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Masters Research Report

Young men's responses to media portrayals of masculinity: A South African qualitative investigation

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Johannesburg, 2012

Declaration

The author hereby declares that this whole research report or dissertation is his own original work and it has never been submitted as part of any other degree or examination at any other institution before.

_____ _____

Jarrod Simon Israelstam **Date**

Masters in Research Psychology

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Abstract

The media has always been an institution inseparable from the rest of society – where they have been societies, there have been ways of discussing and representing information that is key to constituting those societies through media. Specifically, it has been argued that gender identities are informed by social representations in the media, but relatively little research has focused on male gender identities. The importance of understanding male gender identity in South Africa cannot be overstated as this identity shapes men's interactions with women and other men. For example, beliefs around male dominance and aggression may lie behind woman abuse, homophobic behaviour, and the spread of HIV (Dunkle & Decker, 2012; Engh, 2011). For example, South African women suffering intimate partner violence or in gender-unequal relationships have a higher risk of HIV infection (Dunkle & Decker, 2012).

In this context, a sample of 52 male undergraduate students from a large university in Johannesburg, South Africa, completed an open-ended survey after viewing video clips taken from popular media. The three clips showed men carrying out non-stereotypical male activities, such as ballet dancing, nursing, and striptease. The participants were asked to give their feelings about the clips, the importance of being male and about masculinity in general. A thematic content analysis of the data gathered illuminated the dominant social representations regarding masculinity in contemporary South Africa, which were primarily interpreted with reference to the theory of hegemonic masculinity and Moscovici's social representations theory.
Some themes which emerged were around heteronormativity, the high status of male identity, male defensiveness and the constant flux of masculine identity. The appearance of these themes shows the complex interplay of sexuality and gender, the diversity of masculinity, and the power that men continue to hold. This serves to illuminate the relationships between hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinities in South Africa.

Beyond its theoretical significance, this study may also inform gender-education campaigns. There are several university societies for which the results would be useful, such as the LGBQTIA society, Wits Activate. National social programmes that may be able to act on these

results include the Brothers for Life campaign, which seeks to change masculine stereotypes. Changing attitudes such as male superiority and defensiveness may be key to the prevention of gender-based violence as well creating greater gender harmony in South Africa. Some hope is created by tolerant attitudes and resistance to hegemonic social representations this study, but the results presented are divergent.

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Overview

Introduction

For several decades, the field of gender studies has been dominated by studies of women and women's issues. This slant can be understood in terms of the corresponding recent gains in women's, political, social and economic rights (Connell, Hearn & Kimmel, 2005). Only since the 1980s has society witnessed the rise of men's studies and men's movements (Morrell, 1998). This is in contrast to feminist studies, which first grew to prominence in the 1960s and 70s but which was based on theory and activism going back to the start of the 20th century or earlier (Kinser, 2004). This increased awareness regarding men's studies may be in response to the traditional 'de-gendering' of men (McKay, Mikosza & Hutchins, 2005). It could in fact be said that whilst men have been highly noticeable in society, their presence "*as men"* [original italics] has been almost non-existent (McKay et al., 2005, p.270). Elements that have contributed directly or indirectly to the rise in men's studies may include the feminist movements, economic downturns, and media discourses of masculinity crisis (Mac an Ghaill & Haywood, 2007). It can be argued that concurrent with the increased focus on men's studies there has been a trend towards female liberation in all spheres, discussed below. Due to these changes, the cultural stronghold of men appears to have begun breaking down, and along with it, the invisibility of men's gender in the home, politics and all areas of male domination.

The value and necessity of both men's studies and men's movements has been doubted by some authors, especially those with a feminist perspective (Connell et al., 2005). The critique from feminism still has relevance today. Especially during the early 1990s, it was feared that men's studies would only serve to further entrench women's oppression (Connell et al., 2005). It has been argued that in general and in South Africa specifically, masculinity studies exclusively focuses on men and tends to overlook their relation to women. Excluding women from the analysis risks reproducing men's dominant status in interpersonal, economic and political contexts (Macleod, 2007). By contrast, Macleod (2007) argues that a focus on women in feminist studies does not have the reverse effect - that is, marginalising men. Rather it serves to highlight what has historically been ignored or cast as the exoticised 'other.' Whilst this is a useful

caution, it does not diminish the importance of masculinity studies, nor does Macleod (2007) argue against its existence.

Women remain at a disadvantage in many ways in employment, education, political and other contexts (Connell et al., 2005). For example, 66% of 117 female managers in one South African study felt intimidated by their male colleagues (Hofmeyr & Mzobe, 2012). In the US, although women comprise 47 percent of the overall labor force, they account for only 6 percent of corporate CEOs and top executives (Matsa & Miller, 2011). However, there have been recent increases in women's social mobility both in South Africa and internationally. For example, in South Africa, by 2009 the number of women in the National Assembly had increased to 173, or 43% of all members of parliament (South African Institute of Race Relations, 2011). This increased from 27.5% of all MPs in 1994. Internationally, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women of 1979 and the Beijing Platform for Action of 1995 seek to bring gender equality (Connell et al., 2005).

The marginalisation of women is not an issue only to be addressed by feminist studies or studies of women, since that marginalisation derives directly from the position of men in society (Connell et al., 2005). Thus, men's studies – and investigations such as this one – need to operate alongside feminist studies and co-operate with it towards a goal of gender equality and interpersonal understanding. The workability of this is attested to by the fact that authors in feminist studies and masculinity studies are citing each other more and more often, and each field has gained theoretical and empirical insights from the other (Connell et al., 2005).

Furthermore, a more integrated and fuller understanding of men's issues and roles in society is necessary, globally and locally. As society has evolved and as gender relations shift constantly, the need for updating our understanding of masculinity and masculinity research continues. Indeed, Connell (2005) argued that changes in gender relations are a product of the inherent contradictions such relations contain. One example of change is the historical context of a long-standing male patriarchy and a current context in which men have, forcibly or voluntarily, relinquished some of their power over women (Connell et al., 2005).

But social changes are not unidirectional, and this is played out in the South African context. In South Africa for example, young masculinity changed during the 1990s, moving away to some extent from involvement in political activism and towards materialism (Langa, 2008). Epprecht (2010) discusses how the end of Apartheid in South Africa changed the parameters of local sexuality, and masculinity along with it. For example, it gave freedom to same-sex couples as well as inter-racial couples. It was also the time in which the 'open secret' of mine-marriage was exposed – homosexual relationships between ostensibly heterosexual men and boys in the mine compounds of Johannesburg (Epprecht, 2010).

According to Walker (2005), The South African Constitution was designed to liberate gender relations and sexualities from their past confines. However, the highly liberal Constitution does not consider and accommodate the masculinities of the past, which Walker (2005) characterises as authoritarian and violent. These identities are in many ways incongruous with more 'modern' sentiments such as being "a good father and husband, employed and able to provide for his family" (Walker, 2005, p.227). Furthermore, the environment in which the change in masculinities is happening includes the HIV and Aids pandemic and increasing poverty and inequality in many communities.

According to Walker (2005), the state of masculinity in South Africa is a complex one. According to Walker (2005, p. 225), in both white and black communities, "orthodox notions of masculinity are being challenged and new versions of masculinity are emerging in their place. Some men are seeking to be part of a new social order while others are defensively clinging to more familiar routines." In urban areas, '*ingagara*' masculinity – something akin to machismo – is still prevalent, while in rural areas, some researchers have found very progressive men who have "engaged with human and gender rights" (Walker, 2005, p. 234).

Walker (2005) examined the intersectionality of masculinity constructions with economics and political and social change in South Africa post-1994. Walker (2005) argues that a post-apartheid culture of liberal sexuality has combined with lack of opportunity and the diminished social status of 'strong' men such as Umkhonto we Sizwe soldiers to increase violence. To explain briefly, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) was the armed wing of the African National Congress during

apartheid. A similar organization was the Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA), the armed wing of the Pan Africanist Congress (Mankayi, 2010). The MK and APLA soldiers who remained were integrated into the South African National Defence Force (the national army) in 1996, along with black and white soldiers from the apartheid-era South African Defence Force. MK had a "powerful ideological presence" and high prestige (Cock, 1993, p. 50). Thus the importance of MK to its male members was indubitable. At the same time, women within and outside MK were "being pushed back into the roles of 'the protected' and 'the defended'" (Cock, 1993, p. 52).

Bozzoli's seminal article thus described the complexity of gender relations in South Africa as a 'patchwork' of patriarchies (Bozzoli, 1983, as cited in Morrell, 1998). She argued that it was simplistic to view South Africa as dominated by a singular form of male rule and postulated the existence of many patriarchies in the country at the same time. For example, there was the English-speaking variety, Afrikaner patriarchy and an urban black culture characterised by sexist assumptions and ideologies. In rural areas, a 'chiefly' or 'tribal' patriarchy was proposed (Morrell, 1998).

In addition to considering the change that has taken place in South Africa, it is important to take note of the subject of research. Existing psychological research is often biased towards studying men in general (for example; over-selecting male participants), although examinations of different masculinities have been relatively few and far between (McKay et al., 2005). As stated by Morrell (1998, p. 605), "the dominance of men in the public record has obscured the fact that little is known about masculinity. Men have generally been treated in essentialist terms". What is meant here by 'essentialist' is the idea that gender (and masculinity) has a natural existence. It is biologically given to us and does not change over time or vary from individual to individual (Crompton & Lyonette, 2005). Importantly, essentialism posits a fundamental difference between men and women and claims that this difference explains historical and current social and material differences between the sexes (Crompton & Lyonette, 2005).

On the other hand, social constructionism argues that societies create truths or 'constructions,' and that these truths can take on an independent, 'real' existence. Butler (1988) argues that in

this way, the connection is made between biological sex (male) and gender (man). Foucault (1980, as cited in Butler, 1988, p. 524) argued that the idea of sexes artificially brings together "anatomical elements, biological functions, conducts, sensations, and pleasures," for social purposes. These purposes include the guarantee of production and consumption of material goods (as in the sexualisation of manual labour), and sexual reproduction (Butler, 1988). But these 'sexes,' defined as a binary (male versus female) are in essence false notions. Multiple masculinities and femininities exist, as well as identities that do not refer to the masculine or the feminine.

As alluded to above, it is also necessary to examine the closely related idea of sexual orientation in the discussion of essentialised versus non-essentialised gender. While sexual orientation and gender are partially distinct concepts, they are linked through constructions such as heteronormativity and male heteronormativity in particular. As Kimmel (2004, p. 214) argues, "manhood is demonstrated for other men's approval." To a large degree, that approval is dependent on not being "sissy" or "uncool," at the risk of being labelled a "faggot" – a label for gay men that is simultaneously used to show contempt for the one thus labelled (Kimmel, 2004, p. 214).

The study of sexuality is inextricably linked to the study of gender, as Queer theory shows (Bettany et al., 2010). Broadly speaking, queer theory points to inconsistencies in so-called stable relations between chromosomal sex, gender and sexual desire (Butler, 1993). Queer theory rejects the notion that heterosexuality is naturally the normal state of people, and the idea that there could be any natural sexuality (Butler, 1993). The theory points to several human aspects that destabilise the idea of heteronormativity, such as cross-dressing, hermaphroditism, gender ambiguity and gender-corrective surgery. The theory deconstructs everything we take for granted, even the basic idea of treating men and women as distinct groups or entities (Butler, 1993). Whether one accepts this strong version of the argument or not, the concepts of gender and sexual orientation should not be detached from each other.

The theory of social representations provides a way to understand how media content can inform the construction of masculinities, and non-hegemonic masculinities in particular. Connell (2005)

argued that masculinities vie for space and status in society, and that certain ideas of masculinity (hegemonic) dominate other masculinities (non-hegemonic). Social representations theory argues that identities are built out of messages communicated across society. Identities are not 'natural,' but come about as individuals – in particular social contexts – learn from the ideas of their social groups. In this instance, representations of non-hegemonic masculinity are communicated between media and its audiences. This gives meaning to phenomena that group members encounter, such as transgender individuals or same-sex marriage. In this way, masculinities come to be formed, and will differ across (as well as within) different social contexts.

Despite the awareness that has led to the growth in men's studies research, men are still portrayed in the media in the out-dated stereotypical ways (for example; socially and physically powerful, working men). This may be seen as entrenching the superior status that men hold in many societies, but at the same time it constricts men's growth and does not allow for a plurality of masculinities, marginalising non-hegemonic masculinities. For example, in the 1970s men were often portrayed in an active, strong roles, such as labourers, professionals, celebrities, narrators or interviewers (Bettany et. al., 2010). Bettany and colleagues (2010) argue that male gender roles in advertisements have not changed significantly since that time. This speaks to the male gender invisibility which McKay and colleagues (2005) discussed.

For instance, Kervin (1990, as cited in Gentry & Harrison, 2010) examined some of the history of adverts in Esquire magazine. That study found that the same stereotyped masculinities from the 1930s were being portrayed 50 years later. Schroeder and Zwick (2004, as cited in Gentry and Harrison, 2010) referred to one typical, long-existing male portrayal as the hero shot. This is the image of a lone conquering man defeating his foes. In a worryingly similar vein, fathers are often portrayed as disconnected from their families, selfishly going out for success or, at least, focusing solely on their occupation (Gentry and Harrison, 2010).

The often simplistic social representations of gender and sexuality in the media is illustrated by the work presented at an international biennial advertising research conference called the Association of Consumer Research Gender Conference. Started in 1991, it did not have

presentations directly related to sexual orientation until 1998 (Bettany, Dobscha, O'Malley & Prothero, 2010). Furthermore, only at the 1998 conference did a theme of 'the man' emerge, which put "men's consumption behaviours under a *gendered* (own italics) lens" (Bettany et al., 2010, p. 11). This was an important shift in that it reflects the discipline's understanding that men are not the standard against which all theory is tested, nor are they 'genderless.' The growing visibility of men's gender is the starting point for changes in the representation of non-hegemonic masculinities. In the past, when masculinity was considered monolithic or unproblematic, non-hegemonic masculinities were not understood.

Thus, they were socially represented in the media as something strange, if at all. The recency of the changes at this conference is an indicator of how recently the advertising industry on the whole – as an important part of global media – started taking serious notice of gender and masculinity issues. The state of the advertising industry is further revealed if we look at the basic conception of gender in advertising research. Early research indulged in 'gender-as-a-variable' research (Haynes, 2008, as cited in Bettany et al., 2010). This type of gender research is still a part of marketing and consumer research today, and is based on an essentialist understanding of a singular, mostly hegemonic, masculinity. For example, an experimental study of differences between men and women's attitudes to sex in advertising was recently conducted (Dahl, 2009, as cited in Bettany et. al., 2010). This is in sharp contrast to true gender research, which Bettany and colleagues (2010) argue necessarily has a critical agenda to challenge essentialised sex differences.

The importance of the move to a critical focus is highlighted if one considers that social representations in advertising are some of the most powerful amongst media. Advertising has, in fact, been referred to as one of the most influential mediums of socialisation of our time (Cohan, 2001). Advertising research has evolved, however; to encom`pass critical theory, including critical feminist theory. Greater strides in this direction must be taken in advertising research. Without this, advertising will not portray (that is, socially represent) an equitable and comprehensive understanding of gender, and non-hegemonic masculinity in particular.

Just as advertising is slowly moving towards greater awareness of men's issues and non-hegemonic masculinities, men throughout society are attempting to change how they are understood. Specifically, this is through the growing number of men's movements. For example, The Fathers 4 Justice group began in the UK in 2001. It has since expanded worldwide, and includes a South African branch. It has engaged in a number of political activities to highlight the plight of fathers who are unjustly denied custody of their children. They have challenged the family law system through peaceful protest, although several of their members have been arrested or sentenced to prison. Indeed, many of their strategies are akin to some of the early activities of the women's suffragette movement (Fathers-4-Justice South Africa, 2013).

The need of men to be considered worthy parents may be stronger now than it has been in some time (Gentry & Harrison, 2010). Fatherhood is indeed an important aspect of masculinity, whilst expectations around fatherhood (such as nurturing) continue to change (Gentry & Harrison, 2010). Fatherhood represents a good example of the way men are faced with juggling different identities and roles, and deal with adverts emphasizing traditional roles which often clash with current expectations (Gentry & Harrison, 2010). Thus, the social construction of fatherhood as it relates to hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinity are truly important to understand, as well as fatherhood being intimately tied to social representations of hegemonic masculinity. This will be further addressed in Chapter 4, Results and Discussion.

