CONSTRUCTIONS OF MASCULINITY IN YOUNG MEN’S NARRATIVES OF VIOLENCE IN THE HOMEPLACE

THESIS

Submitted in part-fulfilment of a

MASTERS DEGREE IN COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY

By

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis, accept in aspects duly acknowledged, is my original work. It has been conducted under the supervision of Ms Jacqueline Marx and is submitted in part-fulfilment of the degree of Masters in Counselling Psychology at the University of Fort Hare, East London. No part of this thesis has been submitted in the past, or is being submitted, for a degree or examination at any other university.

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This research was undertaken with a view to advancing scholarship on the production and reproduction of notions of masculinity through everyday experiences of violence in the domestic sphere. In particular, the researcher sought to explicate constructions of masculinity in men’s narratives of their experiences of violence in the homeplace.

The participants in this study constituted a fairly homogenous sample in terms of age, education, geographic location, and socio-economic status. A homogenous sample was purposefully selected because it aided an analysis of the phenomenon under study without diversions from extraneous variables. Data was collected from semi-structured, personal, in-depth, face-to-face interviews with eight young men. In these interviews participants were asked to recall and to talk about one particular experience of domestic violence that they witnessed or that had happened to them in the past. Photo elicitation was used as a reflective technique aimed at facilitating recall and discussion during the interviews. Data was analysed by means of a discourse analysis.

The main findings of this research were that the participants grew up in communities where a more traditional hegemonic masculinity was commonplace and where violence as a means of exerting control was associated with being a ‘real man’. The participants did however question this notion of masculinity as a result of their experiences, particularly when they perceived the violence that they had been exposed to as excessive or unwarranted.
ABBREVIATIONS

IPV  Intimate Partner Violence

GDP  Gross Domestic Product

HSRC  Human Sciences Research Council

WHO  World Health Organisation
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research focuses on violence and masculine identity within a specific spatial context, the homeplace. It was undertaken with a view to advancing scholarship on the production and reproduction of notions of masculinity through young men’s everyday experiences of violence in the home in which they grew up in. The aim of the research was to identify the multiple and contradictory constructions of masculinity in the young men’s narratives of their experiences. The purpose of the research is to elucidate the role of violence in the forging of, and resistance to, particular notions of masculinity.

This research was undertaken with a view to advancing scholarship in the areas of masculinity and violence in the South African context by offering a fresh perspective to the phenomenon. In South Africa, research of this nature has focused on women’s experiences of violence. Research on women’s experiences of intimate partner violence (IPV) is a key example (e.g. Artz, 2001; Anderson & Umberson, 2001; Boonzaaier & De La Rey, 2003; Towns & Adams, 2000). From the findings of studies such as these, it would seem that the literature available on men and violence most often positions them as perpetrators rather than individuals who are also affected by it. There is thus a need for an alternative approach from the usual ‘men as perpetrators’ approach.

Research always proceeds from a particular set of assumptions. Some assumptions appear as explicit statements, for example, in the form of clearly articulated hypotheses. While others are only implied, for example, by the way in which a research question is
articulated. Durrheim (2006) identifies four dimensions in which decisions informing the research process are made. These dimensions are: the research paradigm, a set of ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions informing the research; the purpose of the inquiry; the context in which it is located; and the techniques employed to sample, collect and interpret data. Accordingly, design coherence is determined by the degree of fit between each of these dimensions. It is thus prudent, at this point, to describe the paradigmatic approach informing this study and which determined the appropriateness of the literature reviewed and the methods employed.

**Social constructionism**

The theoretical framework which informed this research is social constructionism. Burr (1995) provides the following key assumptions characteristic of social constructionist approaches to knowledge about people and the world they live in. In the first instance, social constructionism takes a critical stance to taken-for-granted knowledge. It encourages us to be critical of the idea that our view of the world yields its nature to us in a straightforward unbiased manner. Instead, it requires that we question the perspective that conventional knowledge is based upon. This places the social constructionist approach to knowledge production in direct opposition to traditional scientific methods informed by empiricism. Empiricism is an approach to knowledge based on the assumption that the nature of the world can be revealed by observation and measurement, and is thus objective and value-free. Empiricism is an approach to knowledge production that does not question bias in the way in which observations about the world proceed, nor
does it question bias inherent in the extreme reduction of peoples lived experiences for the purposes of measurement and quantification of those experiences. Social constructionism, by contrast, is suspicious of these processes and the assumptions they imply.

