a part of it. Like when I walk off the rugby field or the next morning I like to feel hurt because I feel like I have done something, I feel like I have achieved, I have put my body on the line. I think a lot of people don't understand what that means to a rugby player.

FCR10: People don't understand now a day's what it takes to be an elitist what it takes to be a extra, extra normal, what it takes to be a leader now a days.

Researcher: So are you saying there are sacrifices?

Group: Ja,

FCR5: Like how we play games on Saturdays and so many okes go out and like, oh ja we are going out to get drunk on Friday night.

FCR9: Ja, Friday night.

FCR5: And we like ja okay well we going to be in bed 9 O'clock after eating pasta, carbo-loading for the next day and there are sacrifices, but then also people don't, like FCR10 said the good and the bad, see that they don't see like we go out onto the field and make a big hit. That's made up for the night that we could have been out with our friends, that's, we don't mind sacrifices because the good outweighs the bad and people that don't play sport won't realise that.

FCR5: And if you don't go out that night and then you go and play the crapest game of your life the next Saturday that's a risk you got to be willing to take. You gotta, you have to take the risk in order to succeed. So.

Researcher: Um, one question is what do you think makes a man feminine?

FCR5: When you don't act like jocks *(said jokingly)*.

FCR9: No um.

FCR5: I think we all have our own feminine qualities.

FCR9: There is definite .., ja.

FCR5: Like I shave my legs for example and a lot of people say ah no that's gay and like...

FCR10: It's just what he likes, it's his life you can't tell him what to do, if he likes shaving his legs you can't say no it looks dumb. People now a days are to inclined to be sheep they to inclined to follow other people.

FCR5: Like this is how it's done and I am going to do it that way and no way else

FCR8: I think it is how someone presents themselves, like for me someone with a firm hand shake it shows that you, I dunno that you are strong, strong willed, you know what you want and sort of makes you stand out what gives you that edge over someone who doesn't do it.

FCR9: Ja, also I dunno like sometimes before we go out and stuff, like sometimes if a guy straightens their hair they are automatically seen as feminine.

Researcher: Okay.

FCR9: But I straighten my hair, so.

FCR5: Ja, everybody has their own ways.

FCR9: Ja, exactly and like the person that straightens their hair can't be looked at as differently as a person who doesn't straighten their hair.

FCR5: But it is also little things like, we in the school, it's not like a very big school so we see seen as the rugby players that and there's a certain stigma attached to being the rugby players so if you go out and someone sees you wearing say something like a suede suit or something like that that's not in the perception of a rugby player that could be seen as feminine, people don't think about, well people that don't play rugby think about rugby players as being big macho people like they don't see what's behind them and that they actually people.

FCR9: Ja.

FCR5: Ja.

Researcher: So do you think that, linked with that, that when people see you the first thing they think is the rugby player and not...

FCR9: First, first, first.

Group agreement

FCR10: Whenever a person first lays eyes on you first they immediately have a perception of what you are and your and they, what you do and they already categorise you...

FCR5: And it is hard to change that.

FCR10: And it's hard to change that.

FCR9: Ja, like if a rugby player if a rugby guy goes out, to like a club or something and he is well built and he is big and he's been gyming and he's got that size and strength on him and he goes out wearing like tight shirt then people automatically look at him and go like oh well that guys a Roid-boy, like he is on Roids. But they don't actually see the work he has been putting in.

FCR5: The work he has been doing.

FCR9: He has been training his ass off to look like that, so like, we do a lot. I know we look at a picture of someone or a chick will show us a picture and say no this guy looks so hot and we okay well he is one steroids, because he is big and ripped and stuff. So it's an automatic perception, so I look at someone and I think no like you are on steroids. Just because he's, looks bigger than us or better than us.

FCR5: But it's not always a bad perception.

FCR9: Ja, it's not always like that, it's not always a bad perception but then if you see a big like a huge eighth man on a rugby field they you gonna look at him and be like, gees this oke

trains hard. So it depends on your setting of where you are. If you see a, like I said on the rugby field, we had one of the biggest eighth man that we have had at the school last year, last year?

Group: Ja.

FCR9: Last year and um like if people see him out, just say they walk, if I saw him out and I had never seen him before I would automatically think he is on steroids. Because he is so big and so like like macho, but I see him on the rugby field and it is completely different perception so if you go to like a trails of a rugby match and you see all these big okes you just gonna be like yuss these okes train hard. But if that same team goes out to like a bar or something then the perception is that they are on steroids or like they just gym to look good they don't gym for actual specific reasons.

FCR10: I think as humans we are naturally of others that are better than us. Because we can't believe that someone could be better then what we perceive to be ah great in ourselves.

FCR5: I also think it's how you carry it, if I go out and I walk around and laugh at some oke who walks past me and I'm like haha I am bigger than you people are gonna be like well you're a juice boy you've got that charisma about you but then ja, on the rugby field you have that respect of, you met some small oke and he is gonna put you back ten meters when you run into him. Like you have the respect of people around you.

FCR10: And and as a rugby player you don't have to be big and what I found is that a lot of the smaller guys like for instance *[Name of student]*, um that puts in the tackles and like *[Name of student]* isn't a big guy and um but he makes like some of the hardest tackles in our team, he has probably got the, he, probably holds the most respect for *[Name of students]*then other people on the team cos they train so hard in order to put the bigger guys back.

FCR9: Ja

Researcher: With that do you guys feel there is a pressure to try and I guess look like someone who is ripped or huge or...

FCR5: Ja,

FCR9: Of course

FCR5: If you, spent a day with us you would see the amount of times we speaking about supplements, steroids, gym, how much we bench the day before, how long we train for, how much we weigh, like you'd honestly be so shocked about how often we speak about that stuff because it's something that means so much to us like my mom has come to me and said to me that I must stop thinking this way because having that um, strength and size has become an obsession and I think all boys at this age, it is because you want to be, you want to run onto the field and have the other team go, oh look at that oke I don't want to run into him, um you want to have that self confidence to know that you are bigger and stronger than that guy next to you.

FCR9: Ja, ja, on top of that I think now a days the biggest thing for males specifically is, teenage males our age about is gym. Most like, I see a lot of people that I used to play cricket with like a long time ago, now in the gym, gyming hard getting really big and like I see this and I'm like, dude I would never have thought like you would com... that you would be a gym-boy, like three four years ago. And um, I think it's not like people I know are do not like gym so much but I don't think it's not that you like gym like it's more um, the results of gym. I know for me, I don't really, I don't really like going to gym, I don't literally like the reps and stuff cos it's tiring it's like takes it out of you but the result of that you get, from doing all that hard work is the obsession.

FCR10: Obviously you do release endorphins when you gym, so that creates a happiness.

FCR8: I think also when you lining up for a rugby game and you about to run onto the field you look at the opposite side of the field and you see your opposite number and you and you see he's much bigger than you and what are you going to do. It really starts playing mind games with you um and I think to get over that you wanna be bigger, gym, and um to not let that happen to us in the game.

FCR5: But I think it's also a realisation that we come that we come too that no matter how big you are, there's always gonna be a guy about ten times your size. Like, I for instance have friends at the gym and they huge and they weigh like one hundred and fifteen kilos I think and then you go out to a club. And you think like there's this guy named *[Name]*and everyone talks about*[Name]*

FCR9: Ah God...

FCR5: And um, and like we look up to him and oh he is the biggest guy we seen but you will go out to a club or to a bar somewhere with him and there will be a guy bigger than him and that guy will probably see guys bigger than him and there's always gonna be that feeling of not being as good as someone and I think we all just need to deal with that.

FCR10: It's like a guy that is good and big at the same time there's always beat another small...

FCR9: Ja, Ja, that's the, you see now that's the perception that teenagers, teenagers specifically our age have now and like I see, when I go to gym here, gym around here, is I see, now I see Grade 8's from our school. When I was in Grade 8 I didn't even think about going to gym. I didn't even know like what to do at gym so if I did go to gym I would run on the treadmill. So the treadmill is the only thing, like when I think of gym in Grade 8 I think of getting on a treadmill and running or like doing a circuit or something.