At this point it is important to look at some other contextual information that informs the social construction of masculinity in South Africa. The typical South African child is raised in a single-parent home, where overwhelmingly, the father is either deceased or simply absent (Holborn & Eddy, 2011). Often in these cases, parental deaths are as a result of Aids. In South Africa and globally, constructions of sexuality and manhood suggest that young men are knowledgeable, aggressive, and experienced regarding sexuality and reproductive health (Barker & Ricardo, 2005). By accepting these constructions as valid, young men gain a disproportionate share of the power to determine the trajectory of intimate relationships with women. In spite of these constructions, young men often do not have accurate information on either sexuality or health. Barker and Ricardo (2005) explain that due to fear of admitting their ignorance, borne out of maintaining a masculine image, they may be lead to engage in unsafe behaviours that put both

them and their partners at risk. In the context of this poor communication, there are serious implications for HIV risk.

Another major issue is gender-based violence. Garcia-Moreno & colleagues' (2006) World Health Organisation study looked at prevalence of intimate-partner violence. It showed that lifetime prevalence was between 25% and 50% in seven sites studied, and between 50% and 75% in six sites throughout Africa and Asia. Up to 54% of respondents said that they had been victims of intimate-partner violence in the past year. In all but one of the 15 sites, women were much likelier to suffer physical or sexual violence by a partner than by other people. Often, abuse in the developing world is conceptualised as discipline or chastisement (Garica-Moreno et al., 2006). Furthermore, MacIlwaine (2013) highlights that the underlying causes of gender-based violence are found in patriarchy – the male belief in the domination of women. The ideas of discipline and domination discussed above are played out in the current epidemic of 'corrective' rape of lesbians (Brown, 2012). This practice also displays the homophobia acted out by certain South African men.

Homophobia directed against men in South Africa and globally is just as serious. Nel and Judge's (2008) Gauteng-based study found a troublingly high prevalence of homophobic discrimination – from verbal to sexual to property abuse - having been suffered over the preceding two years. As context, Nel and Judge (2008) argue that South Africa's history is characterised by institutional categorisation, discrimination and prejudice, and thus othering has become a normal practice for South Africans. High levels of 'outness,' or overt homosexuality, and challenging patriarchal gender norms are linked to higher levels of discrimination. Importantly, such norms include the right of men to intercourse with women, as in the 'corrective' rape of (often black) lesbians. Nel and Judge (2008) argue that homophobic violence is not conceptually distinct from gender-based violence, but is one aspect of it.

Through examining the social representations of atypical masculinities (such as non-aggressive or gay masculinities) that young men orient to, we can begin to change their ideas or constructions about masculinities and thereby bring about social change. In this way, this study seeks to carry practical significance beyond being theoretically descriptive. Investigations such

as this may inform future university gender-education campaigns. There are, there have been, and there will be several university societies for which this would be relevant, such as the Everywoman Society, The F-Word, and Activate Wits ("Wits Student Clubs," 2008; "Activate Wits," 2013). Everywoman promoted gender equality and female solidarity, the F-Word promoted feminism and opening discussions around what feminism is, and Activate seeks to provide safe spaces and communities on and off campus for LGBQTIA people to get involved in activism as well as to socialise ("Wits Student Clubs," 2008; "Activate Wits," 2013). This is where LGBQTIA means lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, transgender, intersex or asexual.

Similar organizations exist at other South African universities, for example the University of Cape Town ("Student societies & organisations," 2013). For example, RainbowUCT hosts Pink Week, which aims to inform students at the University of Cape Town about LGBQTIA rights and sexual diversity. The club generally promotes the right to choose one's own lifestyle, regardless of gender, biological sex or sexual orientation. Men are often portrayed as stoical and usually portrayed as heterosexual in the media (Levina, Waldo & Fitzgerald, 2000). In fact, being effeminate or not strongly heterosexual is sometimes ridiculed in advertising (Branchik, 2007). Similarly, it has been a common perception of men that gay (or LGBQTIA) men are not real men (Branchik, 2007). As Holland (2004) argues, hegemonic masculinity – as ardently heterosexual – pressurises young people to discipline or distort themselves and even their bodies to fit with the norm. As a (queer) non-hegemonic masculinity, transvestism was portrayed in one of the media clips (Butler, 1999). Thus some light could be shed on the dominant social representations of masculinities which run counter to heteronormativity.

Organizations and campaigns outside university life who could apply this study's findings could be "Brothers for Life" and "The Equality Project" (Brothers for Life, 2012; The Equality Project, 2012). The importance of this study for these organizations could be that it reveals something about current male gender stereotypes, particularly in relation to aggression and the need to appear physically and emotionally strong at all times. This is a particular focus for the "Brothers for Life" campaign, which seeks to change these stereotypes, with a view to changing negative behaviours such as violence, neglect, promiscuity and rape. It should be held in mind that gender-based violence has several highly damaging effects, such as the spread of HIV. This is

due to the dominating nature of such relationships and its interaction with safe sex practices (Bhana & Anderson, 2013). Men refuse to wear condoms and often behave promiscuously to wield their power over their partners.

The study, however, would not merely be relevant to older males, but could inform the 'prevention' approaches adopted by some initiatives geared at school-children (for example; that of Liang, Flisher & Lombard, 2007). To expand, the teaching of the subject 'Life Orientation' in South Africa could begin to expose learners to diverse representations of masculinity. As Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2003) argue, it is important for young boys to have a forum for discussing their feelings. This openness about masculinity could help prevent bullying at school and later manifestations such as the kinds of problems dealt with by Brothers for Life.

It is also believed that this research will be helpful in diversifying the ways in which 'media' as a variable is operationalised and investigated. Studies on media and masculinity rely on university samples fairly often (for example; Hobza & Rochlen, 2009; Hobza, Walker, Yakushko & Peugh, 2007). However, these two studies in particular presented still media images to participants. Thus, this study could be useful as an extension of their methodology to the use of video footage. Furthermore, there seems to be a dearth of studies done on Wits University students on this subject matter, with Picton's (2007) study on male student body-image being a notable exception. This study serves to highlight men's personal conceptions of masculinity as well as the effects the media may play on them, through the unstructured response opportunities given to the participants.

Chapter 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Introduction

It is necessary to state from the outset that this study is concerned with understanding masculinity (as an aspect of gender) from a constructionist perspective, and through the lens of social representations. That is, it is important to understand our biology, but this must be seen in light of how we understand our bodies and how we relate to others on that basis. This is discussed in depth in the section on Research Design. Therefore, theories of the social construction of masculinity are discussed, with particular reference to the public media.

The media plays an important role in the construction of masculinity, along with other social institutions. It is argued that the media has always been an institution inseparable from the rest of society – where they have been societies, in general, there have been ways of discussing and representing information that is key to constituting them through media (Fourie, 2007). One may simply assume that what we see (in the media) must affect us, but there are many theories of how this may take place and to what extent we are influenced. These will be discussed in the sections that follow. The transmission of ideas – gendered ideas in particular – across society through the media will be investigated. Social representations theory will play a key role in showing how new public knowledge is built on top of old understandings.

Furthermore, different conceptions of gender will be discussed in historical perspective, as a critical lens focused on the various expressions and representations of masculinity in the South African, and international arena. Theoretical frameworks for understanding identity formation will be discussed in terms of their relevance to the adoption of gender roles, and the variables involved in the study will be conceptually defined. Finally, empirical evidence, which supports the view that media plays an important role in shaping gender will be discussed, with particular reference to gaps in the research which has been conducted until now.

Characterizing Gender

Attempts to define gender and masculinity from a purely biological perspective have come under great criticism for some time (Connell et al., 2005; Munro, 2005). Linked to this, attempts to create a unitary concept of masculinity have faced similar criticisms. For example, masculinity has been thought to represent "an instrumental orientation, a cognitive focus on getting the job done or the problem solved" (Bem, Martyna & Watson, 1976, p. 1016). However, such conceptualizations of masculinity can be criticized for oversimplification. Evidence shows that masculinity is diverse across and within cultures, as well as changing over personal lifetimes and historical contexts (Mac an Ghaill & Haywood, 2007). Underlying the oversimplified misconception of masculinity is an essentialist view that confuses masculinity with the presence of male sexual organs, hormones or genes (Mac an Ghaill & Haywood, 2007). But as Kessler (1990, p. 25) puts it, "what has primacy in everyday life is the gender that is performed, regardless of the flesh's configuration under the clothes."

We thus act out the expectations that society has of us around biological sex, as our gender identity. The way Butler (1999) puts this is that we labour under an expectation around gender which eventually produces, through our belief and our actions, the same gender identity we believed we always had. It is argued that through the constant *mass*-performance of certain social activities, a concrete gender appears to be formed (Butler, 1999). Butler (1999) argues that there is a tacit agreement between all men which results in the polarization of the genders 'man' and 'woman.'

> "Various acts of gender create the idea of gender, and without those acts there would be no gender at all. Gender is, thus, a construction that regularly conceals its genesis; the tacit collective agreement to perform, produce, and sustain discrete and polar genders as cultural fictions obscured by the credibility of those productions ... the construction compels our belief in its necessity and naturalness" (Butler, 1999, p. 178).

However, it is also not claimed by this author that gender is constructed out of thin air. It is argued that gender consists in several fluid 'categories' that are socially constructed based on the

existence of certain biological differences such as body shape, strength, and vocal pitch (MacInnes, 1998). Even these biological differences are not concrete things, varying from individual to individual and given different meaning and import by each individual in interaction with her/his society. In Connell's (2005) view, at least in Western cultures, a man's view of his gender interacts with his physical sense of being male and social processes, such as expectations and rewards. In other words, feeling as if one is fast, strong or skilled (or not) in a certain way influences the kinds of activities men take part in (for example sport, manual labour, programming). Taking part in (and succeeding in) such activities is either rewarded or not by the larger society, through the conferring of high social status. At the same time social status and expectations will play a role in determining what kinds of activities are available to men (for example being at formal gatherings, taking an interest in decorating). Connell (2005) also notes that the higher a man's social status, the higher his ability to dominate women is.

Lindeggar and Maxwell (2007, p.25) argue that "masculinity is not a property of men, but a socially constructed phenomenon, an everyday system of beliefs and performances that regulate behaviour between men and women, as well as between men and other men." Similarly, Gutmann (1996, p. 17) defines male identities as whatever "men say and do *to be men* [original italics], and not simply what men say and do."

Working definitions for gender and masculinity

Gender is not two static categories – man and woman - which exist in a vacuum but rather, as Butler (1999) argued above, it is contained in gendered social transactions. It is important to note too that males are not merely recipients of a socially prescribed role, they are not simply conditioned or socialised by their cultures. Men and boys have agency in constructing and reconstructing the dominant norms of masculinity (Courtenay, 2000). Thus, masculinity is defined as the socially constructed collection of identities associated with being (and doing things as) a man (McKay et al., 2005).

The context of masculinity and men's studies in South Africa and beyond

To begin this section, a brief introduction to the recent rise in male visibility is presented. Thereafter, some recent research on the specific ways in which men are becoming visible is examined. The import of these changes is that men are now the subject of research in ways they have not been heretofore. The consequences of this are then discussed.

A reified view of men has been (until recently) the basis for a lack of research into what is now called men's studies (Mac an Ghaill & Haywood, 2007). In the words of McKay and colleagues (2005, p. 270) "the very processes that confer privilege to one group and not to another are often invisible to those upon whom privilege is conferred." McKay and colleagues (2005) argue that it is the invisibility itself of men's gender which has maintained male social dominance.

According to some theorists, there is now a growing trend towards investigating men (Mac an Ghaill & Haywood, 2007). As a consequence of a greater social and academic 'visibility' of men, many of the same types of issues that face women for a longer time now face men, such as feelings of "constraint, unease, misery and trying to embody the ideals [of masculinity]" (Segal, 2004, as cited in Mac an Ghaill & Haywood, 2007, p. 29). For example, in Picton's (2007) study, investigating body image dissatisfaction amongst South African male university students, it was found that this particular population group perceived themselves to be more muscular than their ideal body type and, as well as valuing a thinner body ideal. Furthermore, Boisvert and Harrell (2009) argue that men may be more vulnerable to the messages portrayed in the media of a need to improve their appearance.

Men have also become more visible to themselves, and it may be that their 'genderless persona' has started slipping away in recent years (Mac an Ghaill & Haywood, 2007). Recognition of their gendered identity by men can be seen in their attempts to claim a psychological and social space for themselves by constructing or identifying with their own versions of masculinity. Examples include 'the new man,' 'the lad,' the metrosexual' and others. Briefly, the new man is sensitive, the lad is crude and dominating and the metrosexual is highly concerned with appearance (Kimmel et al., 2005; Ricciardelli, Clow & White, 2010)

An important point about media depictions of men is that men's bodies are becoming objects for viewing. Traditionally (perhaps until the 1990s), men's entire bodies were not often shown in the media (Ricciardelli et al., 2010). This may be seen as part of the invisibility of men, as discussed previously. Furthermore, whereas before fashion houses predominantly targeted women, men have been a much bigger focus for them in the last two decades because of a widely-held recognition of new male needs (Mac an Ghaill & Haywood, 2007). Bordo (1999, as cited in Barber, 2008) argues that women are now encouraged to gaze at the beautified male body, for the first time in centuries. Ricciardelli's (2011) findings from interviews with Canadian men suggest that men are aware of appearance norms in society which lay down that which is masculine and that which is not, and react to these.

Bordo (1999, as cited in Barber, 2008) argues that that this sexualisation of men in the popular media and men's concurrent involvement in beauty or 'grooming' practices destabilises traditional gender dichotomies. However, men are not "hypersexualised" in magazines, as women are (Hatton & Trautner, 2011, p264). This is in terms of a sexualisation measure which takes into account poses, exposed parts, touching, and many other factors. Nevertheless, Lorié (2011) shows how the popular television show "Sex in the City" goes some way in sexualising men - making men the sexual object of women's desires.

McKay and colleagues (2005) argue that the media is both a mirror of and a catalyst for social changes such as those discussed above. New male needs are evident in the study by Ricciardelli and colleagues (2010), who examined representations of masculinity in the Canadian men's magazines Details, OUT, GQ, Men's Health, Esquire, Maxim, Stuff and FHM. It has been argued that historically, magazines have been marketed to women (Ricciardelli et al., 2010). As late as the 1980s, the prevalent belief was that men were not interested in lifestyle magazines, which include advice for social activities, health and sexuality, for example (Ricciardelli et al., 2010). These researchers made use of Connell's (1987) theory of hegemonic masculinity, as discussed previously. Ricciardelli and colleagues (2010) examined dominant representations of masculinities within each magazine, listed above. Their findings were diverse and include the points that there were multi-page fashion spreads, and new and upcoming styles were

predominant features. The magazines also represented status symbols and high-risk and violent activities as desirable.

Toerien and Durrheim (2001) conducted a discourse analysis of South African Men's Health magazine, a magazine providing leisure and sex-related content for men. The 'voices' that Toerien and Durrheim (2001) described as speaking in this magazine were the 'new man' and the 'macho man', which are also common in the British context (Edley & Wetherell, 1997, as cited in Toerien & Durrheim, 2001). These discourses "exist as cultural resources in pockets of South African society" – in other words they are *used* wherever and when they suit men's purposes (Toerien & Durrheim, 2001, p. 40).

Toerien and Durrheim (2001, p. 40) report that macho men are mainly interested in sports, drinking, expensive cars, going out with women and "hanging out with the boys." However, the 'real man' is an integrated discourse which combines parts of the 'macho man' and the 'new man.' Such a man is not "explicitly romantic nor overly sensitive," like women or the 'new man' (Toerien & Durrheim, 2001, p. 42). However, according to Toerien and Durrheim (2001, p. 42) he is not "degrading, boorish or excessively sexually demanding (like the 'macho man')." This synthesis of masculinities is created to allow the magazine to address men as a homogenous group, despite the many conflicting discourses of masculinity, and thereby create one, successful product for sale.

Thus, in summary, men are growing in visibility in society, as well as in published research. They are being examined (and perhaps judged) where they never had before, especially as sexual objects.