Second, social constructionism acknowledges that the world as we know it is historically and culturally constructed. Burr (1995) lists examples of categories that we are given to make sense of everyday phenomena. They include the taken for granted sex categories, men and women; as well as more abstract categories like classical and pop music, and plants and weeds. Burr’s (1995) argument is that these categories are not things in themselves (they do not exist prior to our creation and use of them) but that they are socially constructed and reflect the sort of knowledges different cultures or societies ascribe to. Racial categories, for example, exemplify the culturally specific nature of particular (historically and culturally located) racial constructs. Burr (1995) argues that one implication of this is that identity must be understood, like other phenomena, as a social construct rather than innate, and changing (across culture, time and history) rather than stable.

Third, social constructionism acknowledges that social processes (our everyday activities) sustain particular knowledges. That people construct knowledge and understanding between themselves through daily dealings and that through these dealings knowledge of the world is formulated. Social interaction is thus of extreme importance to social constructionists. Even language is seen as a form of social action (Burr, 1995).
Fourth, knowledge and social interaction are dependent on one another because through social interaction knowledge of the world is constructed, and in turn, these constructions inform how we act in the world. Moreover, because there are many ways in which we engage in daily activities, there are also many ways in which those activities can be understood, or made sense of. For this reason, scholars working within the social constructionist paradigm seek to elucidate the multiple ways in which phenomena are constructed (Burr, 1995).

The choice of social constructionism as a theoretical framework for this study was based on the ability of this framework to allow for multiple constructions of masculinity, and the socio-cultural and historical locatedness of those constructions. Social constructionism provides scope for an analysis of the ways in which these constructions can be invoked or contested and, in the context of this study, the implications of the experience of violence for particular notions of masculinity. Social constructionism is also appropriate for a study based on narratives of violence because of the role of language in social constructionist work.

**The role of language**

Language is a uniquely human ability. It plays a central role in human cognition, social functioning and social interaction. The near unproblematic way in which we acquire and use language disguises its complexity. The common-sense view of language, which Weedon (1997) argues is espoused in many expressive or reflective models of language,
is based on the assumption that language is a transparent medium used to express or to communicate facts about the world, or events that occur in it. This view of language implies that facts (or events) exist independently of the way in which they occur in language (ibid). Social constrictions view language very differently. From a social constructionist perspective, language actually constructs and therefore gives meaning to facts and events (ibid) – because it is argued, the meaning of a thing is largely contingent on the way in which it is constructed. One implication of this way of thinking about language is that language must then be approached as a process in which meaning is given to facts retrospectively. That is, the meaning of a thing is not be found in (the nature of) the thing itself but in the way in which it is constructed in language (ibid). Individuals, as language users, are thus continually engaged in the business of creating meaning, even of themselves. And this quite often occurs in relation to the meaning we ascribe to events in our lives. The primacy of language in scholarship informed by social constructionism lends to an analysis of discourse.

The person as discourse-user

Parker (1992, p.5) describes discourses as “a system of statements which construct an object.” Similarly, Burr (1995, p.48) refers to discourses as “a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories, statements and the like, that in some way together produce a particular version of events”. Thus, discourse paints a particular view of the world, event, or a person - a representation. Moreover, if we accept the view that a whole host of alternative versions of events are potentially available through language and
interaction, this means that, surrounding any one event, object, or person, there may be many different discourses, each with a different story to tell about the object, event or person in question. Numerous discourses thus surround any given object, event or person and each discourse brings different aspects of the object, event or person into focus, raises different issues for consideration, and has different implications for what the actions relating to this event, person, or object should be. Thus, discourses, our ways of speaking about events, people, and objects, serve to construct these phenomena in different ways, each discourse portraying the object as having a very different nature from the next.