FCR5: But like...

FCR9: But now a days, when we think of gym, we think of weights, literally like we think of pushing weights doing different parts of the body and just getting big. Ja.

FCR5: Also like we said with the hierarchy and having respect and everything, like, when we were in Grade 8 we looked up to the Matrics and we, like, as a generation goes by things start happening younger and younger like for example I had a phone in Grade 7 my sister is in Grade 5 and she has a phone. So like we, we didn't have that exposure in a way, we speak to a Grade 8 and 9's, yesterday I was at gym and I saw Grade 9 and so I went up to him and we spoke about gym and um and how he is training and everything and we didn't have that exposure. So now we helping them and like if you speak to anyone the Grade 11 grade is known as like the gym grade, like everyone that's all they speak about. And um that's just the perception we have and like we've passed that down basically to the other generations and the other years below us and thats gonna...

FCR9: And they gonna keep handing it down and handing it down and thats...

FCR5: I think it is gonna start happening younger and younger, like I've seen people in my sisters Grade going to gym and gyming, like weights...

FCR9: Ja...

FCR5: And that never used to happened and now and now it does...

FCR9: Ja, and also not even gyming and stuff just like, like in terms of parties. I know we only started having proper parties in Grade 10...

FCR5: Ja...

FCR9: Beginning of Grade 10 end of Grade 9 and I go to a party now and I see little Grade 8's at the party and I'm like, why, how are you here...

FCR10: They like half the size of us...

FCR9: Ja, and they like, like it's just...

FCR5: Like Matric dance after parties...

B9: Ja, Matric after parties you see there are so many young people...

FCR5: And the guys get so cross because it's their, they have waited to get there and then there's Grade 8's ...

FCR10: And then there's people crashing parties, exactly...

FCR9: Ja, but ja, and I think also with like, even especially in this school is like when, I know when we were in Grade 8 the only thing I wanted to do was okay, I played rugby in Grade 8 because my brother played rugby in Grade 8 and he was in the first team, So I played rugby cos I saw my brother as like big first team, okay that's what I'm watching I want to make first team and I was so my whole high school career it was my dream to make the first team so I kept on playing it I kept on practising my kicking with my brother like I kept, it's a generation thing again it just keeps getting passed down and um in Grade 8 all I wanted to do is watch the first team rugby, I didn't wanna, I just wanted to sit there and watch and now, I don't

know what happened but we don't we literally don't get any support for first team rugby anymore, we ah, the one time we had a tunnel of like five people. We just don't get any support anymore. Because now we, now for this for this next season we have to change that especially them (gestures to B8 and B10) because they, our next year is our Matric year so we be

FCR5: The traditions are tomorrows...

FCR9: So they, they specifically them they responsible for getting this spirit back up because the spirit back when my brother was in school was exponential it was crazy, It was so like fun to go to games but like the fact that new generations come in they just keep seeing less and less people going, going to watch games so they like okay well not many people are going to watch so it can't be nice, can't be fun so I'm not gonna go watch. And then the next generation says no well you not gonna watch so I'm not gonna watch. So and now we have to build that spirit up again so we gonna try and try new things this year and stuff, ja.

FCR10: Ja, I think next year is gonna be a good year.

FCR9: Ja, and so many new sports facilities and stuff. We have big stands being built now and enough space for parents and two rugby fields so we will get the time. Because a lot of people don't come watch games because, because it's til very late. our first team game only starts at about half past four, late

FCR10: Well, ja.

FCR9: Half past four, five, and then that's when it only starts so people will watch Grade 8 because it's the first game straight after school and their parents will come and pick them up a little late but now with two rugby fields, two games at a time, will get it quicker and done quicker, more support...

FCR10: I think a lot of the pressure is on us as well, to make this year um successful, not this year, next year successful and ah and really prosper in rugby and make our school proud.

Researcher: Um, just three more questions guys, um the one is families or sort of feel about you playing rugby, is it something your family encourage or your dad encourage?

FCR5: It's change, so when I came home and said to my mom in Grade 8 that I want to play rugby she's like there is no way in hell. But now she is at every game, she's taking me to gym so that I can, so she's in, she's helping me do what I want and she's, like we are going to Argentina, so she is for it, she been helping get quotes and stuff like.

FCR9: Ja.

FCR5: And it changes as you get older, like you can go to any Grade 8 and say what did your mom say when you said you were playing rugby and they will be like no, she said no there is no way but as they see how it gets and the tradition and the honour that goes with playing and life lessons that you learn they, their perceptions change...

FCR9: Ja.

FCR5: Change over the years.

FCR9: But like I said um, generations make a big difference in that like for my family, my dad played, was big into his rugby, also a Flyhalf and then my brother came home and if he wasn't playing rugby then my dad would have a, like it was another thing, like you are playing rugby there is no chance that you, and someone like my brother he will, he had the chance to be playing South African hockey but my dad gave him the perception of rugby is like, not better sport than hockey, don't get me wrong but a more spiritual sport, like people feel it more than hockey does, so but my brother gave up hockey to play rugby because you can't play both at the same time and it was a wise decision. He made it into Craven week, he just was that determined to play rugby and as I say the generations passed on so when I came home and said I'm def, definitely playing rugby I was saying that I'm gonna play rugby in Grade 6 before I even came to this high school. So it was a really a thing in my house but like sometimes, someone like there's there's one guy in our school, ah *[Student name]*, He's like ah, one of our Locks, um he wasn't supposed to, his parent's didn't want him to play rugby specifically his mom. But he played rugby and now he's one of the biggest guys on our team and he's got, he's trying to get further with his rugby and like B5 said his mom is helping him he's going to gym he's getting protein in his body, his mom is paying for all of this, so and then his brother comes to Grade 8 his mom said the only thing you can play is touch rugby, you not going even close to contact rugby and now he's playing games. So it's, it's the parent, parent's do have a big say in it but then again we go back to your own responsibilities and your own choice. if you choose to play rugby and have the risk of getting injured but playing a sport that you really didn't enjoy then you gotta take that risk.

FCR8: Ja, I know, I think that once your family see...

FCR10: How much fun you have and how great.

FCR8: Ja, and how beneficial it is to you then they will call on supporting you and you know doing everything they can to make you happy, even if they don't feel it is right.

Researcher: Sure, um okay another question is, does culture play a part in becoming a certain type of man?

FCR9: Ja, I think, Ja def, I think so, I think so because like, something like rugby, yes it's a sport but then again it could be a culture. It could be a thing like in New Zealand...

FCR10: Lifestyle ja...

FCR9: It's a big culture to play rugby. They get tribal tattoos, if you're a rugby player, like, It's a It's a, basically you could call it a proper culture that people like abide to like they follow rugby as a culture and I saw a documentary on New Zealand rugby, it was like, just around the whole of New Zealand is just All Blacks, like just all these pictures of all these rugby players. So it's a big thing in countries and I know in South Africa as well, is, rugby is

a definite culture. I know for if you see the Afrikaans like a big Afrikaans guy, like you'll, like automatically think he is either a farmer or a rugby player.

FCR5: Or both...

FCR9: And, ja or both, but and also, ja I think it does influence it does influence a man a man as...

FCR5: Your character comes down to who you are, so if I'm gonna be, if I'm the stereotype of a Durban boy with long blonde hair that surfs I can go play rugby as well. Then you can get some Dutchman from the farm that comes and you can see he is a rugby player, he may not play rugby but that culture doesn't influence who they gonna be. They both gonna be rugby players no matter where they come from and um like what B9 said with the tattoos form New Zealand they don't get the tattoos because they rugby players they get the tattoos from their tribal grounds because the tattoos represent a lot about being a warrior and they see, they see that as, cos they don't have wars and stuff now they see rugby as a way of showing that they are warriors to their country and no matter who you are or what you do, who you can do what you want in your like your own desires you can be what you want, like doesn't matter who you are you still gonna play rugby, you still gonna play chess, you still gonna...