Theoretical Frameworks for Understanding Masculinity and the Role of the Media

Theories of Masculinity

Before discussing the stance taken in this paper, it is prudent to consider the approach that opposes it, the approach that has arguably been replaced as the orthodoxy on masculinity. The prevailing stance on gender in the past was sex role theory, in its various forms (Demetriou, 2001). This group of theories was developed between the 1950s and 1980s by functional sociologists such as Parsons and Bales (1955), theorists such as Pleck (1976) and socio-biologists such as Wilson (1978). Sex role theories take as an assumption that men's and women's characters differ and that they are therefore suited to particular roles (Hesselbart, 1981). Hesselbart (1981) argues that the theorised differences correspond well with common lay stereotypes. These include that men are dominant (and enter leadership positions) and that women are nurturing (and enter care-giving professions).

By contrast, Connell's (2005) theory of hegemonic masculinity argues that gender identity formation is driven by a recognition and uncomfortable acceptance of hegemonic masculinity by individuals. Hegemonic males can - discursively and through direct aggression - dominate and position other males as inferior to them and thus assert their power (Mac an Ghaill & Haywood, 2007). Such discursive positioning of men is consistently achieved through the media (Mac an Ghaill & Haywood, 2007).

Hegemony refers to the social dominance by certain groups of other groups through persuasion and other means (Gramsci, 1971, as cited in Speer & Potter, 2001). Consent is, as suggested by the idea of persuasion, the basis of hegemony, as opposed to coercion (Speer & Potter, 2001). This creates a legitimate and naturalised set of norms and values which go unchallenged until recognised as hegemonic and unjust (Speer & Potter, 2001). Hegemonic masculinity, for example, is constantly re-inscribed through talk (Speer & Potter, 2001). Particularly, hegemonic masculinity reacts against what is regarded as feminine, homosexual or non-conformist in men

(Hamber, 2006). However, men may vacillate between "defining themselves as 'new' and 'retributive' men" to protect against criticism of being "either too macho or too feminine" (Toerien & Durrheim, 2001, p. 37). Thus, men are willing and able to draw on different discourses of masculinity in different situation, depending on what suits their purposes (Toerien & Durrheim, 2001).

In terms of the theory of hegemonic masculinity, the third and most recent phase of hegemonic masculinity is transnational business masculinity, characterised by egocentrism, social irresponsibility, and commodification of women (Mac an Ghaill & Haywood, 2007). In the transnational business masculinity phase, society's 'role models' are leaders in global politics and business [especially those who display attributes such as toughness and ambition] (Connell, 1998, as cited in Mac an Ghaill & Haywood, 2007).

However, hegemonic masculinities are not simply "negative" – that is harmful to women or other men. Such ideas as bringing home a wage, sustaining a sexual relationship, and being a father are often included in it. Without such behaviours, it is argued, there would be domination, for sure. But the concept of hegemony would not be relevant if the dominant group were simply violent, aggressive, and self-centred. This is because notions of consent and participation by the subordinate groups are embedded in the theory. (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

Importantly, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005, p.838) state that the concept of hegemonic masculinity must not be used "as a fixed, transhistorical model" of masculinity. It does not describe 'what masculinity is.' Rather, it is a useful lens through which to understand men and their constructions of masculinity, a way of showing how men position themselves so as to achieve the ends of dominance. Furthermore, critiques of the theory of hegemonic masculinity include that it serves to concretise rather than shatter the gender binary of men versus women. As Macleod (2007, p. 10) argues, "Masculinities are pitched against each other. Resistance to 'hegemonic' masculinity is cast within the same signifying boundaries – masculinity. There is no escape." There is thus, merely a shift from one type of man to another (Macleod, 2007). Escaping the gender binary is the only way that a diverse range of gender identities and sexual orientations can be legitimated and thus social justice for the diversity of human beings can be

served (Munro, 2005). Therefore, it is important to discuss all masculinities - hegemonic and otherwise - in relation to the full spectrum of gendered and sexual identities. In this way, the constructions of masculinity in South Africa can be democratised, and as a society, we can endeavour to achieve the goals of gender harmony.

Indeed, since gender is fluid and masculinities are diverse, it is no wonder that, at several stages in the past, it has been argued that masculinity is in crisis. It has been argued above that men find social norms restrictive, but that is not to say that they are restrictive in only one way. That is, men are not simply expected to be strong or successful, but are constantly bombarded with contradictory masculine imagery. The 'perfect' man must be aggressive but not violent, sensitive but not emotional, healthy, active and smart without being an idealist, overachiever or too bookish (Elmore, 2001). To paraphrase one author, men's greatest challenge is to develop and authentic sense of self (Spielberg, 1993, as cited in Elmore, 2001). Indeed, one advertising research study found that "61% of French men, 53% of Brazilian men, and 50% of American men say that expectations of men in society are unclear" (Gentry & Harrison, p.76).

In summary, the role of the theory of hegemonic masculinity in this study may be to explain the adolescent desire to be like aggressive, status-seeking, and attractive men and the tendency of particular types of media to contribute to this (emphasising physical strength, capability and non-emotionality). The theory may also serve to explain the outlook of those not living up to socially-accepted standards. Certain issues of non-hegemonic masculinity, which were picked out for investigation in this study are described in the section that follows.

Non-hegemonic Masculinity

In general, there is some research which shows that men and boys experience more social pressure than women and girls to follow gendered societal prescriptions, for example the health-related beliefs that men are independent, self-reliant, strong, and robust (Courtenay, 2000).

Many studies examining the perceptions of males and females acting in gender-congruent and cross-gender ways show that males of all ages are viewed more negatively than females for their

gender role transgressions (McCreary, 1994). Both parents and peers have been shown to affect children's display of gender-typed behaviours. Parents, especially fathers, reward boys for displaying gender-congruent play behaviour more than they reward girls for this. There are a number of reasons postulated for this. It has been assumed by some that the male role possesses higher social status than the female role (McCreary, 1994). When females differ from the common feminine roles, the Social Status model assumes that they are changing their behaviour in a direction that is higher in status. By contrast, the Sexual Orientation hypothesis states that cross-gender behaviour in boys only is a sign that they are, or will become homosexual, something still considered unacceptable in many contexts and thus punished in boys (McCreary, 1994).

However, society has begun transforming and offering new social roles for females such as careers in business and science, but there are not necessarily more for males (McCreary, 1994). One example of a relatively new male role is the male nurse. The fact that the word 'male' is included in the term 'male nurse' shows that a man in this position is somehow considered unusual. If society expects women to engage in more cross-gender behaviour, a male acting in a cross-gender manner may not only be punished for his status-lowering behaviour but he may also be punished for acting in a socially deviant manner (McCreary, 1994).

One example of non-hegemonic masculinity, which was picked out to explore in this study, is transvestism. In explaining transvestism – dressing in clothes usually deemed appropriate for the opposite sex – psychiatrists in the early and mid-20th century usually drew on the concepts of castration anxiety and homosexual 'panic' (Bullough & Bullough, 1997). Epstein (1960) attempted to develop a theory of fetishism (with transvestism a variety of this) based on temporal lobe dysfunction. He described fetishists as having obsessive thoughts and even psychotic breaks (Epstein, 1960). It was thought that the 'condition' was due to an underlying state of excessive excitement, leading to "persistent identification with the mother, marked sexual fears and powerful aggressive impulses" (Epstein, 1960, p. 116). Whilst in more recent years psychiatrists and psychologists have looked at a broader range of factors, critically, 'transvestic fetishism' has been listed as a mental disorder in several editions of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) of mental illnesses (Bullough & Bullough, 1997). This is due to the maintenance of an

illness model of transvestism (Bullough & Bullough, 1997). It is still listed in the most current version, the DSM V, as Transvestic Disorder (DSM V, 2013).

A person who deviates from the norms and beliefs around (biological) sex and gender may well be considered a deviant and labeled as such in society at large (Sharma, 2000, as cited in Jami, 2005). The positioning of transvestism as an illness by psychiatrists and clinical psychologists has added to the public's misunderstanding of it and has helped to cement transvestism as something to fear and denounce (Bullough & Bullough, 1997). Transvestism is, furthermore; commonly confused with homosexuality, despite much research showing that in the main it is a group of practices undertaken by heterosexuals (Bullough & Bullough, 1997). This appears to be true in non-Western societies as well, for example; Pakistan (Jami, 2005). Such confusion of transvestism and homosexuality shows the deep misunderstanding of and conflation of gender, sexual orientation and sexuality inherent in both lay and professional society (Sullivan, 2000). An extremely explicit example of this is Money's (1970) contention that homosexuality is a pathology with related 'conditions' of transvestism and transsexuality.

A second issue raised in the study is that of occupations for men. In particular, male ballet dancing and male nursing are mentioned below. Billing (2011) argues that the construction that males are suited to managerial jobs (and not females) is still prevalent. Due to this, according to England (2010), women have had more reason to shift towards gender-nontraditional activities and positions than men. However, men in non-traditional occupations experience a certain othering. There is a perception that men are not suited to doing 'women's work' (Wingfield, 2008). This causes a movement away from feminized professions and upwards (socially) to professions regarded as more legitimate for men, although this is not always achievable (Wingfield, 2008).

What is interesting to note is that there is an interaction between desirable or acceptable occupations, and sexual orientation – another area under discussion in this paper. Sexual orientation is the desire for sexual relations with a particular gender, but it takes on more meaning than this. A prime example of the aforementioned relationship is ballet dancing. As men who do not fit into hegemonic representations of masculinity, male ballet dancers are constructed

as gay as well as effeminate in much of our society (Bailey & Oberschneider, 1997). Ballet is a female-dominated activity and thus male participation in it would seem to be unacceptable. Thus in summary, through sexuality, sexual orientation and occupation, we see that masculinity is highly restrictive and that hegemonic masculinity removes itself from anything that could be feminine.

The Media

The media may be conceptually defined as the main means of mass communication, regarded collectively (Definition of media in English, 2013). For the purposes of this study, the visual media - which includes such products as the Internet, television, magazines and newspapers – was relevant. This will be operationalised in the present study through presenting participants with video clips taken from visual media available online and film.

A brief coda on the history and function of the media is necessary here. Soroka (2002) argues that the media interacts with the public and with policy-makers to set social agendas. The media is used by policy-makers to distribute their ideas and convince their public. Similarly, policy-makers are sometimes led by public opinion, which, again, is communicated through mass media. Thus, the function of the media in this context has always been an ideological one (Soroka, 2002).

The question becomes how people – interacting with media – might come to accept the ideas about gender they are exposed to. Noelle-Neuman's (1974) classic theory refers to the spiral of silence, in which individuals perceive a particular belief to be dominant in society. They thus, refrain from opposing those beliefs for fear of non-acceptance. This is in turn creates a cycle of greater conformity and greater fear, until a belief eventually becomes nearly omnipresent.

It is argued that mass media have a strong potential to create spirals of silence (Lang & Lang, 2012). Kielwasser and Wolf (1993) argue that this is because of three properties of mass media. First, by definition, they are ubiquitous and thus a given message can be broadcast throughout society. Second, the messages that are being distributed are highly congruent to each other or at

least complementary to each other. This is at odds with Durkin's (2007) critique that media messages are heterogonous and that therefore, social perceptions do not simply arise out of such messages. It could be argued that whilst messages are not always congruent with each other, the repetition of a particular message is nevertheless used as a tool when a certain agenda is being fulfilled.

Thus we have the third property of mass media - accumulation. Not only does the repetitive dissemination of an idea give it power but the use of different media also creates a unified view of a given social grouping (Levina, Waldo & Fitzgerald, 2000). Gross (1991, as cited in Levina, Waldo & Fitzgerald, 2000) argues that visual media in particular distort reality, by making the images they portray appear realistic. For example, this is done through the personification of characters (i.e. treating them as if they were real people) and the seemingly realistic plots of TV shows.

Stuart Hall (1973) argued (using television as an example) that media viewers rely on meaning structures such as social norms and values to interpret or *decode* messages. At the same time, broadcasters do not simply pass on 'raw' content, devoid of explicit or implicit meanings. They *encode* messages to the audience, operating as a social institution within a network of other social and political institutions (Hall, 1973). It must also be realized that once the message is decoded meaningfully by the audeince, it "issues into the structure of social practices," where it will form part of the meaning structures which inform subsequent broadcast messages (Hall, 1973, p. 130).

Importantly, then, media messages must be meaningfully decoded before they can have an influence. However, what is encoded and what is decoded is not necessarily the same. Thus there are three main ways in which audiences eventually decode the message.Audiences, first of all, may take a media message at face-value. This Hall (1973, p. 136) calls the "dominant-hegemonic condition," and refers to the accepted standpoint on something as the "dominant code".
The dominant code is, Hall admits, a contested thing, but in any event there is a pattern of domination of certain codes. If new or unusual pieces of information come to light, they must somehow be related to existing knowledge before they make sense and the most common way

this happens is for them to be integrated into a dominant code. Such a dominant or hegemonic code defines the universe of meanings in relation to a particular aspect of society – for example, masculinity. Even more important is that this hegemonic code is perceived as the *natural* state of a society, by Hall's (1973) definition.

However, there is a mediator between the dominant code, imprinted with the ideology of a society, and the eventual message – the professional code. This is the message sender's (e.g. a TV network) interpretation or articulaton of the dominant code, via "technico-practical" alterations (Hall, 1973, p.136). In other words, how a news agency (for example) portrays an event – the stills or footage it chooses, the focus of the camera, the length of an interview and so on – is in direct relation to but not wholly determined by the dominant code. Hall (1973, p. 137) sees broadcasting as the "ideological apparatus" of the greater society. Hall, Connell and Curti (2007, p. 341) explain the sender's (in this case, a broadcaster) intention in encoding a message:

> The broadcaster tries, by all the technical and communicative competences at his (sic) command, to bring the encoding and decoding moments into alignment: it is an attempt to realise a certain kind of ideological closure, and thereby to establish a *preferred reading* (original italics) of the topic.

Thus, audience members (the receivers) may be taken in by the sender's message, through persuasion. However, Hall and colleagues (2007) argue that although the reading made by receivers is guided by the meaning encoded by the sender, this occurs in the context of other factors. These are, namely, each receiver's frame of reference, socio-economic status, cultural beliefs, and the interactions and relationships between the receivers.

Therefore, multiple readings may be taken from the same communication. Indeed, there are both "adaptive and oppositional elements" in decoding (Hall, 1973, p. 137). Receivers may take a negotiated position on the message, accepting the basic right of the dominant code to define the high-level terms of the communication but resisting specific elements of the message. For example, a man viewing an advert suggesting that a certain behaviour is feminine or weak may agree with the use of these words to describe men and may agree with the sentiment in some

cases. However, he may believe the message does not apply to his race group or to him, due to pre-existing beliefs about these.

The third type of interpretation takes place entirely within an "oppositional code" (Hall, 1973, p. 138). Receivers entirely re-interpret a message using a different system of meanings (for example, a conservative religious point of view). The message is broken down and reformed, and the meaning gathered from it is, potentially, completely at odds with (and defiant of) the dominant code (Hall, 1973).

The media and identity formation

To understand the views participants took in this study on masculinity, it is essential to discuss how social constructs such as masculinity come about. Moscovici (1963) argues that the media is the single most import way in which we as a society come to share ideas about each other. The role of the media in the construction of identities has been explained in different ways. For example, in hypodermic needle theory, the media 'injects' ideas into the minds of passive subjects (Fourie, 2007). Less simplistically, two-step flow theory gives agency to media viewers and recognizes mediating factors in media effects on people. It acknowledges that there are various people who can filter the media's effects (on children, for example) and states that media can reinforce attitudes (Fourie, 2007). The uses and gratifications theory focuses on what kinds of uses people actively get out of the media, including exploring personal identity (Fourie, 2007).

According to Durkin (2007), much psychological research in the field of media effects has been aimed at proving that the media cause or exacerbate aggression. Similar research has tried to show that the media contributes to other social ills, for example; crime, sexism, racism, substance abuse and health disorders. However, the prevalence of these issues before the invention of television is something to be noted, and something which is too often ignored. Bandura (1977) posited that exposure to media – through behaviour modeling and observational learning - has the ability to influence children's actions, as well as those of adults. However, in his classical Bobo-doll experiment, Bandura (1965) argued that whilst reinforcing the model that carries out the behaviour will influence children to imitate it, this is not sufficient for the child to

acquire the behaviour. The significance of this is that a person can watch something on TV and even see that behaviour reinforced, but he or she will not necessarily take on the behaviour without extra reinforcement from his or her environment. This could come from parents, teachers, peers or any other source that is considered to be socially credible and relevant.