In this study, focus is on the way in which masculine identities are constructed in young men’s narratives (talk) of their experience of violence. However, meaning is not taken as a reflection of an already fixed reality (who they really are or what really happened) but versions of who they are and what happened to them. Identification of these versions of self and of the events shaping the self are, for the purposes of this study, a lever that allows for an analysis of the implications of those events for the taking up or resistance to particular notions of masculinity.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This research focuses on violence and masculine identity within a specific spatial context, the homeplace. For the purposes of this study, violence is understood as being both physical and emotional in nature. In addition, because many individual’s experience of violence include instances of witnessing violence, those experiences as well as violence that they experienced more directly are investigated in this study.

Violence in society

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) report on health and violence (2002) death and disability resulting from inter-personal violence makes inter-personal violence one of the leading public health issues of our time. Findings of the report reveal that worldwide, interpersonal violence is among the leading causes of death for people aged 15-44 years of age, accounting for 14% of deaths among males and 7% of deaths among females. On an average day 1424 people are killed in acts of homicide, which is almost one person every minute; and one person commits suicide every 40 seconds. The data on youth violence show that youth homicide rates have increased in many parts of the world (ibid). For every young person killed by violence, between 20 and 40 individuals sustain injuries that require treatment (ibid).
Fighting and bullying are common forms of inter-personal violence among young people and intoxication is one of the situational factors found to precipitate violence (WHO, 2002). Almost half the women who die due to homicide are killed by their current or former partners (ibid). Most victims of physical aggression are subjected to multiple acts of violence over extended periods of time. Abuse of the elderly is one of the most hidden faces of violence according to the report, and one that is likely to grow given the rapidly aging populations in many countries (ibid). Among those aged 15-44 years, suicide is the fourth leading cause of death and the sixth leading cause of disability and ill-health (ibid). It is clear from the above that violence deserves the seriousness it is receiving and that it is a relevant and current topic to examine. The discussion now focuses on violence in South Africa.

It is common knowledge that South African society is a particularly violent society within which political violence, violent crimes, violence against women and children, and domestic violence is commonplace (Gilbert, 1995). The 1980’s was one of the most violent periods in South African history. This period was characterised by the widespread use of force by the South African government and the disparate political parties. The violence was personified by random and illogical arrests, incarceration without trial, public unrest, and acts of sabotage, harassment, torture, “disappearance” and the general massacre of those in opposition to then Apartheid government (Cock, 1990).

Hamber (2007) argues that after the political situation in South Africa became more stabilised, the nature of violence in the early 1990’s changed from vertical (government...
in opposition to its citizens) to horizontal (fellow citizens against one another) violence. For example, in the 1970’s and 1980’s the police were responsible for more deaths compared to the 1990’s when intra-community as well as intra-organisational conflict was responsible for the greatest number of fatalities (ibid).

In the first South African national survey of partner violence, attitudes to child rearing and the use of corporal punishment by caregivers, Dawes, Kafaar, de Sas Kropiwnicki, Pather & Richter (2004) found that from April 2002 to March 2003, there were nearly 53 000 reported rapes in South Africa, of which a significant number of victims were under 18 years of age. It is argued that while South African Police Services crime statistics are not reliable indicators of the true situation (for numerous reasons), they nevertheless indicate that the levels of violence against women and children are worrying (ibid). Crime statistics also show that during the abovementioned period, 4 798 cases of child abuse and neglect were reported (ibid).

There are many factors that potentially contribute to violence and violent crime in South Africa, such as social inequality and deprivation caused by apartheid being among these (Dawes, Kafaar, de Sas Kropiwnicki, Pather & Richter, 2004). Other factors include a patriarchal society where women and children are less valued than adult men and thus vulnerable to discrimination and abuse; the historical development of a culture of violence where violence was seen as a legitimate means to achieve goals by political parties; the deregulation of state control during the negotiations period (from February 1990 to April 1994); an ineffective criminal justice system and the perception that there
will be no serious repercussions for criminal activity; and the opening of South African borders to criminal syndicates since the shift to democracy has also had an impact on the levels of crime (Hamber, 2007). Needless to say that with a collective culture of violence in South African society, as illustrated above, it can be expected that this could filter through into private lives and private spaces. Peacock (2002) argues that domestic assaults, the level of violence in the wider society, and tolerance for violence are interconnected.