FCR9: Ja, agreed I agree with you completely I know those tattoos are only about like tribal's and stuff but that, like you said, that surfer from Durban and like, like a farmer they gonna, let's say they go and play on the same team or the same sport, they both gonna go play rugby for a club let's say. They gonna go play this rugby and they gonna get used to it and they gonna get used to the things that they do, so, then that let's say the Durban, the Durban surfer influences them, ah, farmer more in, within the rugby then the farmer is gonna...

FCR5: But then it's not....

FCR9: Change the way...

FCR5: culture that is changing you, but then who you are, it's his choice still it's him saying oh okay I see that that's cool I'm gonna do that. It's not rugby that makes him be that way. It's not his religion making him be that way, it's his own choice to be like that.

FCR10: Going back to the whole thing the whole sheep and the wolves. People will, um inevitably follow other people in their culture, if they if they are a sheep and it, and you really can't say that culture um defines who you are, because because we all make our own decision. Some of us might be sheep and it might define us but others might be outgoing and different and might not.

FCR5: I think maybe influences definitely.

FCR9: Ja, it definitely doesn't define you. I'm saying that things be it culture or a habit or lifestyle can definitely change you. And I know, like even with the school, I know, that if you go to gym and you get big your personality also changes because you see yourself as bigger

and more masculine then someone else. So it definitely changes your perception of who you are and it's ja, I think a lifestyle or lifestyle or religion or something can't change who you are but not define who you are because deeper, like we said earlier there is a deeper meaning to you and there's deeper thoughts behind it.

Researcher: Okay, and the last question is, thanks guys, a question posed to each of you moving forward so after Matric, finishing school, how do you still see rugby as a part of your life. Is it something you want to continue playing or is it more, I'm just wondering...

FCR5: To be honest, I wouldn't really, I don't really take rugby to seriously like I love playing it and I love watching it and I take it seriously in the way of watching it, being a follower of the game. But not as me wanting to play professionally so after school ja, I think it will become more of a hobby say if mates are arranging a game I will play with them and I would like to play in university but then after that I'm not gonna join clubs and stuff to try and find, get further. And so, we live in South Africa so rugby like you said is a culture so there is no way of escaping it so we all gonna follow the game until we die, so ja. Just carry on watching it.

FCR9: Ja, I agree with FCR5, there some people that um enjoy the game. like I know this year there's a couple, couple of players including our captain *[Student name]*, very good players thinking about going forward with rugby, but the other day comes and tells me that he doesn't want to go further with his rugby. He might not even play varsity rugby and it like like it shocks you to see the talent that he has could enable him to go further, but he chooses not to. He chooses to go on his own path with something else, know what I am saying. But someone like, someone like me and my family it's, it's not it's not necessarily that I wanna go all the way to professionalism of it. But at least take it further than Varsity Cup rugby something like that. Being acknowledge for something that you, you are talented at. So I don't wanna have to, all over these years, these past five years, I've trained myself to keep this talent that I have and um to maintain it and stuff, but like, I know, I have this talent, I have a talent for being a sportsman and I will keep at that talent and I will like work at that talent. like there is a saying and I don't know said it or whatever, but it's like if you good at something rather practice what you good at then practicing what you bad at and being mediocre at both of them. So what I'm doing is I'm keeping my sports, my sporting ability and I want to take it to at least varsity level, maybe not professionally, but if I do get recognised in varsity level and get contacts and start playing for under 20's or whatever and get noticed and then play in provincial like the Sharks or the Bulls or whatever, then so be it, then it's gonna happen, but...

FCR10: What makes you not want to play professionally?

FCR9: I think it's just a dream for most people, for me it's a dream to be, to be so, high...

FCR10: I rate...

FCR9: To be so high in professionalism but then it's just a dream.

FCR10: I rate anything is possible. You can't say no it's just a dream. I rate anything is possible if you try hard enough. If you want it hard enough if you want it...

FCR5: I think you are being naive (Not heard by FCR10)

FCR10: If you want it and train hard enough to can you can achieve anything

FCR9: I dunno

FCR10: I don't think your size should dictate, because you can always go on growth programs, I don' t think your mentality, mentality should dictate cos you can always change your mentality. I don't think anybody else should dictate whether you go to professional level or what you do with your life.

FCR8: Ja, for me like I'm going to carry on with my rugby long as I can, long as I can play and get as far as I can and um, you know rugby for me at the moment is kinda a life style like when I do everything rugby it's just it's can't get enough of it and when I think what like I can, I'll try make it as far as I can and even if people who say, no I don't think you can make it or whatever you know you can set out to prove them wrong, you do everything you can.

FCR10: For me personally if somebody says I can't do something I feel compelled to do it just to prove them wrong.

FCR5: I'm stubborn like that if someone says to me you can't I'm like I will show you I can.

FCR10: Mmm, exactly.

FCR5: But it's also like what appeals to you like being a professional rugby player doesn't appeal to me, like and like you say anything is possible but you also got to be realistic...

FCR9: Ja.

FCR5: About your like your talent like my main sports is cricket and I'm playing Gauteng and there is like a possibility of me going professional but then I don't just wanna give that up and put my heart and soul into rugby when I don't have that natural talent.

FCR10: It's that personality that I think that makes you a sheep, it's that person that personality that I think differentiates losers from the winners. I think that if anybody separa...separated from the norms and are keen on becoming a winner um, and are set on that goal um, ah and hear anything from anybody else that thinks differently it think they obviously, will obviously say no because the naysayers in this world, or who I like to call the naysayers in this world, are always trying to think of of the ways that something can't happen rather than the ways that something can happen.

FCR5 looked confused and stunned while B10 spoke

FCR5: But you can't just think like that.

FCR9: Ja.

FCR5: Because you can't tell me I can wake up tomorrow and say okay I want to be a professional golfer and I have never picked up a gold club...

FCR10: Why can't you?

FCR5: No, no but you got to be realistic...

FCR10: If you train hard enough most of the golfers go to the golf course every single day, like if you if you put your mind and soul...

FCR5: Okay but be realistic, like I'm gonna go to the golf course every day, I don't have a job, So how am I gonna pay to play in a tournament, so um, you gotta get a job first, k cool I get a job, I get money to play golf but now I want to go to the gold course everyday but I need to earn money. How am I gonna pay for entrance fees if I don't have a job, how am I gonna do anything else and say I don't make it in golf what am I gonna do then cos I spent five years of my life at the gold course every day doing nothing.

FCR10: John Travolta wanted to be a pilot and he and he.

FCR5: Ja so? He studied, but sports and studying are different.

FCR9: Ja but like dude, what I am saying is why...

FCR10: But what I am saying is.

FCR5: *(Laughing)* Look at this oe....

FCR10: Sorry.

FCR9: Why I say I want to go to varsity rugby is because at the at my moment in my life right now, that's possible to me when I make into, when I make it into that varsity rugby then then only then will I say okay now I've made it into what I wanted to make it into so now I want to go further with it and if you and if you, if I make it into varsity rugby and say okay well I've done enough or I feel that I want to then I will go on. I wouldn't say I want to make Springbok cos then I make it into varsity and I won't make it into provincial squad and then I feel dumb. So for now you dream of something that's realistic for me to achieve and then when you get to that achievement they you can say okay I'm here now let me go further with it.

FCR10: I rate you make your one goal and then you do it in steps, one step at a time and if you make it to a step you decide okay maybe I do not want to go to South African rugby for whatever reason but then from, that step you can then um diverge and create another path way that you can travel on, that's all I'm saying.

FCR5: Ja but you can't, but you also got to be realistic about your goals you can't say the smallest Grade 8 is gonna play under 19 Bulls next year, you gotta be realistic...

FCR10: It doesn't have to be next year it can be...

FCR9: Ja but that's why I' saying about now...

FCR5: Realistic...

FCRR9: So next year you guys are gonna be in the same position that we are looking at varsities to go to, looking at what you want to do. So I wanna look at varsities that specifically give sporting varsities, so I will look at something like Stellenbosch or like UCT or something like that so I can achieve that one little goal that I have. Once I have achieved that little goal that I have I can make that little goal into a bigger goal and then work towards that goal, so you work, work towards each little goal that you are given so my goal for high school was to make first team rugby. I worked towards that goal and I made first team rugby. So those little goals that now that I have made first team rugby I look further into it, So now I say I make varsity rugby so now that I make varsity rugby, when I get to varsity rugby I will say, let me make provincial rugby and I make provincial rugby let me go further with it. So like you said it is in steps, you can eventu... you can have a bigger goal...