The media and constructions of masculinity

According to Durkin (2007) researchers who blame the media often characterise the media effects debate as 'over'. However, the 'debate is over' stance generally presumes that media effects are linear and homogenous. Such research may also assume a hypodermic needle model, ignoring the media user's agency. In terms of gender roles, there is the assumption that because the media often portrays traditional gender stereotypes and because young people are exposed to this, the media must be causing, or contributing to, traditional gender-role development.

However, Durkin (2007, p. 27) argues that it is difficult to investigate this claim, "partly because the processes of gender-role development are still not fully understood, partly because media representations are heterogeneous, and partly because of the methodological challenges of measuring exposure to and processing of media content." Establishing causality is difficult largely because it is virtually impossible to separate out the contributions of one medium (for example television) from others, or more generally from the range of factors that may influence gender role development (Durkin & Nugent, 1998).

Durkin's (2007) explanation of media effects is more complex and follows something akin to a two-step flow model, where he argues that young people "are active social cognitive processors of gender-related information in the media" (p.27) and use what they have learned from a diverse range of sources to impose an understanding on media messages. There is some evidence that as early as the age of four, children can explain and elaborate on on-screen behaviours or events by drawing on pre-existing knowledge about how males and females should act (Durkin & Nugent, 1998). However, this does not imply that there are fully-formed stereotypes operating.

Social Representations Theory

Social representations theory explains how a particular idea is interpreted by a group of people according to a social context, through the use of terms that make sense to that group (Bauer & Gaskell, 1999). The theory places great importance on the circulation of ideas through society, especially in the media (Moscovici, 1963). The theory maintains that how we represent our world can only be understood if we examine the prevailing historical, cultural and macro-social conditions. A social representation is understood as the collective elaboration "of a social object by the community for the purpose of behaving and communicating" (Moscovici, 1963, p. 251). A representation is social because people relate to it as such, and not by virtue of some inherent characteristics.

A social representation emerges whenever a group's identity is threatened and when a new idea subverts the status quo (Moscovici, 1963). Events and phenomena which disrupt the life-course of social groups are usually unfamiliar to those groups. Therefore, people need to cope with the phenomenon; materially as well as symbolically (Moscovici, 1963; Wagner et al., 1999).The symbolic field is where social representations are highly pertinent. There are three parts to representations - subjects, objects and projects. The subjects are the carriers of the message, whilst the object is the concrete being or abstract notion being represented (Bauer & Gaskell, 1999). Objects are always represented through a project – a common vision or purpose of a group. This vision is formed by the particular social context of the group; for example, the ideological context of communism (Bauer & Gaskell, 2008). By no means does a common project suggest that all group members agree on the nature of a particular phenomenon. Rather, each individual draws on a common base of knowledge and ideas which allows him or her to communicate with other sharing the project (Bauer & Gaskell, 2008).

Initially, symbolic coping encompasses anchoring - naming the phenomenon and attributing characteristics to it. This immediately allows the phenomenon to be communicated and talked about (Wagner et al., 1999). Importantly, anchors are based on existing names for objects found in the group knowledge base. Objectifications then make anchors tangible, through the application of particular examples, images and metaphors to the more abstracted anchors. One

example Bauer and Gaskell (1999, p. 172) give is the anchoring of genetic engineering to the term "cloning" and the objectification of this as "Dolly the sheep."

This collective symbolic coping is carried out to a large degree through media, as well as (to a lesser degree) in personal interactions. However, we need to examine what the larger function of social representations is. Social representations serve to create and preserve a homogenous and all-encompassing group identity. They allow "individuals to orient themselves in their material and social world and to master it" (Moscovici, 1961, p. xiii). In essence, they provide a code in which social exchanges can take place (Moscovici, 1961, p. xiii).

Just as Hall (1973) argued that the media is not simply 'absorbed' by people, Moscovici (1963) shows that media is a tool, used by people along with other tools, to share ideas and create consensus. Importantly, the communication of social representations changes the way society constructs its reality. The social representation of non-hegemonic masculinities thus informs the social construction of masculinity in any given society. This process will be discussed in the section that follows.

This research thus takes a perspective in which the media is seen as a vehicle for social representations. Such representations are shared as tools for use but which at the same time shape subjectivities. This is a perspective in which media users have some agency in determining what social representations they identify with, and impose an understanding on the media content they see. This prior understanding comes from the socio-cultural (including media), cognitive and biological forces which affect them.

Marrying social constructions and social representations

The study at hand is concerned with the social representations of non-hegemonic masculinity and what impact such representations could have on masculinity construction in South Africa. Thus, it is necessary to explore the relationship between social representations and social constructions. At the most basic level, social representations are the conduits that convey images or ideas to the

members of society, particularly through the media (Howarth, 2006). But, as Moscovici (1963) argues, these ideas permeate social practices. They "ceaselessly circulate, intersect and crystallise about a word, a gesture, an encounter" (Moscovici, 1963, p. 40). By our use of social representations for making sense of the world, those very representations constitute our world (Howarth, 2006).

Denise Jodelet was Moscovici's partner in the development of social representations theory. Her argument was this: social representations are "systems of knowledge which… intervene in the definition of identity and in the construction of objects" (Wagner, 1996, p. 5). The use of the term 'construction' specifically refers to social constructions. As the constructionist perspective would argue, social representations *are* the objects (in the theoretical use of the term) that they represent – there is no separate object and representation thereof. This is because reality itself is socially constructed, and thus all things in the world "become what they socially are" through the actions of a social group (Wagner, 1996, p. 17). It is suggested that this is the very reason that Moscovici's (1963) work was entitled *La psychanalyse, son image et son public* (Wagner, 1996). Moscovici, it is argued, wanted to show that for all purposes, psychoanalysis *is* a representation, and thus to refer to representations *of* psychoanalysis risks giving it a reality outside of the social constructions eventually formed therefrom (Wagner, 1996).

Social Representations of masculinity in the media

As it has been argued that social representations help to constitute social constructions, and that the media plays an important role in this, it is necessary to examine how masculinity has been socially represented in the media in recent years. This section will thus attempt to illustrate how the media uses anchoring and objectification to achieve social representations of masculinity. Rahman (2004) presents an analysis of how football star David Beckham is socially represented in the media. A key aspect of the analysis is how the media represents aspects of non-hegemonic masculinity (including particular dress and body work) in the process of "queering" Beckham

(Rahman, 2004, p.3). Queering here refers to a blurring of gender identity. Some telling excerpts from the study are shown below.

Rahman (2004, p. 2) quotes an interview from Marie Claire June 2002, which included the statement: "You can see why people might think you're a bit of a big girl's blouse, because you have manicures, sunbeds and bleach your hair." Here, the magazine's writer anchors low status non-hegemonic masculinity (the ridicule of "big girl's blouse") to taking part in beauty culture, and uses manicures, sunbeds and hair-dyeing as objectifications. The queering of Beckham is done in complex ways, such as in the following segment from the tabloid Heat: "David sported a new blonde barnet and a fitted black suit, and despite the controversy caused by his pink nail varnish he still managed to look macho and absolutely beautiful" (Rahman, 2004, p. 2). The representation of effeminate, non-hegemonic masculinity (suggested by the word 'beautiful') and the objectification of this in 'pink nail varnish' is starkly opposed to the word 'macho,' a likely anchor of hegemonic masculinity. Thus, without being easily apparent, the magazines have socially represented masculinity in ways that make the stories "relevant, understandable, and often controversial," therefore; promoting sales (Rahman, 2004, p. 2).

We therefore see that the media socially represents masculinity – and non-hegemonic masculinity in particular – in ways which could encourage the construction of certain behaviours as strange or deviant, for example.

Conclusion

The literature review has shown that gender and masculinity are social constructions, taking on the reality of the way they are discussed and given real existence. Such construction hides the diversity of masculinity, and until more recently, men were treated as if their gender were irrelevant. This is changing, and men are learning to use discursive strategies in defining their gender as they come under greater examination. The theory of hegemonic masculinity shows how certain masculinities become normative and marginalise others through the assertion of their power through talk. Hegemonic masculinity creates a prescription, for example, to be heterosexual and behave in gender-consonant ways such as choosing particular occupations.

Such marginalisation creates damaging social effects such as homophobia and gender- based violence. Constructions of masculinity are communicated across society through the encoding and decoding of social representations. Anchors and objectifications are used to make the unfamiliar, familiar, and thereby create new knowledge. Thus, the investigation at hand sought to discover the dominant social representations of non-hegemonic masculinities (as represented in video clips) to better understand the social construction of masculinity in contemporary South Africa.

Chapter 3: Methods and Methodology

Introduction

Research methods should be chosen in such a way that they best answer the research question (Mauch & Park, 2003). According to Mauch and Park (2003), the research methods chosen in a study need to be practical, efficient, likely to succeed, and readily available. Thus, questionnaires were chosen, as they are relatively quick to complete and be answered by a large number of participants (in comparison to interviews, for example). Inevitably, the choice of a research method influences the outcomes of a study (Mauch & Park, 2003). The implications of this are discussed in the strengths and limitations section of the Results and Discussion chapter.

The chapter begins with discussing the research aims, and then moves on to how the aims will be addressed through particular research questions. Next, the elements of the study are more fully explained in the section on research design. A description of the sample and sampling frame follows, as well as a justification for the selection of this sample. In the measures section, the questionnaire is described, including the demographic information that was collected. Next, the procedure section details how the study was carried out, from gaining access to the sample to where the data was collected. The data analysis section describes the qualitative analysis carried out and the reasons for choosing this analysis. Finally, the section on ethical considerations details how ethical permission was attained to conduct the current study, what the ethical issues were, and how these were dealt with.

Research Aims

This study sought to investigate the dominant social representations of masculinity as depicted in a number of video clips that highlight atypical forms of masculinity, as showed to a sample of adolescent South African men. This is with a view to understanding how such social representations may influence the social construction of masculinity in South Africa. As the study aimed to make heard a variety of voices, data was gathered using a qualitative, open-ended

survey. In doing so, it was hoped that a better understanding of South African masculinities would be gained. It is hoped that this will contribute to the psychological well-being of males, by legitimizing multiple masculine identities. This could be achieved by exploring the ideologies that the media constructs (along with other institutions), such as unattainable and harmful notions of masculinity.

Research question

What are the dominant social representations of non-hegemonic masculinity as represented in video clips that depict a male nurse taking care of a patient, a male ballet dancer demonstrating technique, and a transvestite striptease?

Research Design

The design of research is guided by three main concerns: paradigms, ontologies and epistemologies (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). A paradigm is defined as "an accepted model or pattern, as an organizing structure, a deeper philosophical position relating to the nature of social phenomena and social structures" (Feilzer, 2009, p. 7). Johnson and colleagues (2007) argue that the roots of the paradigm debate go back as least as far as ancient Western philosophy. The three broad philosophical camps were those who argued for universal truths such as Plato, those who believed in relative truth (the Sophists), and those who believed that reality was a balance of these things, for instance Aristotle (Johnson et al., 2007).

In today's terms, we have positivism, interpretivism, and middle-ground approaches such as pragmatism (Feilzer, 2009). The interpretivist paradigm posits a reality that cannot be separated from our knowledge of it or our values. Dewey (1925, as cited in Feilzer, 2009) argued that positivism (underlying quantitative research) and interpretivism (underlying qualitative research) are in fact related paradigms. This is in that they try to find 'the truth,' whether truth is conceived of as objective or relative. This is interesting as a critique of qualitative research, yet it merely

underlines the need for qualitative researchers to stay open about the research process and its limitations, and refrain from referring to knowledge as final.

Thus, in qualitative research, claims are assessed by how well they fit the available information and not against standards for producing 'absolute truth' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Truth is a construction and is not like a physical object, subject to grand laws (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). We thus speak of a relativist ontology – the idea that reality is constructed intersubjectively (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). That is, it is constructed in the talk and engagement of social actors. Reality is changing and not simple, but rather, multiple realities exist. Indeed, the research process is a part of constructing and transforming reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

The constructed ontology of psychological experience and truth corresponds with a subjective epistemology (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Epistemology is a position on what constitutes acceptable knowledge. In the case of qualitative research, this is the subjective meaning people give to the world, a position known as subjectivism (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). However, as Guba and Lincoln (1994) argue the division between ontology and epistemology breaks down in the interpretivist paradigm because ontology is not based on objective truths and epistemology is not concerned with capturing them. Researchers and participants co-construct knowledge, as opposed to a researcher 'finding out facts.'

Thus, in the study at hand it was taken as an assumption that biological 'males' are a product of society (and their interactions with it), and exist, therefore; as a representation. Men, as individuals and as a group, are represented to the world through media (for example). Indeed, they are represented to themselves – told what they are and what they should be. The study at hand was concerned to illuminate the dominant social representations of non-hegemonic masculinity. Crucially, masculinity is seen as a series of constructions, arising throughout society and communicated all across it through representations. As a qualitative study, it aimed to reflect the participants' point of view by allowing them as much as possible to define the terms of masculinity, and to make heard different voices (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Such undertakings help to redefine the power balance that traditionally exists between researchers and participants, or subjects and objects (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Through asking open-ended questions

(coupled with thematic analysis and not quantitative content analysis), these aims could be achieved.

Sample and sampling

Fifty-two male student participants were included in the sample for this study. The participants were drawn from first year psychology classes, and ranged in age from 17-33. Specifically, the participants are enrolled for the following degrees: Bachelor of Pharmacy, Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery, Bachelor of Health Sciences, Bachelor of Health Sciences (Biomedical Sciences), Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Fine Arts, Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Commerce.

The justification for the use of this sample is that, first of all, university students arriving in first year may be generally exposed to more diverse and radically different identities as compared to what they found at primary and secondary school. High schools may be divided along racial and socio-economic lines, for example. This is largely due to government regulations which stipulate learners from designated 'feeder zones' must enrol in a school in the area designated to them (Circulars of the Gauteng Department of Education, 2003). This is typically but not always the area where the learner lives.

Furthermore, at universities, there are a number of different student clubs and societies, ranging from religious clubs to cultural and social clubs, and from charity groups to business societies ("Wits Student Clubs," 2008). Also, considering the particular attitudes that a university encourages, such as ethnic tolerance, and the perception that universities are key to gaining success, it is thus interesting to investigate how these could contribute to gender identity formation in the current sample. Wits University in particular is likely to encourage a certain type of student identity, having been one of only two universities under apartheid to admit non-white students, to a very limited degree, whilst having quite a typically segregated student community at the time (Murray, 1990).

Non-random, convenience sampling was used, and will be explained in the procedure section below. Non-random sampling will have decreased the study's transferability, yet, the purpose of

this study was to examine a particular context of masculinity and thus transferability is not a required feature of it. However, sampling Wits students and Health Science students in particular provided the opportunity to examine a diverse sample with respect to ethnicity, socio-economic status and other factors of interest. For example, Breier and Wildschut (2007) showed that in 2003, 28% of new medical students were African, 33.5% were Indian, and 37.2% were white.

In general, students from previously underrepresented groups such as women, marginalized ethnic groups, and mature students are gaining greater access to South African universities (Ntshoe, 2004). To illustrate, according to Wits' latest figures, in 2010, 52.8% of all Wits students were female. In addition, 50% of academic staff was female. Furthermore, 14.7% were Indian (compared to 2.5% nationally), 27.8% were white and 53.9% were black in 2010 ("Wits at a Glance," 2011; "Mid-Year Population Estimates," 2011). This marks an approximate rise of 6% in black students and 6% fall in white students since 2007 with other groups remaining the same. In addition, 10% of Wits students are foreign ("Wits at a Glance," 2011). Because universities are becoming more and more diverse in terms of race, gender, age and urban/rural place of origin, the sample at hand presents a good opportunity to contribute to the on-going debate about South African masculinities of all types.

The reason for the relatively small sample size is that students were largely unavailable to participate at the times when the researcher attempted to conduct data collection. The researcher in fact visited all of the lecture venues several times more than the expected number of sessions, but unfortunately, the lecturers involved cancelled the data collection sessions at the last minute. This was due to time constraints that they were under, such as unscheduled class tests and revision sessions, and the incorrect scheduling of free periods. Where sessions could be rescheduled, they were, but this resulted in fewer students being present as the year progressed. Where sessions could not be rescheduled, the researcher found other lecturers willing to allow their students to be sampled. The researcher also had no control over the students' choice to participate, despite offering an incentive for participation.