South Africa is also no stranger to the institutionalisation of physical punishment of the young. During the Apartheid era and for a short while thereafter, corporal punishment was the primary method of punishment for juvenile offenders in the justice system and in public schools. This practice was outlawed by the 1997 Abolition of Corporal Punishment Act as well as the South African schools Act of 1996. Prior to this, the way adult-child relationships were understood, made it legitimate for a teacher to physically assault a pupil. Beyond the physical act of punishment was the cultural goal of producing good citizens through teaching obedience and authority – beatings were seen to serve this purpose (Dawes, Kafaar, de Sas Kropiwnicki, Pather & Richter 2004).

Vlasis-Cicvaric, Perpic, Bohan & Korotaj (2007) argue that the only reported advantage of corporal punishment is a child’s immediate compliance. The authors argue that corporal punishment is associated with vast, diverse and hard to estimate negative effects and that it is related to increased occurrence of social and psychological development
difficulties. Excessive corporal punishment during childhood is considered to predispose children to do likewise as adults (ibid).

**Violence in the homeplace**

Jewkes, Levin & Penn-Kekana (2002) believe that in order to understand partner violence, it needs to be presented as a network of connected and mediated issues and processes which are centrally influenced by ideas regarding masculinity and the position of women in a society, and ideas about the use of violence. In South Africa particularly, the acceptance of patriarchal beliefs and principles is seen to be a significant influencing factor behind intimate partner violence and child maltreatment or corporal punishment (Hamber 2007). In short, it would seem that the risk of violence in the home space increases when it is coupled to a belief that men can assault their partners and possibly their children, when they are seen to be failing in their roles and duties (Vogelman & Eagle, 1991)

Additionally, Strauss (1977) argues that family members tend to have similar interests, engage in common activities, and are likely to spend large amounts of time with each other. This may lead to greater opportunities for violent interactions. Furthermore, the relatively small size of the family unit may prevent families from adequately coping with stress, and so increases the prospect that violence could be used as a coping method. Failure to achieve societal expectations and norms, as well as gender and age gaps in the family, may add to stress levels. In addition to this, low marital satisfaction has also been
linked with violence within the home space. According to O’Keefe (1995) child maltreatment and partner violence generally co-occur; where there is violence between the adult couple, the children are at risk of physical and possibly also emotional abuse.

Male perpetrators of violence are likely to have experienced violence in their families of origin, including witnessing violence between their parents or experiencing regular harsh punishment or abuse as children (Osofsky 1995). Dawes, de Sas Kropiwnicki, Kafaar & Richter (2006) purport that this cycle of violence is particular to males. Children who grow up in violent homes seem to model their behaviour on significant others such as parents, caregivers, and older siblings. Those who observe intimate partner violence in their families are more likely to consider violence as legitimate, as a means of achieving one’s goals or resolving an arguments; this legitimacy is further reinforced when parents’ violent behaviour are seen to go unpunished or without any serious consequences (Dawes et al., 2006).

There seems to be no shortage of information on violence in South Africa, there is however a scarcity of information and statistics available on the incidence and prevalence of corporal punishment, as well as the extent of disciplinary attitudes used by parents to warrant their use of corporal punishment (Dawes, et al, 2004). According to the Abolition of Corporal Punishment Act, 1997, any law which authorises corporal punishment by a court of law, including a court of traditional healers is repealed to the extent that it authorises such punishment. Corporal punishment in schools in any form is thus regarded as illegal and as a punishable offence. This is by no means a deterrent for parents who
doe out punishment as a means of discipline as the statute does not include the banning of punishment within the home space (Government Gazette, 1997).