FCR10: Yes.

FCR9: You can have a bigger goal there is nothing wrong with having a bigger goal, but do it in steps rather.

FCR10: Ja, but what you were just saying is that, you have to, what you were just saying now, like you have to make realistic...

FCR5: Ja.

FCR10: But if you, South African rugby, if the little Grade 8's wants to get into South African rugby what dictates that he can't...

FCR5: No one can say that he can't, I am not saying he can't but I am saying be realistic...

FCR10: But if he works hard enough and puts effort into it...

FCR5: I respect how you thinking, but you also got to be realistic about life you can't say okay I wanna be an Astronaut and fly out to the moon tomorrow, cos that's not realistic.

FCR10: A little Grade 8 will, you have time to think out your plan you have time to.

FCR5: Ja, I respect that I respect that and like FCR9 said he wants to get to Varsity Cup and see where it goes. So you saying why don't you wanna go further that's his personal wants and needs

FCR9: Goal.

FCR5: If he wants to go on to business school that's fine, but you saying you want a bigger goal and I respect that and that's fine but as you get older you get, you start to realise that there is more to life than just wanting to reach your final goal. Like there is day to day living other then like we all said when we were young that we wanted to be singers and actors and fireman and all of this and that can still happen and then the people that say I want to be the

best sportsman in the world, that can happen, I am not saying it can't. There are realistic ways of going about it to get there to get to that, you can practice every day you can do what you want to get there, but also there's day to day living that goes in-between it you eventually gonna wanna start a family, have a job, be successful, own a company maybe so that...

FCR10: If you want something enough nothing can change...

FCR5: No, okay...

FCR9: No I see were you going with it, if you put, you can put anything to your mind and you can do it, but for some people, like like you ask me why, why do I not wanna go further with it. it's because I'm putting my mind to it, so I get to varsity rugby, now say my mind is here I've made it. So then once I'm there I can be like wait a minute I'm here I can go for something else and it doesn't necessarily need to be Springbok rugby I can start gold for all I care I could say I want to beat Ernie Ellis in a game of golf and I could work for it and beat him. So there is nothing that you can't do I know exactly what you saying but like I also agree with FCR5, you have to be realistic. You can't say that if you if you say to yourself that when I am nineteen I will be in the Olympics, and even when you sixteen you want to be in the Olympics. There was a sixteen year old in the Olympics so you can put your mind to it, that was that was what her...

FCR5: but no you can't....

FCR9: That's what she wanted to do.

FCR10: Ja.

FCR9: So she was like I want to go to the Olympics, *[Student name]* wants to make it into the Olympics so he is determined enough to make a fool out of himself every morning to go running around the field while everyone is laughing at him. But he's someone that is going to be successful. But for me I put in my mind something that is Varsity rugby, so that's what I am going to work towards. I know exactly what you are trying to say, there is nothing you can't put your mind to.

FCR10: Sweet.

Researcher: Thanks guys, so I just want to check do you guys, I mean what are your plans after school do you know what you want to study?

FCR5: Study Law.

FCR9: Ja I'm looking to study ah brand management degree and in-between it play sports, specifically rugby and golf, but um ja I'm looking at mainly going to Cape Town cos Cape Town is quiet a central place in South Africa so ja definitely, hopefully get into brand management or marketing degree and then play rugby in-between.

FCR8: Ja I would like to ah do sports management and also to play as much sport, rugby in particular.

Researcher: Have you thought at all? (Towards FCR10)

FCR10: Nope.

Researcher: Okay well thank you guys

APPENDIX E: FOCUS GROUP 'TR' TRANSCRIPT

Researcher: Okay, So I guess the first sort of question we can speak about is, I mean what do you guys think I means to be a young man?

TR1: Um, adventurous, definitely adventurous, ja.

TR2: Have fun.

TR3: Ja, and take like a lot of responsibility, becoming, like a young man.

TR1: Don't commit to long relationships. It's definitely a waste of your school career.

Researcher: Why?

TR1: Well, when you're a young man you are supposed to be adventurous and take on challenges and stuff and I feel a girlfriend will just hold you back.

TR3: The one talking with a girlfriend.

TR2: Ja, with a girlfriend. *(laughs)*.

TR1: Okay, but it doesn't have to be a girlfriend, just some person that you meet at a party.

(Laughter)

TR1: And decide to take it serious then, um, I feel they hold you back. And also you can't like get to know a lot of people, know different girls if you got a girlfriend.

Researcher: Okay.

TR1: Ja, so if you get like, if you talk to a lot of girls and stuff it will boost your confidence and that will help you when you get out of like school and stuff. Have bigger confidence.

Researcher: Okay.

TR1: Ja.

TR3: Populate and stuff, social skills.

TR1: A lot of relationships that start early and then early marriages end in divorce, so rather wait.

TR2: Most marriages end in divorce.

(Agreement and laughter)

TR4: A lot of what the young man consists of is just sex and ja, trying to have fun.

TR2: Ja.

TR4: But at the same time, trying to learn, like how my brother said, like how to become responsible.

TR2: Ja, it's a battle between your hormones and your brain.

TR3: Ja, it's learning basically.

TR4: Basically you get blamed for everything.

TR1: Who wants my raisins *(holding out a handful of raisins after eating the peanuts)*.

Researcher: So where do you guys sort of, find you fit in and between adventurous and responsibility, because those were the two things you said.

TR1: Ummm.

TR3: Ja, you have to really balance it out.

TR2: You have to try but usually your hormones and stuff kinda take over, you, into the more adventurous side.

TR3: Ja.

TR2: And you have to fight it, to be more responsible.

TR3: Ja, you have to push yourself to be responsible.

TR4: Depends on what kind of person you are.

(Group talking)

TR4: You know if your parents brought you up to be like a star student then you will be more responsible than adventurous.

Researcher: Okay, sorry you say adventurous, in what...?

TR1: Experimenting, and also not being afraid of challenges and going out and doing new things, not being kept in a cage, but also having clean fun, ja that's the responsible side.

TR2: Ja, that's the responsible side taking over. It's the battle between too much adventure, which is obviously going into the sex and the drugs and whatever. Which, that's when your responsible side has to kick in.

TR1: Mmmm. *(Silence)* This is deep.

(Group laughter)

Researcher: K, then the other thing is, um, I guess what does playing touch rugby or even rugby mean to you guys?

TR4: Mmmm, I think it's just like that, it's there to blow off testosterone, really helps with that kind of stuff.

TR1: Definitely.

TR2: Ja, also as well you, keeps you busy and that distracts your mind from all your stress and…

TR3: Ja.

TR2: Girls and all that kind of, gives you time alone and time with the boys kind of thing, like going out and drinking and all that kinda crap. It just ja, you get rid of a lot of, more more so in rugby, you get rid of a lot of like anger, but in touch you can't do that but it's still helps.

TR2: Ja, it does and also helps you to be social and talk to everyone.

TR1: Keeps you healthy.

TR3: Ja, fitness side.

TR4: Ja, boosts your confidence you know, more healthier.

TR2: Your body stays better as well.

TR4: Ja.

Researcher: Okay, well I mean is fitness quite important to you guys then?

Group: Ja we have to be, definitely definitely, I think so.

TR2: In touch rugby I rate that's the most important thing on the field.

TR3: Ja, you have to be very fit.

TR4: Knowing what you are doing and being fit.

TR1: Also a strong team. Team bond.

Researcher: Um and was there a decision to sort of play touch versus contact rugby?

TR1: Um, no there wasn't really a decision, like contact rugby is second term and like the school has very low commitment.

TR2: In contact rugby.

YM1: Well not just contact rugby, but because they, ja, to sort. Cos the academic side, they not very committed to the sport.

TR3: They also they also about the, they worried about injuries and don't want their students getting injured so they would rather let them play touch rugby then contact rugby and also in

the school, it's not such a big sporting school so what they, so not many rugby players would come here so the boys that try and start rugby here start it and it just fades away.