Instruments

The participants in this study completed both instruments below concurrently.

i) Demographic Questionnaire (see Appendix B)

Participants completed a demographic questionnaire asking for their age, race, religion, home language, and parent's highest level of education. This demographic information was to be used as context for understanding the themes which emerged from the thematic analysis, but this was ultimately beyond the scope of this particular study.

ii) Open-ended questions

As many researchers have felt, the diversity of masculinity may be too great to be investigated thoroughly using a scale, or for that matter, quantitative methods as a whole (Meth & McClymont, 2009; Brown, Sorrell & Raffaelli, 2005; Vuttanont, Greenhalgh, Griffin, & Boynton, 2006). In particular, a quantitative approach would not capture the social representations of masculinity, nor the social constructions that they may engender in South African society and beyond. The need to understand diverse masculinities – through analysis of social constructions - and not a monolithic masculinity has been motivated in the first two chapters of this work.

The open-ended questions are included in Appendix C. The questions were all developed with the theory and research already discussed in mind, and in consultation with gender scholars. For its validity, this study relies upon Guba and Lincoln's (1994) four classic criteria, aspects which these authors tied to trustworthiness. Credibility is determined according to whether there has been a thick description of the data and thus whether findings would represent a plausible interpretation of the raw data from the participants' perspective. Several data extracts were presented along with the analysis, and were constantly referenced therein. Furthermore, the

themes being constructed were constantly reviewed throughout the analysis. As the researcher re-examined the data, themes were added, removed or combined, in order to get to as close a representation of the participants' perspective as possible. Pictorial depictions of the thematic analysis were created along the way, in order to document this process, and are presented in Appendix D.

According to Maxwell (2005), reflecting on the analysis and interpretation process also increases the credibility of findings. This is in particular reference to the biases researchers naturally bring into a study and through reflection, this researcher was able to identify a possible over-emphasis on the liberatory goals of the study and thus warn readers of the ideological stances taken (in the Reflexivity section below). Further credibility is lent to the data by the anonymity and confidentiality of the results. Participants were able to give the answers they wanted to, and not what they thought the researcher wanted to see.

Transferability in this study is the ability to generalise the findings to other contexts (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This was addressed through describing the research context (description of the South African context in the Introduction chapter) and the assumptions that were central to the research (in the sections on Reflexivity and theoretical frameworks). While no attempt has been made by this researcher to generalise the findings to other contexts, it remains theoretically possible to do so as the parameters for comparison of contexts have been thus defined.

Dependability is the quality of the integrated processes of data collection, data analysis, and theory generation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The dependability was constantly assessed and audited by a reviewer who is knowledgeable in the field of gender studies, the research supervisor. Revisions of the data collection methods, theoretical framework, and analysis were required several times before this study at hand could be completed.

Finally, confirmability is the ability of a study's findings to be confirmed by other researchers. This is partially dependent on how much bias was brought into the study, and as argued, the maintenance of reflexivity would help in limiting this. The research supervisor also provided a

'devil's advocate' perspective, such that arguments counter-intuitive for (or not apparent to) the researcher could be recognised.

Question 1 was developed and included so that the participants would make specific reference to (social representations in) the videos. Through asking whether the participants were affected "at all" by the videos, the researcher could examine a broad range of social representations.

Questions two and three were developed to inform the definition of masculinity in further research. Question two in particular can be seen to address the concept discussed by Gutmann (1996) that male identity is defined in terms of behaviour and attitudes specifically aimed at being a man, and not just all male conduct. In terms of social representations theory, the researcher aimed to examine how hegemonic masculinity might be anchored in particular ways, since the distinction between being seen as a man and being seen as a person must rely upon certain conceptions of what manhood is. It was believed that participants answering that it was very important to them to be seen as a man would support hegemonic representations such as being totally masculine.

Question three is seen as key, since it was designed to allow participants to discuss masculinity in the most unfettered way possible. This was with a view to exploring how participants saw the current and potential construction of masculinity in South Africa.

It is to be noted that the questions described here were in relation to the video clips described in the section below.

Selection of the video clips

Video clips were chosen from a Google search and from a review of popular films which related to gender. A total number of the three clips were shown to the participants, and totalled seven minutes of viewing time. This was due to time constraints in gathering the data and the length of each research session. In Ramasubramanian's (2007) study, either a race stereotyped or race counter-stereotyped (control) video was viewed by participants. The length of the videos was

twelve minutes. Similarly, in Kalof's (1999) study, participants viewed one of two ten-minute videos, displaying idealised or non-idealised (control) images of women. In the current study, where there was no control group, a greater number of videos could be shown to participants, within the time constraints.

The videos were chosen from the media of film and online clips as these are highly popular forms of entertainment and were, therefore; the most likely to be relevant to the participants. These media are especially popular among the youth. For example, 12–17 year olds constitute the largest proportion of users on YouTube, an Internet-based video sharing site. The choice of videos was also dependent on obtaining (non-pornographic, non-violent) videos of men, which appear to represent masculinity in the relevant ways. Non-pornographic and non-violent clips were chosen so as to safeguard the participants' interests, as violence and explicit sexual content are argued to be the most damaging to young research participants (Fleming et al., 2006). The clips, which were all intended to showcase non-hegemonic masculinity, depicted male characteristics such as dancing ability and care-giving, which are typically considered to be low social-status activities (McMillian, Morgan & Ament, 2006). Particularly, male nurses, rather than enjoying patriarchal privilege in the workplace, face being constructed as inferior men, inferior nurses and homosexuals, when this is not the case (Harding, 2007). In line with the study's declared aim to investigate social representations of non-hegemonic masculinities, men who could be considered atypical were shown in the videos.

Specifically, one of the clips was obtained using a Google search, as well as searches on the YouTube website. Internet search terms included for example 'alternative man,' and 'male nurse,' in order to represent non-hegemonic masculinity in general and also with regards to occupations. The justification for examining Internet representations of masculinity is that the virtual world is increasingly becoming a place where gender identities, as well as other identities, are performed (McDonough, 1999). Klimmt, Hefner and Vorderer (2009) argue that online gaming (for example) is currently a highly important and popular trend amongst the youth, in which all kinds of identity - including gender - are performed, for example through character creation. It was thus felt that using at least one clip taken from the Internet was important, considering how much young people use the Internet as a resource (Durkin, 2007).

In choosing clips from the medium of film, the researcher considered what aspects of masculinity and gender were not represented in the internet clip. Since sexual orientation was not explicitly addressed in the Internet clip, a clip about transvestites was chosen. Another reason that a clip about transvestites was chosen was that the researcher believed that it would be an extreme example of alternative masculinities. Ramasubramanian (2007) argued that extreme counter-exemplars can suddenly and totally change the perceivers' attitudes. Thus, it was felt that including such an example was highly likely to yield strong responses.

Moreover, it could be argued that the specific depiction of transvestism in *Rocky Horror* (used in this study) does not accurately or fairly represent transvestites. However, this is not strictly relevant when considering that this clip was included so that it would be shocking and hard-hitting. Participants would still want to reveal their feelings about perceived normal or abnormal masculinities. Furthermore, it is the only clip of the three, which was likely to be 'shocking' whereas the other clips were likely to be perceived as fairly realistic and more common. As such, the inclusion of this shocking clip was risky. There was always the chance that it would further entrench negative views about transvestites.

However, the (potential) negative effects of the clip would act as a caution to future researchers or intervention designers. That is, they need to take care in going too far beyond their participants' likely expectations without some kind of buffer. That being said, this clip was at least likely to be attention-grabbing, due to the potentially surprising nature of the content vis-à-vis participants beliefs about masculine behaviour (Itti & Baldi, 2005). The number of reactions (and the detail thereof) to this clip in the open-ended responses is testament to that (as to be addressed in the following chapter). That participants would have had reactions with respect to sexual orientation and sexuality, in addition to gender, is seen as an opportunity and not a problem in analysis. Sexuality and sexual orientation are tied inextricably to the expectations surrounding gender, through heteronormativity and its increased relevance for males (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). As Kimmel (2004) put it, "homophobia is a central organizing principle of our cultural definition of manhood."

As discussed, film was chosen as the other medium to be used since it is something, which South Africans are constantly exposed to and is thus a pertinent medium to investigate. This is evidenced by a 6.83% growth in South African cinema attendance between 2002 and 2007, resulting in a figure of 26,206,505 attendances in the latter year (Cinema Attendance, 2008). Reasons for this may include growing similarity to the US in movie preferences, a number of blockbuster movies being released, the rise of 3D movies and an economy recovering from recession (Fu & Govindaraju, 2010. Links to the video clips are provided in Appendix D.

Description of video clips used

The first video clip shown came from the movie "Precious: Based on the Novel 'Push' by Sapphire." This clip ran for two minutes, and was chosen because an alternative male occupation – male nursing – is represented in it. In the clip, Nurse John (played by musician Lenny Kravitz) gives nutritional advice to a pregnant teenager, Precious. Her friends have come to visit her in the hospital, and they all begin talking about how strange male nurses are. They then tease Precious for supposedly being in love with Nurse John. The second clip is of the male ballet dancer, Finis Jhung. This clip was chosen because male ballet dancers are often considered strange or homosexual (Bailey & Oberschneider, 1997).

Ballet for men could thereby represent an alternative social or occupational activity. The clip ran for one minute, and displayed Jhung's dancing ability as well as some coaching he received from his (male) ballet coach. The third and final clip is the performance of "Sweet Transvestite" in the film "The Rocky Horror Picture Show." This is a scene in which Dr Frank-N-Furter, a self-described transvestite from "Transsexual, Transylvania," dances and removes his clothing piece by piece to reveal his transvestite costume. He describes himself in sexual terms, and asks the viewer not to "get strung out by the way that I look" (Sweet Transvestite Lyrics, 2011). This clip represents both counter-stereotypical sexuality and gender roles.

Implementation

After ethical clearance from the Ethics Committee for Non-Medical research at The University of the Witwatersrand was granted, the researcher asked permission from the course-coordinators of the Psychology classes to approach the students registered for this course, to invite them to participate in this study. The course co-ordinators granted this researcher lecture periods in which regular work was not planned for the carrying out of this study. It was arranged that, on the day of this visit, the male and female students were taught in different venues and relevant activities regarding group dynamics (as part of the course curriculum) were taught to the separate classes. Once arranged, the researcher came to the relevant lecture venues were the male students were being taught during the designated times. The lecturer introduced this researcher and then left so as not to associate participation in this study with any reward or consequence to their registration for the course. The researcher then informed the students about the nature of the study as well as what would be required for participation.

At this point, the researcher offered a random draw for a prize (given in gratitude for participation) to the students as an incentive to participate in the study. As such, students were told that if they participated in both stages of the study, they stood a chance to win an Apple iPod, valued at R400. Note that the ethics of this process are discussed in the chapter on Ethical Considerations. The researcher next informed the students that completing and handing in the questionnaire would be taken as consent to participate. The students were also informed that if they chose to participate, they would need to write their birth date and initials on the questionnaire. They were told by the researcher that this personal information would not be used to identify them in the reporting of the results but that it would be used to carry out the random draw. The researcher also explained that a winner would be chosen at random by the researcher and his initials noted, and that when the time for the draw came the winner would have to identify himself or alternatively remain anonymous and not collect the prize. At this point, the researcher informed the participants of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage. Those not willing to participate were then allowed by the researcher to leave the venue.

Those willing to participate were issued with a participant information form (Appendix A). In the beginning of the session, participants were told that they would watch some video clips and then afterward complete a questionnaire based on open-ended questions. The videos were

digitally presented by the researcher in VLC Media Player and projected onto a screen in the front of the lecture venue. Once the participants had viewed the video clips, the demographic questionnaire and the open-ended questions were handed out. These forms are contained in Appendices B and C respectively. The students completed the instrument in the lecture hall while the researcher was present to answer any questions regarding the completion of the questionnaire or the meaning of the items. Because of their proximity to each other whilst answering, it is possible that participants influenced or saw each other's answers, even though the researcher strongly discouraged this and asked for silence. This could have impacted on the honesty, seriousness, individuality and confidentiality of responses. Furthermore, it was clear to all participants who the other participants were, and therefore, anonymity was partially compromised.

The questionnaire took no more than 30 minutes to complete. Once completed, the participants placed their questionnaire in a box at the front of the lecture theatre as they exited the lecture venue. The questionnaires were stored in a locked cupboard in the researcher's supervisor's office for the duration of the study. Due to the possibility of the random prize winner wishing to remain anonymous, the researcher drew a winner and backup winner. The researcher then came to the winner's class at the end of a lecture and announced the winning initials. The winner then identified himself using his student card and his contact details were taken by the researcher to arrange a time for delivery of the prize.

Data Analysis

Reflexivity

Qualitative researchers should be committed to transparency in the research they carry out. This is especially because of the personal biases they acknowledge as existing in all research, as discussed above. As such, reflexivity is a major part of the process in feminist research, participatory action research, ethnographies, and hermeneutic and post-structural approaches (Dowling, 2006). Reflexivity, it is argued, goes beyond paying attention to the researcher's role before, during and after the research has been carried out. Indeed, researchers are expected to

engage in self-critique and be constantly aware of their relationship to the research topic and to the participants.

Some researchers attempt to bracket off their biases regarding a topic before doing research on it (Dowling, 2006). However, this may never be possible, and furthermore it may distract attention from truly understanding what happens during the research process and how that has shaped the outcome (Dowling, 2006). To do this, researchers are encouraged to ask themselves searching questions, such as how the results may have turned out differently if the research question or methods had been different. Researchers should reflect on the assumptions they made during the research process (Dowling, 2006). Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009) argue that this needs to extend to the political-ideological context as well. Through asking certain questions and interpreting the results a certain way, researchers inevitably support political interests and either maintain or subvert the status quo.

I will, therefore; discuss these concerns below, so that my relationship to this work may be more clear. I am a male student researcher with strong feelings about the status of masculinity in today's world. My major concerns are around what I perceive to be the incompatible expectations that lie upon all men, as breadwinners who are also sensitive and well-groomed but strong and indifferent to judgement. I therefore began this research project with the hope of understanding how (and if) men are adapting to these expectations. Other of my assumptions included that men often dominate other men through physical force or threat thereof, that many men are intolerant of homosexuality, and that the media spreads harmful messages which encourage men to be dominating. I thus brought into the research egalitarian beliefs and a kind of liberatory agenda which would tend to support non-typical men and subvert the status quo.

My role in the research was as the main co-ordinator in planning, execution and analysis. However, I was guided in all these aspects by a research supervisor. I was present at all times during data collection. Potential participants – who were all male according to the constraints I created – were similar in age to the researcher as well as being students at the same university. I may therefore have been an influence on the participants, not only by my constant presence but by my presence as (in some way) a peer.

Thematic Analysis

Ricciardelli and colleagues' (2010) study used qualitative thematic analysis to examine representations of masculinities in a number of popular men's magazines. Their findings indicated that fashion; status symbols and high-risk and violent activities were commonly occurring themes in men's magazines. It thus, seemed valuable to extend the use of thematic analysis to the visual (non-print) media.

In the current study, a thematic analysis was conducted on participants' answers to the three open-ended questions. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is a method for identifying patterns or themes within text. Themes "capture something important about the data in relation to the research question" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82.) These themes are deliberately coded by the researcher from extracts from the text. It is possible that any given segment of text could contain several themes (Wilbraham, 1995). Thus, an analysis that is flexible, offers thick description, and can summarise key features of a large body of text can be produced (Wilbraham, 1995).

In the first stage, all of the data was coded manually by the researcher in a Word document. According to Braun and Clark (2006) codes are aspects of the data that are interesting to the researcher, based on the research questions at hand. The coding process was used to make an initial organization of the data into groups. This was done by reading each statement, across the questions, in comparison to the other statements and highlighting similar or related phrases. As the researcher read and re-examined the responses, organizing concepts began to emerge in the researcher's mind. Codes thus emerged, were given initial names, and were listed.

Thus, the researcher placed statements which seemed to fit under the initial code headings. As more statements were added to the lists, others were removed or moved under other codes. As the lists evolved in this way, the names of the codes also changed. Some codes were combined with each other or were separated out into constituent parts. Some statements merited being

placed under more than one code. For example, a fair number of participants who pointed to cross-gender behaviour also spoke of discomfort or concern for their gender, and thus these were included as separate codes.