TR2: Ja.

TR3: Slowly because people get disinterested and they not committed enough to play rugby.

TR4: Also a lot of the a lot of the sports our school does invest in a lot of people don't like, lot of people don't like, like hockey, cricket, and invest more time and money into cricket when they should spend more money and time into touch rugby and normal rugby.

TR2: Ja, and if you look in my case, I've got back issues so I basically couldn't play full contact rugby so touch rugby is kinda my only choice.

TR3: And also here we, they only allow from grade 10 to Matric to play rugby…

TR1: Not really…

TR3: They do…

YM1: I played this year.

TR2: Ja but you were an exception. You and [*Student name*].

TR3: Because it's, because of injuries so these guys don't really have a choice they have to play touch rugby.

Researcher: Okay, um so I guess one of the other things is do you people expect rugby players to behave in a certain type of way?

TR2: Rugby players are usually sort of associated…

TR1: Stereotyped…

TR4: Ja, generalised…

TR1: Angry and big, and always mean and not good people and…

Group: Steroids, jock.

TR4: Ja jock of the school, I wouldn't say mean but…

TR2: Ja, just the jock the player the…

TR1: The popularity that comes along with it.

YM2: Ja, like on tv it would be the American football captain.

TR3: Ja, it's definitely stereotyped.

Researcher: And how does that stereotype fit with you guys?

TR2: Usually we are seen as like the moffies kinda thing…

TR3: Ja…

TR2: Because people don't really know the sport. So they kinda look down on it because it's not rugby. It's kinda like chicks rugby, so people will look down on it and say, well you guys are too scared to play the real rugby.

TR4: um, like whenever, whenever we like say we play touch rugby like they immediately like start insulting you, like 'oh touch' and you know that whole thing and it's just irritating.

TR3: It's not that kind of sport it's more like…

Group: Physically fit, thinking.

TR3: It's more thinking type because rugby is just charge, its more tactical touch rugby.

TR2: Ja.

TR3: And you have to, ja and its more, it's more tactical.

TR1: But it's the same amount of fitness…

TR2: Possibly even more…

Group: Ja more.

TR2: Cos we run backwards as well and they just running, and we have less men on the field.

TR1: I think in this school because there is no rugby, um, we get seen as the sporty guys cos we the only guys playing sport this term pretty much apart from the cricket players.

TR2: But the commitment to touch rugby isn't that great we got eleven twelve people playing in our team and in turn we don't have, well the school doesn't supply us with balls or anything to play with so our coaches have to bring their own balls.

TR3: Ja, and also we went to a touch rugby match and they supplied a bus there but they didn't supply us with a bus back and things like that.

Researcher: So it sounds a bit frustrating sometimes.

Group: *(laughing)* Ja.

Researcher: And then um you said sort of sport isn't that big at the school, sort of what's, are there some sports that are guess where people are more invested in and sort of…

TR2: There are, like um…

Group: Cricket.

TR2: Ja, cricket, soccer and swimming are the main sports here, but still the school isn't that…

TR1: Hockey a lot of the time too…

TR2: Ja, hockey as well but the school isn't that kinda committed, like if you look at, say all boys school a lot of all of the boys schools they kinda force you to play a sport, here hardly anyone plays sport and when they do it's nothing serious. It's like it's very like kind of reluctant.

TR3: No but for swimming they do, they do give scholarships for swimming and for soccer and so we have a very good soccer team and swimming side and for cricket and for hockey our sports director like he's very enthusiastic about hockey and cricket and he likes to keep it alive, but also from the prep school, from the kids coming from [*Schools name*] Prep through, they, they have too um no they play cricket and they have all those sports and touch rugby isn't there, so when they come to the high school they realise oh okay, now they have to start…

TR2: Start learning a new sport, So now if you look at us, as Grade 8's coming up we have to teach them, and all of us know the moves, like say TR3, he was a senior and um we came up and he he knew it all but he had to sit there through and watch it because there's only one time. He had to watch us and just chill there because he knew it and while we were getting taught he had to kinda just chill because he knew it all.

TR1: We said a lot of things about um low commitment but I just thought about it now, it's actually we've got to big a variety of sports and too little sportsmen, because, because like second term is soccer, touch and another sport. So I think they just clash too much and they go for the popular sports.

Researcher: I mean do you think there are sports that maybe have a higher status then others, even in school, people respond to people differently because they play a different sport?

TR1: Definitely, like I don't think chess is seen as a sport.

TR3: Ja, actually that's true.

TR1: I mean to some people it might be.

TR3: That's true, so ja, a the soccer players do get…

TR2: Big headed…

TR3: Ja, and swimming players especially they get more respect from the, from the, school, teachers in general…

TR2: I mean if you look at it like this all of us here play for the Gauteng side. Not one of us have been recognised in assembly, not one of us have been recognised at all.

TR3: But whenever there is one person who has done something amazing in swimming even if its small they will call them up and…

TR2: Ja, they get a merit and or a provincial gold or bronze medal they still will get called up and get a certificate and like…

TR3: Ja.

TR2: Acknowledged by [*Teachers name*], all of us, two years in a row now um have made the Gauteng side and no one knows.

Researcher: Why do you think?

TR2: The school just ah does the sport just isn't recognised as like a a good sport or like a.

TR1: Important.

TR2: Ja, important in the school, it's just kinda for fun, it's not taken seriously.

TR1: So it's sort of like recreational more than anything else.

TR3: Also I think maybe lot of our Olympic medals come from our swimmers and I think our school wants to see us more for our swimming and you know those big things that will attract other people. You know they won't go about during class and say like, be like oh, they won't go around saying we have this many players of provincial Gauteng touch but they will go around saying you know this kid got a bronze medal in swimming ah Gauteng tournament…

TR4: To get more people in…

TR3: Ja to get more people in, there a lot more swimmers then touch rugby players.

TR4: Ja that's true.

Researcher: Um, do you see yourself being in anyway if you didn't play touch rugby.

TR4: I'd be fat.

TR3: Ja.

TR2: Just wouldn't be as fit but I guess, ja, just cos…

TR1: But I think in reality in our own perspective we wouldn't be different.

TR3: I think I wouldn't be as social.

TR4: If I didn't do touch rugby, I would have, I would have been a lot more introverted, stayed home a lot more.

TR2: Ja, cos touch rugby is on the field, there only six of you. So you kinda have to play as a team, you have to talk like that's the bi… like one of the biggest things in touch is communication. So it does teach you to be a lot more social and that can also help I suppose

but like I guess in terms of popularity and respect from other people, you, it wouldn't change much and your physical self besides your fitness wouldn't change that much.

TR3: No but also what touch rugby does is it tries to bring people to play the sport by saying it's social come to talk to your friends it's a fun time and then when you go to the actual matches, they held at Zoo Lake and everyone gathers there and everyone just talks and you meet people and then you see them again on another Friday and you all just talking, so it's not like school versus school, everyone gathers…

TR2: Ja, as friends…

TR3: Ja.

Researcher: Is there something about sort of being in a team with other people that you form that sort of different bond or is it…

TR2: You kinda become a family kinda thing…

TR4: Ja you get used to playing with each other like I remember I used to I, like for Gauteng I usually play with these two (TR1 and TR2), um weren't, they weren't there the one practice and I just remember I didn't play at the top of my game cos you know you are not playing with the right people.

TR2: Ja, you need, cos it's not a, it's not a, course you can do something's, like one person can say have better step then the other and that sense that they better but it's not a game that you can play and win by yourself you need your team mates. Without them you kinda feel lost in a sense you need them to be there to support you and they know your moves and they know your strengths so someone knows that you can run fast so they will run a move where they need a fast runner in that movement.

TR3: And also helps your relationships off the field as well…

TR1: Ja, defintiley,

TR3: You become friends and get to know each other a bit better in terms of, ja.

TR1: I think you see people differently after you become a team like that because then you start talking about more personal things and you see their personal life and ja I think you just get closer and, ja.

Researcher: I think sort of maybe one of the stereotypes of rugby is sort of rugby players aren't sort of very open about how they feeling or you know, how do you guys feel about that sort of thinking?

TR1: Ja.

TR2: I'm very open about everything there's…

TR3: Ja…

(laughter)

TR4: We don't all have sessions where we talk about our feelings…

(Laughter)

TR2: Ja not really talk about it to each other but like if someone, like if I was having a down day and someone asked what was wrong I wouldn't like hide it in, like I would speak about it, so I'm not very, so I don't think that sports changes that.

TR3: But I think in conventional rugby, I think ah, they wouldn't share their feelings…

TR2: Cos they meant to be the big…

TR3: Ja they want to be stronger and show that they better then, everyone wants to be better then, ah the rest of their team mates so I don't think they will show their weaknesses.

TR1: And that brings you back to that masculine topic where boys aren't supposed to like cry or something, like…

TR3: Ja, like boys don't cry.

TR1: Ja, tell your feelings then there is something wrong with you.

TR2: Ja, they trying to be the strong.

TR4: Try and be intimidating and no one is intimidating when they're sobbing.

TR1: Are we allowed to eat?

Researcher: Ja go for it guys, so what do you guys feel about the saying boys don't cry?

TR2: I'm not gonna lie I cry, no if I'm upset I will cry so…

TR2: I think everyone cries, maybe not in public…

YM4: Um, I don't just like be randomly like my life.

(Agreement and laughter)

TR4: I will cry at like the end of a sad movie you know, so that's not completely emotional.

TR1: I don't really cry, when I am sad I tend to get angry, I get angry with myself for being sad. So when I'm sad I just get angry. So ja I sort of stick to that saying ja, but it's how I was brought up and stuff.

TR2: Ja I'm, I cry obviously not like I will go and sit there and cry about really nothing, it does take quite a bit to get me to cry but like ja I do cry. I don't kinda, like when I cry I don't think oh like you are not a guy or you are a guy you can't cry. If I feel like crying I will cry.

Researcher: Um, okay I guess one question is sort of do you feel, I think maybe linked to stereotype again, as a rugby player as a touch rugby player there certain things you can't do because you play rugby or image associated with maybe, a rugby player you can't join the choir or something like that?

TR1: No, it doesn't affect me.

TR2: Ja, I don't think that cos I guess if we were playing proper rugby…

TR1: Ja…

TR2: Then I guess you wouldn't do a lot but at this school like there's not much, it doesn't take touch rugby to make me say I'm not gonna the chess team, I don't want to join the chess team cos I feel that that's a sport. So, it's not touch rugby that makes me feel that way it's just myself.

TR1: People in the school are very accepting so, like…

TR2: Cos it's such like a multi-cultural school…

TR1: So Ja, when like you play guitar in assembly no one thinks bad about you they, they get up and say well done. So ja.

TR3: Ja.

TR1: If we had conventional rugby I don't think we would have that acceptance.

Researcher: So there is something about the school being conducive to people being allowed to be themselves?

Group: Ja, yes, Ja.

TR3: Definitely independent.

TR2: Ja, the school focuses on that a lot cos I mean we have got like every culture under the flippin rainbow so…

(Laughter)

TR2: So if you not accepting then you kinda don't belong here.

TR4: Ja, if you stand out and don't accept someone rather than everyone join you to pick on the kid that's different all the people will pick on you for picking on the different kid which is really good, it makes it like a special school bond.

Researcher: Um, so there generally things men should or shouldn't do regardless of whether or not they play rugby.

TR1: Ummm…

TR2: Never come to practice in a skirt.

(Laughter)

TR1: Ja ah, just stay masculine…

TR2: Ja just be a man.

TR1: Play chess, just do it manly.

(Laughter)

TR1: Just play on your strengths like if you are academic, go for it, don't let people hold you back like bullies and stuff.

TR3: But like I think society, you should make your own decisions, you don't always have to follow the norm.

TR1: Ja.

YM3: If you good at something you should go do it.

TR2: And I think like rugby is kinda associated with that manliness with that, like a gay guy playing rugby wouldn't really go down to well. Because it's known for that manly sport. So like a gay guy, even if he liked rugby, wouldn't necessarily join the team. For the reason that he would probably be teased or beaten or whatever the case. It it just doesn't suit the criteria of rugby.

Researcher: There stuff that you guys, in yourselves wouldn't do cos you, cos I dunno it doesn't fit at all or you worry about what people would think?

TR1: An example?

TR2: I wouldn't do ballet.

TR1: Ja, exactly.

TR3: Why wouldn't you do ballet?

TR2: Cos it's like, to me it seems like a more of a girls sport like rugby is more of a guy's sport. So I know like a lot of guys do it but I couldn't see myself doing it.

TR1: Ja like I can't picture myself in a leotard.

TR3: I could picture myself in a leotard.

TR1: Do you ballet or something?

TR3: I do tap dancing.

TR1: You have to wear a leotard for that?

TR3: No.

TR1: Then why do you picture yourself in one?

TR4: Because he sometimes has dreams.

(Laughter)

TR1: Ja so ballet I'm also with you there, I dunno, I dunno if there's like other things that we do.

TR2: Like I wouldn't dance, I mean lots of guys dance, like even break dance it's more of a guy dance. I wouldn't dance, not because of anything like to do with masculinity or anything I just couldn't…

TR3: This is more a personal preference not anything that's attached to rugby or anything.

TR2: Ja.

TR4: If we come to school the next day and say we play trumpet, you won't be teased at touch rugby, you come to school and you say you do ballet, you won't get shi… you won't get teased at touch rugby.

TR2: You probably will though.

TR3: Ja but only like a little bit.

TR2: But even if it wasn't touch rugby, if you if a guy came to you at school and said ja no I do ballet I think everyone will tease him.

TR3: Ja I do tap dancing and everyone is like ja that's cool more seen for girls.

Researcher: Well I mean doing tap dancing, I guess this sounds like something you like, but were you worried about what people would think at all? Or was it not something you really thought about?

TR4: In the beginning, maybe when you started…

TR3: No, not at all. I didn't think about anyone, I just did what I wanted. I didn't really care what other people wanted or thought of me.

Researcher: So I mean is that sort of a, something you guys share, sort of not really worrying what people would think of you, regardless of who or…

Group: Ja, definitely worry, ja I do worry.

TR4: That's definitely like one of the week points I think everyone has, everyone wants to look good everybody doesn't want to look like an idiot so ja I think, no one wants to look bad…

TR2: I think everyone is conscious about what people think of them, but I think like I wouldn't kinda think like, well depending on like ballet I guess the only reason I wouldn't do

it is because is how people would look at me. So of course like I care about it but like you don't need to let it run your life. You still if you, want to do something and you really want to do it, you don't let, like okay I don't want to do it cos they will look at me funny. Which…ja.

TR1: I agree.

Researcher: Okay, um, what do you think about the media's perception of men.

TR1: Ummmm.

TR2: Stereotyped.

TR4: Ja stereotyped.

TR3: Stereotyped again.

TR4: Men always work, men always, they always out there they always the emotionless ones, like whenever you show an ad like consisting of, something, like if their showing like a movie, they won't show the main character, that's a guy crying. Like in the trailer because that will just put people off, more have the girls have the stereotyping, crying, ja it's very stereotyped.

TR3: Ja and also men always like the tough guys and like the movies they, they like always do more of like the action stuff. They not really crying.

TR4: Shown as superior.

Researcher: Is there a pressure to sort of, maybe not even for you guys, but do you feel the pressure to try and live up to sort of a certain ideal of a man or perception of a man?

TR1: Ja, mmm.

TR4: Definitely.

TR1: But I think it's only like for straight guys, because if you're not straight then you won't want to be that. But ja.

TR2: I think most of us kinda look up to our fathers, like…

Group: Ja.

TR2: Most boys look up to their fathers like most girls look up to their mothers. So you, kinda look to your fathers, what he's doing, kinda look up to him, try be more like him, because that's what you grown up with and think is right.