Once all the data was coded, the process of theme construction was considered. Creating themes was essentially a process of bringing codes together, from across the entire data set, in order to gain a higher-level understanding. Throughout this process, the fit between the data extracts and the themes was considered from two points of view. That is, each theme needed to be internally consistent (be made up of similar data extracts), and also needed to be distinct from other themes (Braun & Clark, 2006). The themes that the researcher sought to identify were (primarily) the social representations that the participants reflected in their answers.

Importantly, points of view which related to candidate themes but was in conflict with other data within the theme was not ignored or sectioned off. According to Guba and Lincoln (1982), the inclusion of negative cases is essential in building the trustworthiness of an analysis. The themes were then reviewed, and it was considered whether any themes needed to be combined, better defined, broken up, or taken out. At this point it was also determined which themes were more accurately portrayed as sub-themes (themes within a theme), according to frequency as well as conceptual fit. Then the themes and sub-themes were given final names. Thematic maps, which represent the themes pictorially, are contained in Appendix E. These were used to visualise the relationship between the themes and more easily see where changes needed to be made. They are presented in order to make clear the process that was followed. The themes which emerged will be discussed, and supporting quotes to illustrate each will be provided. A discussion of each theme in terms of relevant theories and past findings will be presented, and thereafter, a summary interpretation of the results will be given.

Ethical Considerations

The main ethical consideration was that the participants had to provide their birth dates and initials, particularly in relation to the random prize draw. According to Standard 8.02 (“Informed Consent to Research”) of the American Psychological Association, researchers are required to

inform potential participants, before they agree to take part in a study, what incentives are offered for participation (Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct, 2013). There are no stipulations disallowing or discouraging incentives being used.

Furthermore, as Tishler and Bartholomae (2002) report, influencing participants to participate is not in itself problematic. Undue influence, however, is a problem, as the Belmont Report of the U.S. National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical Research explains (Tishler & Bartholomae, 2002). In terms of the Belmont Report undue influence occurs "through an excessive offer of an excessive, unwarranted, inappropriate or improper reward or other overture in order to obtain compliance. Inducements may become undue influences if the subject is especially vulnerable" (Tishler & Bartholomae, 2002, p. 369).

Whether an inducement is an undue influence depends on the amount of the financial incentive, the risk involved in the study, the financial need of the subject, and willingness of an individual to place himself or herself at risk (Tishler & Bartholomae, 2002). According to Grant and Sugarman (2004), cases where incentives are used that could be classified as bribery or blackmail are rare. Grant and Sugarman (2004) argue that where the subject is in a dependency relationship with the researcher, where the risks are particularly high, where the research is degrading, where the participant will only consent if the incentive is relatively large because the participant's aversion to the study is strong, and where the aversion is a principled one, the incentive is unethical.

Hobza and Rochlen (2009) used course credit as an incentive in their study. Meth and McClymont (2009) used a cash incentive of R360 in their study on masculinity in Durban, South Africa, in a context where most of the participants were very poor and for some, the money was "a key reason for their involvement" (Meth & McClymont, 2009, p. 912). A wide difference such as this in socioeconomic levels did not exist between the researcher and the participants in the current study. As Meth and McClymont (2009) argued, a monetary incentive can be appropriate as a way of making up for the use of the participants' time.

In the current study, participants were encouraged to participate in two phases of research. On top of this time constraint, one of the phases involved answering three open-ended questions. Although this feeling was discouraged by the researcher, the participants may have felt they had to write a lot due to the large amount of space provided. Thus, the participants were compensated for the time they spent taking part in the study, and it is the belief of this researcher that none of the negative conditions described by Tishler and Bartholomae (2002) or Grant and Sugarman (2004) obtained during the course of the study.

The participants were also informed that their personal information would not be reported in the analysis, and that their names would never be asked for. Anonymity and confidentiality may have been partially compromised due to the data being gathered in groups of participants, but even so, no participant's name was connected to his answers in the findings. Additionally, no participant could have seen any large part of another's answers, since the researcher was present and vigilant at all times whilst participants were completing the questionnaires. Only willing volunteers were used, and completion of the questionnaire was taken as consent to participate, as was explained to the participants. Importantly, the participants were also informed of their right to withdraw at any stage.

The researcher did not present videos that are pornographic or violent to the participants. It is believed that the topic itself is not sensitive, and that the population being researched is not a vulnerable one. Furthermore, the multi-staged consent procedure, as outlined in the procedure section, should have ensured that the best interests of all potential participants were protected. However, in case there were any concerns that arose as a result of participating in this study, contact details for free counselling services from Lifeline and the South African Depression and Anxiety Group were provided on the participant info sheet. The researcher's name and email address were also provided to the participants. The raw data remained entirely confidential, as only the researcher and his supervisor had (and will have) access to it. A summary of the results will be available to the participants for one year via email upon request of the participant.

Chapter 4: Results and Discussion

Introduction

The results of the thematic analysis are presented below. Accompanying the findings is an interpretive discussion with reference to theories, which help explain the data. The implications for theories of hegemony, social representations, and the formation of subjectivities are discussed. The relevance of (and implications for) the South African context is also discussed.

Findings

A thematic analysis was conducted, and the themes discovered in this analysis are presented below. The themes are organized into a thematic network, as mentioned in the data analysis chapter. Each theme is briefly introduced, and text segments which exemplify each theme are then presented. The text segments are indented for clearer presentation. The themes are numbered starting at one, for easy reference. The data has been cleaned of major grammar and spelling errors.

The Thematic Network

Theme One: Hegemonic Masculinity is anchored to Heterosexuality and Gender-Consonant Behaviour

In this first theme, "heterosexuality and gender-consonant behaviour," it was vital, for some participants, that men be heterosexual and not stray from this path. Some participants explicitly anchored heterosexuality to male behaviour, thus giving heterosexuality a hegemonic status. Following from this, participants made a prohibition on cross-*gender* (that is, non-male) behaviour where they saw behaviour as out of line with heterosexuality. This could be have been predicted by the work of McCreary (1994) on punishment of boys for cross-gender behaviour.

Furthermore, Butler (1988) argued that the linking of biological sex and sexual orientation is key in the constitution of gender. Some exemplars follow:

> P1: “Highly important, to show that I'm 100% male.” (Black, Christian)

> P2: “I am man and a real man; with no gender crises.” (Black, Christian)

> P3: “It is either a man or a man who has female tendencies and that means not a proper man by society’s definition. I would much rather be labelled a man than anything else.” (Black, Other religion)

> P4: “Very important, in our society, the sexual orientation of a man tends to decide the fate of his survival. Therefore being a proper male person tends to give hints about my future success.” (Black, Christian)

The first three participants all express that there is no room for anything that could be considered feminine in masculinity – any man showing such characteristics is not “a real man” or has “gender crises.” Hegemonic masculinity, Connell (1992) argues, is strongly connected to subjugating women. Defining oneself as apart from as well as above women provides some men with the ability to show their masculinity. In the same way, alternative forms of masculinity such as ‘camp’ or effeminate masculinity are looked down upon. Perhaps nowhere is this truer than with regard to gay men, who are constructed “as a despised ‘Other’” (Wetherell & Edley, 1999, p. 336). Perhaps due to the third video more explicitly being about transvestism than homosexuality, the participants’ comments show hatred and disgust toward transvestites:

> P5: “The video of the transvestite disgusted me because men were created to be different from women, not to emulate them. It is unnatural and disturbing.” (Indian, Muslim)

> P6: “Transvestite: Just weird. I'm not a homophobe, but that was too out there. I don't have a problem with people expressing themselves, but it has to be done in a socially acceptable way. And that wasn't.” (Indian, Christian).

P6's response seems confused between homosexuality and transvestism, in his use of the phrase "I'm not a homophobe" to talk about the transvestite. It is possible that transvestism is unfamiliar to this participant, and he attempted to anchor transvestism to the more familiar concept of homosexuality. However, the participant may have simply used the incorrect word ("homophobe"). It appears that, in the transvestite, there is a threat perceived by the participants to their gender identity (Moscovici, 1988). Crushing this threat would allow them to consolidate their positions and move closer to the ideal state of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005). The threat is exemplified below:

> P7: "Yes, because the balance 1:1 ratio of men to females gets affected by people who tend to act the opposite sex, since natural and sexual selection also influence the sex ratio." (Black, Christian)

> P8: "Yes, I feel like the Y chromosome is nearly in trouble as every man seems to have feminine tendencies in almost every career. Thus I wonder if homosexuality is really natural or just a personal lifestyle choice." (Black, Christian)

Not all participants used negative anchors with respect to the masculinities presented in the videos. Some seemed to mainly focus on the strangeness of what they had seen (especially regarding transvestism), or that they felt uncomfortable:

> P9: "I was torn between surprise and amusement. I mean, I'm an open guy, I find transvestites very interesting. I'm not bothered by homosexuals. 'Live your life.' However, dressing up like a woman and behaving like one that I still need to understand. Even so, I still take preference for granted, so 'they' prefer it. (Black, Agnostic)

> P10: "Yes it was quite strange or taboo so I was not used to seeing things like that." (White, Christian)

P11: “It challenged my beliefs and made me feel uncomfortable to a degree.” (White, Christian)

P12: “The last clip made me tense and very uncomfortable. I was getting irritable and I would have otherwise turned off the TV.” (White, Jewish)

P13: “No, but in terms of the "Rocky Horror Picture Show" clip, sitting in a room full of guys does make it a bit uncomfortable but I feel that's mainly due to societal structures.” (Coloured, Christian)

As Moscovici (1988) argued social representations are very important in the context where a group's identity is threatened, typically by something that is unfamiliar to it. The participants above needed to deal with transvestism through labelling it as “weird” or “strange” (P6;P10) and in P6’s case, possibly by anchoring it to the more familiar idea of homosexuality. The participants thus, anchored non-hegemonic masculinity to transvestism.

It must be noted that there were some tolerant voices present. They were indeed important and interesting negative cases. Notably, the idea that being gay is a choice was held by both the tolerant and the less tolerant participants:

P14: “Yes you can be a nurse if you are a guy and dance ballet and if someone chooses to be gay, well it’s a personal choice and it has to be respected” (Other race, Agnostic)

P15: “…also possible for men to pursue dancing and ballet - it is a stigma and these men are often associated with being gay but there is no actual evidence that suggests that men that dance are gay” (White, Christian)

P16: “Yes, I feel like the Y chromosome is nearly in trouble as every man seem to have feminine tendencies in almost every career, thus I wonder if homosexuality is really natural or just a personal lifestyle choice.” (Black, Christian)

As Wetherell and Edley (1999) argued there are many discursive ways to construct hegemonic gender identities. Complicity with hegemonic masculinity and resistance to it can be mixed together – consider where P14 anchors homosexuality to non-hegemonic masculinity in his suggestion that ballet dancers are gay, but defends the rights of non-hegemonic males.

Corresponding to the idea that some behaviours and attributes are seen as undesirable or forbidden – as gender-inconsonant - certain key characteristics are seen as expected. Being "strong," "brave" and a "leader" were seen as important, as well as a number of other related qualities, which were anchored to hegemonic masculinity. It was important to various participants not to show emotion, to be aggressive, or to be diligent, disciplined and reliable. By the same token, participant 5 thought it important to stay away from activities which do not reflect these qualities. Participants 6 and 7 agreed with this, adding that dress, speech and gait were also important. Participant 7 specifically mentioned the colloquial and SMS language term "LOL," or laugh out loud, as a forbidden saying. The example he gives is ballet, which may be as a result of having watched the ballet clip. It is possible that the representation of men in the clip fitted into his already-existing notion of unacceptable behaviours, and also that his attitude was reinforced by watching the clip. Participant 5 also openly states that he is strongly influenced by certain social norms which, it could be argued, were social representations communicated to him by "the community" he lives in.

Participant four actually refers to himself being affected by visual media images, but not those in this study's video clips. His answer is succinct and begins with the incomplete sentence "KFC boxmeal," as if this answer required no explanation. It in fact refers to a recent advertisement for take-away restaurant KFC. In it, a man is shown starting out physically weak and literally limp-wristed, then eating the meal, and then becoming strong and supposedly, masculine. The limp-wristed portrayal of the man may be a reference to homosexuality, which the man then miraculously 'overcomes.' The participant's comment thus, reflects an anchoring of non-hegemonic masculinity to weakness. The advert also shows, arguably, an attempt to establish a preferred reading of the weak man as homosexual through a less than subtle reference to a

common homophobic term for gay people - ‘limp-wristed’ (Hall et al., 2007; Clarke, Hayfield & Huxley, 2012). This anchoring may have been taken on by the participant.

> P1: “To be strong, mentally and physically, in my household and in social environment.” (White, Christian)
>
> P2: “Many things but mainly masculine, strong, brave, qualities such as that.” (White, Christian)
>
> P3: “To be a man means being aggressive and also going out with women.” (Black, Christian)
>
> P4: “KFC Boxmeal. Being able to independently support oneself.” (White, Christian)
>
> P5: “What I think is largely influenced by my society, being a man according to my society implies being conservative when coming to expressing your emotions; staying away from activities like ballet; being someone the community can trust and having respect for women.” (Black, Christian)
>
> P6: “Dressing, speaking and walking as men” (Black, Christian)
>
> P7: “Men don't "LoL (*Laugh out loud*)"!!! <- No jokes” (Black, Christian)
>
> P8: “Respectful; diligent; brave; strong; sensitive to few things; disciplined. (Indian, Hindu)
>
> P9: “A leader, integrity, firm in what you want, open to suggestion. A person to be relied on, a provider and hard-worker.” (Black, Christian)

The social representations discussed above have the potential to influence masculinity constructions in South Africa in a number of ways. The ways in which non-hegemonic

masculinity was socially represented by the participants point to the possible construction of alternate masculinities as weak, inferior and unwanted. Of particular concern would be gay masculinities. As Thoreson (2008) argues, homophobic practices (including corrective rape of lesbians) in South Africa are fairly prevalent and it is argued that many representations discussed here would support bigoted practices. These include the reference to "limp-wristed" gay people, the disgustingness of transvestites and the fear that the "Y chromosome" is in trouble due to "feminine tendencies" and homosexuality. This flies in the face of hard-won South African freedoms such as same-sex marriage (Epprecht, 2010).

The social representations of hegemonic men as strong, aggressive and non-emotional may also feed into already-existing social constructions of masculinity in South Africa. For example, often, young men are often inculcated with the values of fearlessness and violence (Barker & Ricardo, 2005), for example, in the army. The South African National Defence force, it's veterans, and MK veterans together number in the tens of thousands, making this a serious issue. Being strong and aggressive were important representations here, and sexual prowess has been shown to be important in maintaining this kind of self-image (Barker & Ricardo, 2005). In order to prove this prowess, men may take violent means or behave promiscuously.

Sub-theme One: Hegemonic Masculinity is Anchored to the Heterosexual Family Unit

Theme 1 is extended to include the sub-theme, "The heterosexual family unit." This sub-theme encompasses two co-occurring aspects of a man: he is heterosexual and (therefore) he has a family. This extends the main theme by revealing the anchoring of hegemonic masculinity to procreation and family life. For example, P1 defines a man as protecting his loved ones, and as having no homosexual desires. Perhaps more positively, providing for one's family is taken as important for a number of participants. This is both about financially supporting them and caring for them. Participants see being a provider as a man being responsible and at the same time gaining him respect.

> P1: "It means being assertive, a leader, defending oneself when necessary, including loved ones and ultimately loving women with no desire to engage in sexual activity with

other men. Well, the last part falls under masculinity, with the previous being my classification of a male figure." (Black, Christian)

P2: "To be a man is to behave like a man and have feels for women, otherwise there are gender crises." (Black, Christian)

P3: "A Man also needs to be someone willing to care for others, especially with regard to their family, and should not hesitate to express any feeling of love and care towards others." (White, Christian)

P4: "Being a man is not at all a biological thing, being a man has to do with how a person carries themselves, it's about being responsible and taking care of your family, and of course being happy :) Real men don't hit women (Just had to put that in)" (Other race, Agnostic)

P5: To be a man means that you must work hard each day to make a living for your family so that you can get the respect that the man wants. (Black, Christian)

P6: "Provide for family, take responsibility for actions." (White, Christian)

P7: "Bread winner, family person." (White, Christian)

Connell (2005) has argued that marriage and fatherhood often mean that men make compromises with women, rather than simply trying to dominate them. Long-term relationships may well be a driver of egalitarian attitudes in men, but the shift created does not mean that male privilege is eradicated or even diminished (Terry & Braun, 2011). Thus, bread-winning and fatherhood remain anchors of hegemonic masculinity.