TR3: But I think that bar, that bar set or that expectation set to live up to. I don't think it's very high at all, I think everyone is satisfied, with, with what they what they doing…

TR2: Ja, in modern day the bar is going down I rate.

Group: Ja.

TR2: Because people are being accepting now.

TR4: We always have that unconscious thing that we wanna live up to our, you know to our fathers way, we will always be like that. There's a Greek saying that says; "Be a better man than your father" and I think that like shows that you know everybody wants to be like their dad everybody wants to live up to the name, and become a man, that's what your father is, he's a man.

Researcher: So I mean what did, I guess maybe is it difference is then sort of your father versus the media perception?

TR1: I think like ah the community sees the media's perception of a guy and judges people from that. Not knowing their background and their morals. So you get judged on the bar set by the media on masculinity and being a man rather than people like looking at you yourself and…

TR2: Your fathers like, if you look at opinions or like the bar, your father's bar and your father, like setting a bar or something for you to live up too that would be more accurate in real life would be more realistic then the media's perception of what you could be, because your father is more like you and knows you better and all of that, so the media looks at you from an outside perceptive where as your father or whoever your role model is that you are living up too knows you better or you know better.

TR4: And also with the media and fathers I think the media depicts more like, you know you always have to work and you always have to like just certain attributes you have to have be to become a man in order to become a man in your fathers eyes, you know you have to look after your family you have to you know, know what's going on with your life. You know they are two very different things and to be honest I would rather impress my father's version of a man then let society judge me.

TR1: Ja, societies is basically the general criteria. Your father's is the more detailed.

TR2: The media would kinda look at it like you got a hot girlfriend or something, okay he is a man like they look at crap like that and not, they look at what you have not what you are.

TR3: But the bar for media is always set much higher, to sell you products, so like they will set that high and they will say to you, to be this you have to have this as well or you'll go out and you'll buy all of these products but to try and be what the media want you to be, use this, they try and make you try and, they set the bar high in purpose so you can try and attain it by buying their products.

Researcher: And do you think it's realistic sort of representation or measurement of being a man.

TR1: Well, it's, I wouldn't say it's realistic, but if you can live up to that standard, so it because…

TR2: You'll be seen as more of a man by everyone, not just your father.

TR1: Ja, so we, every single human strives to be accepted in society. So I believe that even if we don't want to we still do it subconsciously and measure ourselves on that scale on that example of what a real man is, so ja I think I do.

Researcher: Do you guys think culture plays a part in becoming a certain type of man?

TR4: Culture, generally speaking? I think Jewish people, a lot of religious families, have to go to the bar mitzvah, you know the whole thing, a lot of people see a lot of kids or even fathers see their sons as men you know, ja they respect them and they can see that they can they can now start to go out there and start to become a man, rather than…

TR2: Perspective…

TR4: Ja you, like with the bar mitzvah you obviously have your bar mitzvah and you are a man but more like today you, it's more like you have your bar mitzvah and you can now start becoming a man, start becoming the person you want to be. You know and ja, that's basically what happens in Jewish culture.

TR3: Ja, but also like in the Zulu culture or other African cultures, they have to venture into the wild and independently to be a man and then you come back you can start your life, start a family.

Researcher: So something about having to prove yourself?

TR3: Ja to your culture group.

TR1: Definitely.

Researcher: And I mean does, in South Africa, do you think rugby influences culture at all?

TR1 and TR4: Big time.

TR4: I think the government uses rugby as a big thing to get the country together and have a you know united and support the rugby world cup you know and people, people came together and when we won the rugby world cup it was amazing cos we were all united and we were all pulling together.

TR2: Feeling of nationalism.

TR3: Ja I think especially after apartheid, it helped a lot for our country…

TR2: Bring us together as a country.

Researcher: Ok I think we may have covered it a bit but um, what do you think are important aspects of being a man, so physically, emotionally so, I know we mentioned, you said physical ability and stuff but is there stuff attached to that is…

TR2: Like I think men try and be muscular and more built and like cos, attracted to women and that's like kinda what a man lives to do is attract the women, get the women so a man will spend hours and hours in gym rather than hours and hours studying cos they kinda more,

they wanna be with guy who is the more adventurous side meeting the responsible side. Really getting that girl now in high school isn't going to help you as much as getting that kinda thing. So it's more adventurous to look good for the girls you know at this age.

Researcher: So I mean is there a pressure to look a certain type of way?

TR1: Ja there is.

TR2: Definitely.

TR3: But I don't think it's negative though.

TR1: And I feel a lot of the time you can only have one of the two, either brains or muscles.

TR3: Ja but it's not negative though, you have to, you have to build yourself unless you do it in a bad way like steroids but it's it's all positive it will help you become healthier it will help you get confidence…

TR1: Ja it's good for your life style…

TR3: So it's not, you don't only see it as getting for the girls, you also do it for yourself, it will help you in life.

TR4: I think society has also taught us to judge people that are not um…

TR1: Built.

TR4: Built, so that you know fat people, you know you always see them teased in the movies, the nerdy kids don't get the girl, always that kind of stuff. We've always been brought up like that we've always wanted to be that guy who can get the girl, you know who is good a sport and is big and has…ja, so it's that same thing that society sets the bar or like Hollywood sets the bar I would imagine.

Researcher: I mean just in relation to that you mentioned sort of getting the girl and stuff like that how important is sort of, I think you guys said a bit about girlfriends and stuff but sort of girls being attracted to you at this age is it very important, something you sort of really strive towards…

Group: Ja.

TR4: I think it builds, if a girl is interested in you, your confidence will shoot up and I think that improves your marks at school your social life, your um…

TR3: Overall happiness…

TR4: Ja your overall happiness, the situation at home could feel a lot more happy doing things you know.

TR1: Cultural side could influence a lot, Um not cultural in like religion and stuff, like acting and.

TR2: Confidence.

TR1: Mmm, strive to be a.

TR2: But most most guys at this age pretty much focus on like gaining the attention of girls, like it's the main thing in a guy's brain at this age especially because of the hormones and everything is to impress girls to get a girl you know to just, that's like all we kinda really focus on.

TR1: And it's also a status symbol from popularity side.

TR3: Ja and also to show that you're a man you know cos all the girls want you you'll be seen as a better man then someone who doesn't…

TR2: Mmmm, exactly…

Researcher: So in that is there something about I guess a hierarchy in some way I mean…

TR2: It's not distinctive I mean you just look at it and there's no things in terms of like, you're here you're here, it's just like a guy dating say the hottest girl in the grade or something, he will be looked at more than the guy who or has hardly, never kissed a girl or something.

TR3: Ja there is a hierarchy but it's it's more…

TR4: Clicks…

TR3: Ja it's like an invisible one…

TR2: No one says anything…

YM3: You don't think about it, it's just kinda there…

YM2: Ja and no one says anything about it…

TR1: And I think just because we wanna fit in, we that's another reason why we don't notice it because you see this person as cool and you wanna try to be them but you dunno why, but subconsciously so that's hierarchy.

TR2: Because he's always got the hottest girlfriend, cos he's got the biggest muscles or whatever and that's why you like him and the hierarchy and that's why he's cooler then you.

TR3: But I think at school, I think that our school is, the hierarchy isn't like that big where in other schools it could be really huge like the jump could be like massive, but like here it's much smaller because we don't really judge that much we are very accepting.

TR2: And I think if you look at the school with proper rugby the hierarchy, say the soccer player the rugby players are usually by the girls are looked at more like higher in the hierarchy because they tougher they more manly. So if you look at it in the sports perspective

the rugby is definitely seen as the higher, higher in the hierarchy but soccer is maybe lower, followed lower even lower than that the hockey, or tennis or chess or something.

TR1: And I think the hierarchy is seen more by girls…

TR3: Ja, that's true.

Researcher: It sounds like something about sort of being at the top is being physically tough and sort of able…

TR3: Ja.

TR4: Definitely.