With these anchors in mind, there are certain ramifications for the construction of masculinity in our country. If masculinity and fatherhood are constructed as being about taking responsibility, and caring for and supporting one's family, this could only bring about positive change.

Currently, the proportion of children with only one parent is extremely high (67%) in South Africa, and responsible fatherhood would go some way to remedying the problem (Holborn & Eddy, 2011). By contrast, if fatherhood were to be constructed as a right, as in the pre-Constitutional framework of violent, authoritarian masculinity, it could lead to an increase in rape and sexual assault, as well as children born into families mired in conflict (Walker, 2005).

Theme Two: Masculinity is Anchored to Shifting Constructions of Gender and Personal Identity

In this theme, many participants said that, after much thought, they could not come to a decision about what defines a man. This was often because of a perceived instability or flux in the concept of masculinity. This understanding of masculinity is predicted by social constructionist theories, as gender is not a given and is therefore not static (Butler, 1999). Some attempted to define masculinity, but (at least in Participant 1's case) thought their definitions might apply to themselves and not necessarily to everyone. Participant 2 stated that masculinity was always changing and thus he couldn't define it. Participant 5 thought that the difficulty comes in actually expressing the definition clearly and accurately, although he eventually managed to do so. Participant 6 was unsure but thought that the biological element was important. Participant 10 was aware of male social norms being challenged in the clips, without be able to define what masculinity truly was.

Participants were supportive of the male nurse character (Nurse John) in the first video and in general, they defended each person's right to choose his or her own path in life. The participants appear to criticise any kind of prescription of masculinity, especially conservatism or traditionalism (P1). P12 criticises some specific, harmful aspects of current social norms, whilst accepting them as important to follow in general. As Wetherell and Edley (1999, p. 352) argue, complicity or resistance to male norms should be seen "as labels to describe the effects of discursive strategies" (that is, talk used to position oneself) in particular contexts, not as labels for types of individuals. Vacillating between complicity and resistance should perhaps be expected where there is such uncertainty about masculinity.

This theme should thus be seen as a major contrast to theme 1, where participants negatively evaluated non-hegemonic men. Here, participants resisted hegemonic masculinity, albeit perhaps in a non-specific way, in their refusal to conclusively lock down masculinity to any anchors.

> P1: “Honestly, I am not sure. Integrity, non-judgementalness, independence. These are qualities that I would identify with but they aren't really gender specific. I'm really not sure.” (Indian, Atheist)
>
> P2: “I don't know what it means to be a man because the concept of masculinity changes all the time” (White, Atheist)
>
> P3: “I don't know. I'm still trying to figure out that.” (Black, Agnostic)
>
> P4: “I wonder the same thing, never coming to a conclusion.” (White, Other religion)
>
> P5: “Being a man, involves a wide variety of concepts & this is difficult to put down in words. It is not just gender, but to me involves concepts of integrity, being a provider, treating women with respect, honest & so on.” (White, Christian)
>
> P6: “I don't have a clear definition of a man but to me biology makes a huge influence. If you are genetically a man then you are a man.” (Indian, Agnostic)
>
> P7: “I like to think of myself as a progressive, modern man and I do not think that being a male nurse in today’s economy would make you less of a man” (White, Christian)
>
> P8: “People should be allowed to lead the lives they would like without judgement or interference.” (Indian, Atheist)

P9: “Made me quite proud as a man. The guy wasn't afraid to be himself, express his opinions and share affection with other people, regardless of what others thought of him” (Indian, Christian)

P10: “The video affected me in a way that it showed men in a different way. It challenged social constructs about being a man.” (Black, Christian)

P11: “No, but in terms of the "Rocky Horror Picture Show" clip, sitting in a room full of guys does make it a bit uncomfortable but I feel that's mainly due to societal structures.” (Coloured, Christian)

P12: “Having the qualities that society expects but not with respect to violent, impulsive, stubborn & closed-minded behaviour” (Coloured, Agnostic)

The openness and tolerance shown in the representations of masculinity above bode well for masculinity constructions in the South African context. Challenging male norms may be the starting point for improving gender relations, since if masculinity is no longer constructed as a fixed thing, the pressure to act in particular ways may be reduced. For example, if there is no longer the pressure to take the lead, as a man, this may reduce men’s need to control women. As Dunkle & Decker (2012) has shown, more gender-equal relationships will have many benefits to South African society, not the least of which is a reduction in the rate of HIV transmission.

Theme Three: Non-hegemonic Masculinity is Anchored to Balance

Participants spoke of striking a balance between “typical” masculine norms and values, and those not often associated with masculinity such as emotionality. They thus cast the typified hegemonic masculinity as unbalanced. P3 anchors hegemonic masculinity to non-emotionality, and sees the expression of emotion in opposition to doing “masculine” things. Participant 2, similarly, spoke of “typical” male behaviours such as drinking beer, but thought that emotions also need to be expressed.

Furthermore, Participant 2 anchors masculinity to being “strong” as well as not being afraid “to show emotion.” He anchors non-hegemonic masculinity to leadership, as well as being equitable (a man is “head of the household but still gives his wife/spouse a voice”). Participant 3 thought that the balance comes in his relationships “with others, with himself and with God.” He sees a failure to do this as leading to men “doing foolish things” to prove their manhood. This lends some credence to Kimmel’s (2004) argument that masculinity is performed for other men to gain their acceptance into manhood.

> P1: “To do what you want to do and not care what anyone thinks. Be loyal to your brothers (friends) and faithful to your ladies. Complain less about your problems and do something about it. Drink beer. Not be afraid to show emotion, but be ready to "suck it up" when others need you to be strong. Men don't "LoL"!!! (*Laugh out loud)* <- no jokes. To be comfortable in your own body.” (Black, Christian)

> P2: “I am quite androgynous and like being viewed as such, I don’t necessarily want be viewed as a butch man who has no emotion and just works. I try to remain balanced, I am open about my emotions which allows me to be better understood and to better understand women (in my opinion) but at the same time I love being a man, I love watching any sports and braaing and having a couple of beers but I try avoiding being a typical man that sees women as pieces of meat.” (White, Christian)

> P2: “A man is a leader, her thrives under pressure, he enjoys a challenge, he is not afraid to cry or show emotion because he does not care what others think of him. He is strong and intelligent, a problem solver and the head of the household but still gives his wife/spouse a voice. A man is all of these things, he is balanced.” (White, Christian)

> P3: …I don't "define" myself by what others think of me. I'm quite soft-sided and I don't have problems expressing it, but I also complement it by participating in "masculine" activities and doing crazy fun stuff with my mates” (Indian, Christian)

P3: “Being a man is defined by 3 relationships: His relationship with others, with himself and with God. A man should be able to face the world with courage and unashamedness for who he is. "A man who stands for nothing will fall for anything." He should treat women and other men alike; with fair amounts of both respect and affection and both of these stem from love for your fellow person. To do this, he must have a keen awareness of who he is and what he lives for (and this is where God comes in). Too many men nowadays don't receive confirmation of their manhood by elders and hence try to create it by doing foolish things. And that (in my opinion) is a big problem in our society.” (Indian, Christian)

Looking at how masculinity is constructed in the local context, the influence of representations of balance could well have a positive effect. There are clear implications for gender equality in the Constitutional society, as well as for male well-being. After all, if men can construct masculinities around strength and leadership but still be egalitarian and sensitive, this could prevent men resorting to or even considering violence.

Theme Four: Non-hegemonic Masculinity is Anchored to Independence from Women

The participants, who are all male, defended Nurse John as well as the male gender against a specific threat: being belittled by women. Participant two is highly perturbed, appealing to the reader’s sense of justice with the rhetorical “I mean really… come on!” Participant three picks out “feminism” and the role it played in women’s supposedly poor treatment of men since its advent. It is argued that men are moving towards job and family roles which are more nurturing, whilst women are more career-focused than in the past (Gentry & Harrison, 2010). The difficulty men face in adapting to new, non-hegemonic roles is compounded, for the participants, by perceived judgement of the validity of such male roles. Their stark reactions show that this has personal significance to them. The participants anchor non-hegemonic masculinity to independence from women by distancing themselves from the restrictions placed on Nurse John by “the ladies.”

P1: “The insensitivity of the girls in the first video.” (White, Christian)

P2: “It's the reaction of the ladies that bothers me - why should they make such a big deal that a man is a nurse? I mean, really… come on!” (Black, Agnostic)

P3: “Precious, because it shows equality between genders and how women perceive men similar to how men perceived women before feminism” (Coloured, Atheist)

Protecting the right of men to be self-determined is not essentially a negative thing. It is positive in that it could lead to greater freedom of expression for diverse masculinities. However, if masculinity were perceived as under threat from “feminism,” a reactive masculinity could be constructed which represses women and attempts to revive old gender orders. This has the potential to cross cultural lines, as in Bozzoli’s patchwork of patriarchies (Bozzoli, 1983, as cited in Morrell, 1998).

Theme Five: Hegemonic Masculinity is Anchored to Male Pride

Theme five is about pride in masculinity. Here participants anchored hegemonic masculinity to high status, pride, and superiority. For example, participants spoke of the pride they feel in carrying out the role they have been assigned (such as provider), as well as the superiority they personally feel. One participant was acutely aware of males’ traditionally superior social status as well as the fact that this view of men is a stereotype. With regard to high status being viewed as a man is seen as “birth right” (a phrase typically reserved for royalty) and “stature.”

While the superiority and family aspects are linked to theme 1, the focus of theme 4 was different – the feeling of self-identity gained by being seen as a man. Participants explained that being recognized as a man was important because this identity fits with the one they have chosen for themselves. Some participants simply say they wouldn’t like to be seen as anything else, whilst others specifically mention what they would not like to be seen as: a woman, a gay person or other “inferior” person. P8 in particular stresses this, as illustrated by the threat he makes. Here, there is a similar sensitivity to judgement as was displayed in theme three above. Perhaps a

key point made in this theme is that being seen as a man allows one to gain respect or "social currency," as one participant put it.

> P1: "I believe to be viewed as a male is to a certain extent, important as male are traditionally viewed as strong, physically superior and are people who are in positions of authority and control. I carry that stereotype with me and am proud of being a male and intend to uphold the values they stand for." (White, Jewish)
>
> P2: "That makes me to know more who I am and where I am going in future as a man. I also get encouraged and am proud of myself as a man." (Black, Christian)
>
> P3: "Very. I would like to be perceived as a man of stature, honour and pride who can provide not only for his family but for those around." (Black, Christian)
>
> P4: "It is sort of important as I want to be seen as a male and as a provider for my family (future family)." (White, Christian)
>
> P5: "Very important, being a male is a birth right and people must accept this physiological appearance that I have taken upon." (White, Christian)
>
> P6: "It is not all that important but don't think I would be all too comfortable viewed as anything other than a man because that is what I classify myself as." (Black, Christian)
>
> P7: "Being viewed as a man is important to me because that is how I view myself." (Black, Other religion)
>
> P8: "I don't care about how others perceive me, as long as they know who I am, what I do and can do, and they treat me like a human being. If I am not treated as a human, but rather as a female or inferior, there will be consequences." (Coloured, Atheist)

P9: “It is important since I am a man and would not want to be viewed as a woman” (White, Christian)

P10: “It is extremely important and this is because it adds to your social currency and there is generally a stigma towards those males who act gay/feminine.” (Black, Christian)

P11: “It is important because people tend to respect you, just for being a male.” (Black, Christian)

A worrying stream of social representations here is the strict placement of men apart from and above women. The bundling of “female” and “inferior” and the notion of male “birth right” are examples of this. The construction of masculinity as superior in South Africa, whilst a definite concern from the results, would sadly not be a new issue in our country. The ‘ingagara’ (macho) masculinity discussed by Walker (2005) is just one construction of masculinity which may feed off these kinds of sentiments. The implications for gender equality are certainly not positive. However, the positive of male pride could be the construction of men – and fathers in particular - as responsible, since pride is something which is upheld through one’s actions. If one looks at custody rights groups such as Fathers 4 Justice, this idea is played out in the current context.

Theme Six: Masculinity is Anchored to Social Power

Here participants discussed their being put into categories by others and their acquiescence to this. Participants generally saw submission to social control as something which was sad but unavoidably true but sometimes seemed just to accept it. The first participant emphasises the need to belong to a group. An attempt is made by the participant to understand why society classifies people.

Interestingly, P2 twice addresses the reader or receiver of his comment (presumably the researcher) directly. The first (“for order, right?”) seems to ask for confirmation of his views, whilst the second (“who are we kidding?”) may be an attempt to convince one of the truth of his

comment through rhetoric (Potter & Billig, 1992). Wetherell (1998) might argue that such comments appear to be a way for the participant to negotiate with what he feels before finally 'admitting' to it (that how the world sees one is important). The fourth participant observes without too much concern that he is expected to keep up some kind of a masculine front in public but can show his true self in private.

> P1: "I think there is a larger general level of acceptance in society if you are male with masculine characteristics. It is important for me to be understood and feel appreciated in a group. For this I need to be viewed as a male." (Indian, Hindu)
>
> P2: "It is a very important aspect of me that others should view me as a male person, but it is not as important as being viewed as just a person. I think in a world that is obsessed with classification (…for order, right?) it is important to be viewed as a male person. Honestly, who are we kidding? To achieve a lot of things in this world the world must have an opinion of you. Sadly, being viewed as a male is important. So, it is important to me." (Black, Atheist)
>
> P3: "It is important for me to be viewed as a man because I do not think there is anybody in the world who views people as just people" (Black, Other religion)
>
> P4: "In the sense that it is normative for me to be a man, I want to be seen as a man. That way no one will act in a disrespectful way around me" (Black, Christian)
>
> P5: "Yes this is as firstly, that is what a man is expected to do on a daily basis especially for public places. But if you are with a girlfriend or male friend you can then show your true nature. But for me it is important." (White, Christian)

This theme could lead to sweeping effects on the construction of masculinity in South Africa. Surrendering to social forces fatalistically is tantamount to complicity with hegemonic norms of masculinity which, it has been argued, are detrimental in a number of ways. The importance of diversity to continuing an agenda of progressive masculinity cannot be overstated (Connell,

2005). One participant explicitly states that he has to hide his real identity by putting on a public face which, to take just one example, is the kind of issue which stops gay men being able to 'come out' as such. Gay pride parades have already been subject to attacks in South Africa and worldwide (Muller, 2005).

Theme Seven: Hegemonic Masculinity is Anchored to Male Genitalia and Genetics

Discussions around biology were important enough that they form their own theme. Participant three directly refers to having a penis, whilst participant four refers only to masculine genitals. It is uncertain whether he was not more explicit due to politeness, awkwardness or an attempt at sounding scientific and formal. Nevertheless, hegemonic masculinity is clearly anchored to biological maleness by several participants. Not all participants were certain of their answers or even agreed that biology was an important aspect of masculinity, with Participants one and two respectively being cases in point. Participant four mentions male genitals, along with other, non-biological characteristics.

> P1: "I don't have a clear definition of a man but to me biology has a huge influence. If you are genetically a man then you are a man" (Indian, Agnostic)

> P2: "Being a man is not at all a biological thing, being a man has to do with how a person carry themselves, it's about being responsible and taking care of your family, and of course being happy :) real men don't hit woman (Just had to put that in)" (Other race, Agnostic)

> P3: "To be a man I think means having a penis first and foremost..." (Black, Other religion)

> P4: "Being a man means; 1 - possessing masculine genitals; 2 - understanding and respecting the value of a woman; 3 - complying with constitutionally stipulated rights of other people especially woman." (Black, Christian)

The anchoring of hegemonic masculinity to biological characteristics has the potential to impact already worrying constructions of masculinity in South Africa. Construction of men as those with a penis risks an unhealthy focus on the penis as the center of manhood, which could contribute to anxiety about sexual performance and penis size (Forrest, 2000). Deacon and Thomson (2012) argue that where masculinity revolves around the penis in South Africa - for example during traditional circumcision processes – there is a real danger of increased promiscuity. Sex immediately after the end of circumcision rituals is very common, and is seen in what is surely an unhealthy light – "cleaning off" on a woman that the boy typically does not love (Deacon & Thompson, 2012, p. 80).