TR2: Also being at the top, most guys that are at the top that are physically built and all that have usually got a girlfriend…

TR1: And they are douches…

TR2: Ja…

TR1: Most of the time…

TR3: (Gesturing to TR1) Stereotype…

TR1: Most of the time I said. But ja like you see in a lot of the movies it's normally the guy that treats women badly that gets with them…

TR3: Ja…

TR4: I think that's kinda true in real life, in some ways the douchebag always gets the girls, you know that's, there are also cases where you know it's not, it's not it's not, every case but it does happen, it's an often occurrence, a lot of guys are like put his friends and…

TR3: But the hierarchy I don't think it's like individual people I think it's more like a, it goes up and then it does like a circle at the top because you not always, no no one is gonna think that they at the top unless, unless it's like done like that at the school, but I think here it's more like it goes up and then it does a circle cos then the group, it will probably be like a group, cos than they will, they'll, everyone will think that someone is better than the other person, they will look at that person more.

Researcher: What do you think makes a man feminine?

TR1: Crying, not really, ballet, a lot of the things that we said makes you a man…

TR2: Squeaky voice…

(Laughter)

TR1: Ja it's the opposite of the things that make you a man, ah…. I know this is like a touchy subject but I also think that if you are um like not straight, you also get frowned upon in society and get seen as less of a man…

TR2: But that's because they are more feminine in the sense that they, very more, they more open about their feelings, they kinda, they like, they will go and cry cos something silly whereas a man, ja they will cry but they won't cry as easily and like a man is seen feminine when he, I mean you can see by the way he walks the way he talks the way he holds a cup or you can see it and usually feminine men aren't built as much, I mean obviously of course there are some um I'm just generalising but they usually have thinner arms they not like as, their shoulders usually aren't as wide because they aren't interested in that gyming and that building to attract the girls.

TR4: Ja I think also what makes men feminine is that vulnerability, a man is vulnerable you know he can become extremely more feminine, ah ja feminine and release his emotions a lot and a lot of people see that as not manly and that's basically what happens you know once you start talking about it you are seen as not as much of a man and ja I think and also I think it's really hard for gay people because gay people, well they constantly, they wanna be accepted in society but they also have you know, they have their needs and a lot of people go through their whole lives with this a emotional torture and they have to and they have to in order to get accepted in society as men they have to you know lie, they have to lie to the people that they love and to lie to themselves in a way and I think it's ja, think it's very hard life for a gay man.

TR3: Ja but if you not, if you not a man then you a women, you know it's like…

TR4: There is nothing in the middle…

TR2: Ja society hasn't kinda, and I think eventually there will be the middle class because there's more gays coming out of the closet, let's put it that way, there's more gays being accepted now so at the moment there's still, you are a guy or you are a girl or you're not accepted. Whereas, say, in the future, in a few years' time there might be, it will be totally fine to be gay it's just what it is…

TR3: Ja.

TR1: Ja it's your choice, but ja I do think it makes you a little more feminine.

TR4: I think it doesn't make you more of a man if you point out the fact that a guy's not as much of a man…

TR1: Ja, as you….

TR4: And a man that insults you and constantly calls you, that doesn't make you more of a man it makes you, you know an asshole. Ja and I think that's kinda if you do that to someone else and degrade another man it doesn't make you more of a man.

TR1: But society, once again, that's the bar that they set, um you always see the jocks in the movies, the cool guys, but are mean to everyone, so…

TR3: Ja that's true…

Researcher: What do you think them being mean is about?

TR2: Cooler then everyone, they think…

TR1: Putting people down so you look better…

TR3: Ja to make themselves feel …

TR1: Superior so you point out all their weaknesses, that would be your strengths…

TR2: Ja to make you feel better about yourself…

TR4: Basically they depict them with really low self-esteem, that's what they do in movies. You know these guys that, if it's correct and if it's accurate and they bully these people, these guys go home every day crying about their terrible life and that's that's one of the main reasons why people insult each other because they want to feel better about themselves, so that's what really in my opinion doesn't make sense at all.

Researcher: Um, what are masculine virtues or qualities useful for?

TR2: Protective.

Group: Ja.

TR2: ja like if you, what comes along with gyming is also strength, so if you gym to to, look, like attract a girl say like okay not like now, now you don't really have to protect anyone cos obviously our parents pro…protect us and it's not like we have to protect our families. But now, if you gym now most of the muscle will stay with you if you carry on gyming and then that kinda, as well as impressing the girl, gives you the strength to defend yourself and say your family and so can protect you as well as your wife or your children or whatever, I suppose also it comes with that as well.

TR4: I think a lot of responsibility comes with like becoming a man. You know looking after your family and you know, looking after yourself looking after you know making, making the others around you happy and that's one of the big responsibilities of the man and that's a quality you need to have. You, you can't be selfish ja you can't be selfish.

TR3: Put your family first before yourself.

TR2: Ja.

TR3: Because you become the bread winner for your family…

TR2: Where as if a like feminine guy he can't really see a feminine guy protecting someone you know. But like he just doesn't come across as strong or as, like if a feminine had to run

up to say like a criminal and like scream at him he wouldn't be as intimidated as if a guy with big muscles kinda came there's like a difference in intimidation and the way even if he didn't have to like fight physically or defend himself physically the more masculine…

TR1: The perception…

TR2: Guy is more intimidating and would be like more scary.

Researcher: I think we have brought up quite a lot of the physical sort of thing and I'm wondering if, you guys going to gym, do you guys go to gym? Is it something you feel you have to keep doing?

TR1: No.

TR3: No I don't think it's something you have to keep doing but you wanna…

TR2: Ja you wanna, you want to do it to again impress the girls.

TR3: And also just feel good about yourself.

Researcher: What careers do you guys see yourselves doing after school?

TR2: I want to go into the computer industry, the IT like IT security kind of thing. So ja.

TR4: I want to go into acting, you know with the drama and…

TR3: Ja I'm not too sure what I want to do, I went for vocational test and they ah said I should be a bio-kinetics but I'm not sure.

Researcher: Okay guys those are basically all my questions. I don't know if there is anything else you guys wanna bring up or that we spoke about, any questions about.

TR4: Just to like clarify this, I don't know if you guys want to get this across without, I do think you know that gay men can still be men you know…

TR3: Ja…

TR4: It's not impossible to you know, I know a lot of gay men, you know football players in American that have come out as gay you know, they still men. They still provide for their family they still provide for their partner you know. What we like based on is we….

TR3: Mmm, that's true…

TR4: You know we not trying to single them out and say gay men can't be men that's you know.

TR3: Ja you can be strong and protecting and gay at the same time, it's not either or…

TR2: It's just generalising you don't like from a, what we have kinda been exposed to and seen on TV and…

TR4: Ja whenever you see…

TR2: Gay men are seen more kinda like the wimpy guy…

TR4: And they always have that thing with their hands and high pitched voices and that kinda of stuff.

Researcher: So I mean it sounds like there's something like, you can be gay but then still identify with being masculine or feminine.

TR1: Ja.

TR1: And then also hand movements per say, ja, along with masculinity you have to know how to express yourself and like use your motions…

TR2: Like you don't wanna kinda like use your hands and flop your hands cos like, it's not like a big thing but it's also if its weak, you would wanna rather keep yourself firm and get like you know keep your arms stiff and kinda thing like that's also like very minor but it's seen like if you kinda flop your hands around you are also seen as more feminine.

Researcher: So is there something then in that saying sort of having a firm hand shake?

TR1: Exactly.

Group: Ja.

TR2: Ja there's a lot of like, when you shake a guy's hand you usually shake hard or squeeze like harder to prove yourself. Say I'm the bigger man in this handshake ja.

TR4: And when a man, like comes out of nowhere and twists your hand you're like wow this guys a man.

TR2: Ja like he's strong, if you feel like a strong stern handshake where as you shake a guy and he kinda flops it in like this you kinda look at him like what the hell.

TR1: Exactly, so ja and not just that but your walk and…

TR3: Ja…

TR2: Everything…

TR4: How you dress, how you dress is a big thing. You know you can't go around. Well society tells us that as a man you can't go around you know wearing like the tightest stuff and you know having your hair, not really your hair gelled back but like you can't really, ja you must be dressed like, always like wear like smart. Always look formal always look presentable always look classy that kind of stuff you know.

Researcher: Anything else guys? Cool, thanks very much guys.