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

The current study had several strong points and a number of limits on its applicability. First, the strengths of the study will be described, and then the limitations will be examined. Thereafter, recommendations for future research will be discussed, with possible improvements to this study's design in mind.

The first strength of this study is that in terms of theory and practice, it legitimated multiple conceptions of masculinity. This is due to its reliance on a concept of gender that is socially constructed and diverse, the use of videos which cast masculinity in unusual ways, and open-ended questions which allowed participants to express their own views of what masculinity is. However, the researcher takes heed of the caution that the gender binary of men versus women should not be re-inscribed, and thus does not see his findings on masculinity as a 'closed book' or final interpretation of the gendered ways people express themselves.

The second strength of the current research was that it utilised videos rather than still images. Videos are seen as having greater pertinence to the youth of the country and the world, whose culture is being more and more dominated by video content, such as from YouTube (Chau, 2010). The use of videos also extends the methodology used in magazine studies such as Ricciardelli and colleagues (2010) as well as Toerien and Durrheim (2001). Also, this study used

two sources of videos for representing masculinities: the Internet and popular film. This is seen as improving the applicability of the findings to different types of media.

The final strength of the study was that it helped to apply social representations theory and the theory of hegemonic masculinity – developed in Europe and Australia respectively – to issues which have particular relevance in South Africa, such as Aids.

Three limitations come from the way the data was collected. Firstly, the participants may have been tempted to answer in socially desirable ways. For example, they may have wanted to impress the researcher. This is because being the same sex and roughly the same age as the participants, the researcher may either have been seen as a peer or as a competitor (Frank, 2007). Furthermore, participants might have answered in ways that were socially desirable to other participants. As discussed earlier, the seating arrangements in the research sessions meant that participants had the potential to see each other's answers, even though the researcher specifically instructed participants not to discuss their answers and watched over the participants.

Secondly, the questions asked and the fact that a survey was used made it difficult to look into objectifications of non-hegemonic masculinity in detail, despite anchors being apparent. If there had been more dedicated time with each participant – possibly in one-on-one interviews - more detail could have been discovered.

Finally, the researcher did not include sexual orientation or past academic exposure to females as demographic questions. Asking about sexual orientation would have been helpful in understanding the social representations of masculinity that heterosexual and homosexual participants orient to, respectively. Since heteronormativity is such an ingrained feature of hegemonic masculinity, it would have been useful to see how this is expressed differently by the groups. Indeed, gay masculinities include effeminate men as well as hyper-masculine men, and those who fall somewhere in-between these (Connell, 1992). Even though asking for sexual orientation may have been ethically ambiguous, it may still have been worthwhile. Asking about past academic exposure to females, such as including a question on whether the participant came

from an all-boys school, may have explained some of the participants views on masculinity (in relation to femininity).

Recommendations and Implications for future research

Even in the face of counter-stereotypical and sometimes rather shocking men portrayed during the current study, a large portion of participants reflected current social representations which support a somehow restricted view of masculinity. However, the media is (as argued) likely the strongest platform for the exchange – and therefore changing – of ideas. The media has the potential to provide, for example, explicit or implicit career suggestions to large numbers of young people and their families (Durkin, 2007). Such intervention research is important, because media can access a wide range of audiences quickly and with the expertise of skilled professionals (Durkin, 2007). But, with regards to promoting counter-stereotyped options, there will always be difficulties. Celebrities have been shown to be useful in this regard, promoting condom usage, for example (Treffry-Goatley, Mahlinza & Imrie, 2013).

On a research design note, knowledge of the study's intentions may have caused participants to respond differently than they would have if it remained unknown. Hobza and Rochlen (2009) and Hobza and colleagues (2007) used deception to try to ensure that participants did not guess the nature of the study. Whilst this is a possible approach for future research, the ethics of the particular deception used must be examined. It may also be interesting to compare the results of this study to findings around non-university students. This could even include conducting another phase of research once participants have left the university environment.

Further research should be conducted on education programs about gendered social representations and social constructions. The themes of shifting constructions of identity and balance (themes two and three) apply here. The fact of these themes emerging shows the potential for tolerance and gender equality in South Africa. Gender education programs could be used to prevent clashes at schools and other possible manifestations of the male ideologies of aggression and power. This would also reduce the workload of such programs as Brothers for Life. Gay rights and women's rights campaigns and organizations should use the understanding

provided in the study of the male fear of femininity (and feminism) to help them communicate better with men who are homophobic or scared of acting on their beliefs in gender equality. Women's views on social representations of masculinity should also be considered, for example to gain insight into the everyday experiences of hegemonic masculinity.

It would also be worthwhile to design a study in the future that looked at the notion of project. Projects, which describe the shared goal of a social group, are what shape social representations. Perhaps, the themes of social power (or complying with norms) and male pride and superiority (five and six) could be applied here. By looking at local projects that support representations around superiority, a better understanding of male domination and violence could be gained. Correspondingly, an examination of social power would explain the mechanisms that allow these social relations to continue, and be useful as the basis for education and activism. Future studies could look at the relation between patriarchal representations of masculinity and demographic factors such as religion or cultural group, in order to make research more locally relevant.

Conclusion

This study made use of open-ended items in questionnaire format. It examined student's perceptions of gendered social representations, qualitatively. The study attempted to examine the participants' views about what masculinity is and can be, using a set of videos depicting counter-stereotypical men as a point of reference. Social representations of male ambition, emotional toughness, disapproval of homosexuality and providing for a family were some of the themes which emerged in the study. Future directions and uses of the research are considered, with applications being suggested to the fields of violence-prevention, education and activism.

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Appendix A – Participant Information Sheet

School of Human & Community Development

University of the Witwatersrand

Private Bag 3, WITS, 2050

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

Hello,

My name is Jarrod Israelstam and I am a Research Masters student at WITS University. I am conducting a research study on men and the media. The focus of my study is to investigate men's responses to what they see and hear in the media.

I would like to invite you to participate in this study. Please be aware that participation is completely voluntary and there will be no consequences to your decision to participate or not to participate. However, completing a questionnaire will be taken as consent to participate in the study. You may choose not to answer any questions that you do not feel comfortable answering, and withdraw from the study at any time. Please note that I will not ask your name and no names will be mentioned in the research report or presentation. Whatever is said or written during the research will be kept confidential, as only the researcher and his supervisor will ever have access to the questionnaires you will answer if you participate.

If you choose to participate, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire on two different occasions three weeks apart, and to view video clips in the second session. The questionnaires should not take more than 40 minutes to complete, including the videos that I will ask you to view. Please note that all participation in this study will be during your ordinary class times, and you will not be expected to travel to East Campus when you wouldn't already be doing so as per your course. Once the research is complete, I will provide a one-page summary of the results to any interested participants. If at any time during the research you have a problem, you can contact me directly using the details below. In the unlikely event that you felt any distress during

the research process, free telephonic counselling is available from Lifeline (011 728 1347) and The South African Depression and Anxiety Group (011 262 6396).

Thank you so much for your time.

Mr Jarrod Israelstam
Email: jisraelstam@yahoo.co.uk

Appendix B – Demographic Questionnaire

Please tick the appropriate box in response to the questions that follow. Please note that this information is purely for statistical purposes.

Age (in years): ☐

(Please indicate your actual age in the box provided above.)

Home Language:

Afrikaans	English	Sotho	Tswana	Xhosa	Zulu	Venda	Other

Race:

black	white	coloured	Indian	Asian	Other

Religious affiliation:

Christian	Muslim	Hindu	Jewish	agnostic	atheist	Other

What is your parent's/guardian's highest level of education?

Mother:

None	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary

Father:

None	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary

Guardian:

None	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary

Appendix C – Open-ended items

1. Did the video affect you in any way? If so, how?
2. How important is it to you that you are viewed by others as a male person in some way, and not just a person? Why?
3. What do you think it means to be a man?

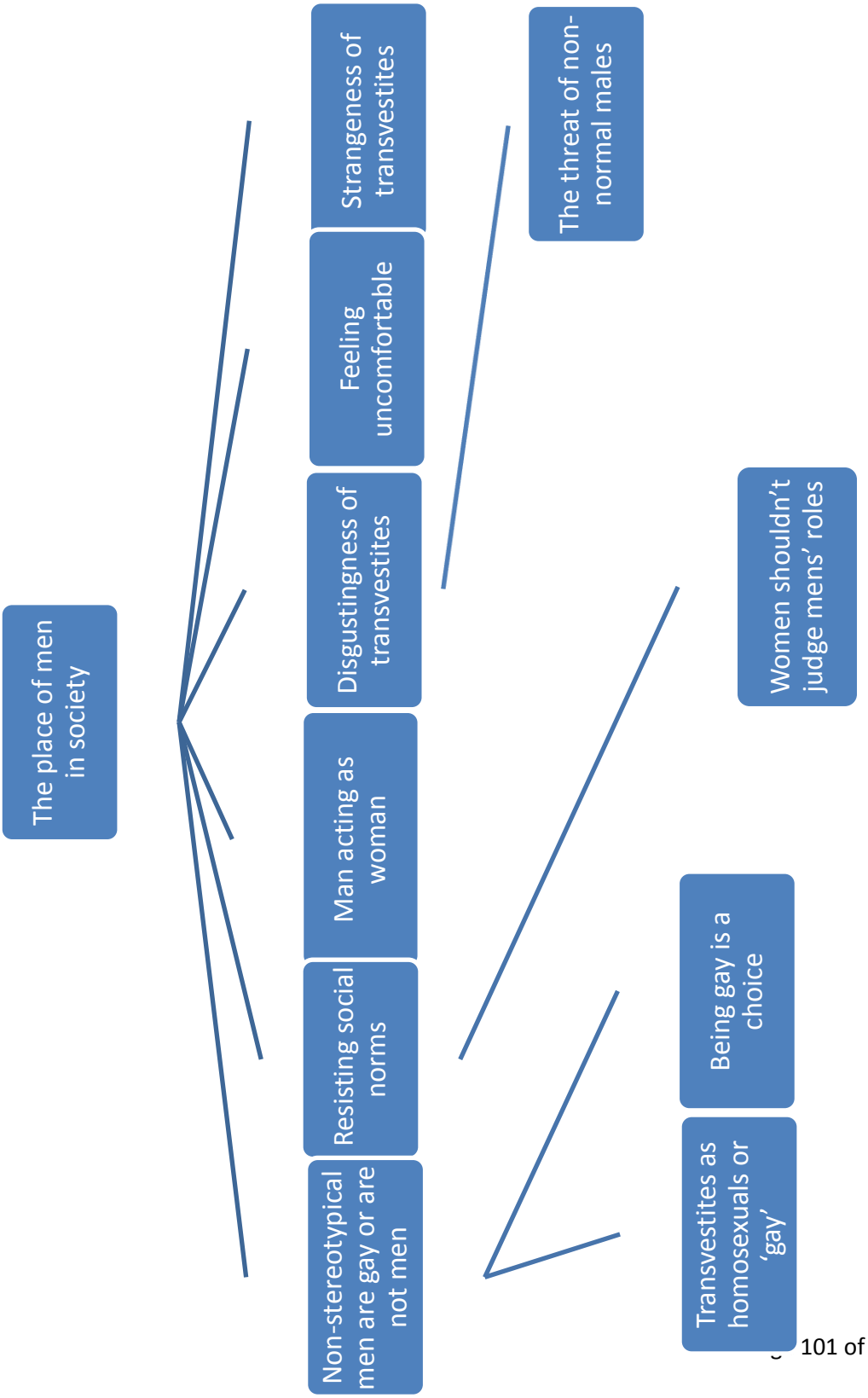
Appendix D – Links for videos to be used in the study

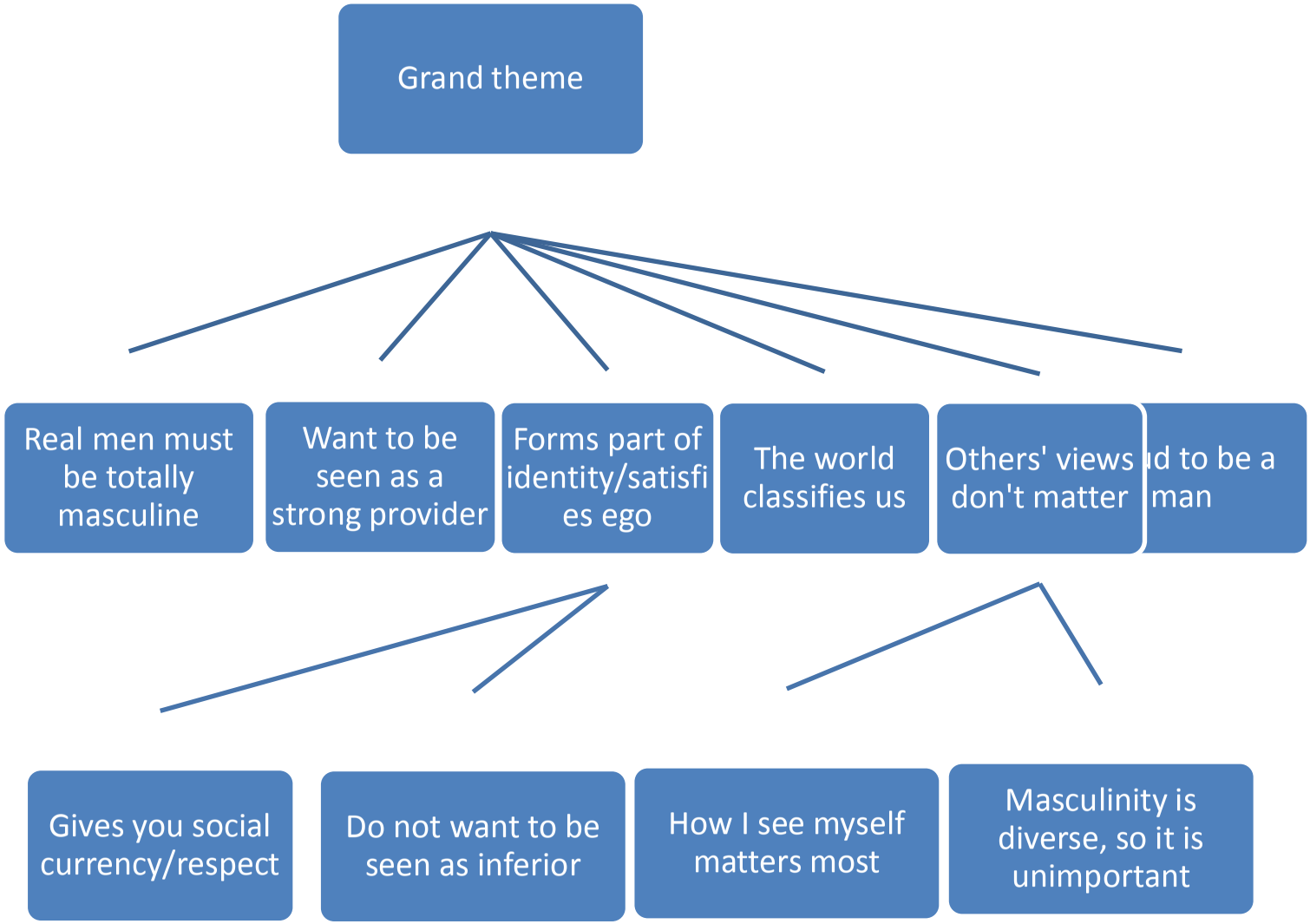
Clip from “Precious: Based on the Novel 'Push' by Sapphire”
http://www.reelzchannel.com/trailer-clips/44651/precious-based-on-the-novel-push-by-sapphire-clip/

Finis Jhung, male ballet dancer:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-b50SL6U01o

Clip from “The Rocky Horror Picture Show”:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=bc80tFJpTuo

Appendix E – Examples of hematic Maps Generated During Analysis




Grand theme
Real men must be totally masculine
Want to be seen as a strong provider
Forms part of identity/satisfies ego
The world classifies us
Others' views don't matter
d to be a man
Gives you social currency/respect
Do not want to be seen as inferior
How I see myself matters most
Masculinity is diverse, so it is unimportant