Dawes, Kafaar, de Sas Kropiwnicki, Pather & Richter (2004) purport that there are definite links between intimate partner violence and the use of corporal punishment. Common risk factors include patriarchal beliefs, beliefs in favour of violence, alcohol and drug dependency, violence in the family of origin, low educational attainment, psychopathology and mood disturbances (such as depression), gender of the child, family size, marital problems, etc (Dawes et al., 2006). In addition to this, men who abuse their wives are also more likely to be violent towards their children; mothers may divert their anger and frustration from their spousal relationship to their children; fathers may abuse their children as a way to hurt their wives; children who witness intimate partner violence may externalise this behaviour and imitate their role models, engage in parental abuse or acts of non-compliance or misbehaviour; this may be met by harsher punitive disciplinary methods from parents leading to what seems like a vicious circle (Dawes, Kafaar, de Sas Kropiwnicki, Pather & Richter, 2004).

Similarly to this, Johnson-Reid (1998) found there to be a definite correlation between youth violence and exposure to violence in childhood. Children exposed to violence during their childhood, are therefore more likely to perpetuate violent behaviour during their adolescent years.
Social constructionist theorising of gender and masculinity

Gender can be defined in many differing and sometimes opposing ways and there is by no means a straightforward explanation or clarity with regards to how this is conceptualised. The concept of masculinity is used within a variety of disciplines, including anthropology, sociology, history, and of course, psychology. Various formulations of masculinity have been offered within these disciplines. The scope of this research does not allow for a full elucidation of these writings. But in keeping with the focus of the study, the researcher will discuss central ideas pertaining to gender and masculinity, which are informed by social constructionist theorising.

Traditionally the term gender was used as a contrast term to sex to illustrate that which is socially constructed as opposed to that which is biologically prearranged. Gender, in this instance, is utilised to describe personality traits and behaviour in distinction from the body. Gender and Sex are thus considered as distinct. However, Gender has increasingly become used to refer to any social construction having to do with the male/female dichotomy, including those constructions that separate female bodies from male bodies. This emerged with the realisation that society shapes not only personality and behaviour, but also the ways in which the body appears. Social Constructionist theorists believe, following from the above, that gender is the social organisation of sexual difference. Correspondingly, Morrell (2001) argues that masculinity is not inherited nor is it acquired in a one-off way, but that it is instead constructed in the context of class, race and other factors. Masculinity is thus seen to be fluid and does not belong in a fixed way to any one
group of men. It is regarded as a socially and historically constructed concept which involves a process of contestation between rival understandings of what being a man should involve. Masculinity is therefore not 'real' in the sense of a tangible (really existing) entity, but as a discursive construction which is achieved through a discursive economy (ways in which masculinity can be constructed in a particular spatial context, historical moment, or socio-cultural context). It is also achieved through everyday practices and experiences, which are themselves given shape by the use of discursive strategies.

In his book entitled Gender and Power (1987), Connell illustrates the interconnectedness of power and gender by arguing that men enjoy the benefits patriarchy affords them. He terms this the “patriarchal dividend”, which is “the advantage men in general gain from the overall subordination of women” (Connell 1995, p.79). Additionally, Connell (1990) argues that being a man involves, to a large extent, the negotiation of hegemonic masculinity. According to Connell (1995), hegemonic masculinity is one that dominates other masculinities and which succeeds in creating prescriptions of masculinity which are binding, and which create cultural images of what it means to be a ‘real’ man. Men are thus subjected to a variety of ways of being masculine; some of these ways become winning ways and it is with these that men must engage, and are expected to accomplish (Connell 1995). Hegemonic masculinity is not a personality type, or an actual male character. It is an ideal or set of prescriptive social norms, symbolically represented, but a critical part of the nature of many mundane everyday social and disciplinary activities. Wetherell and Edley (1999) argue that Connell’s notion of hegemonic masculinity
correlates with what might be called ‘macho’ masculinity, which they argue is an
aspirational goal rather than a lived reality.

In essence then, these gender roles are performed (Butler, 1993). What we perceive our
gender roles to be influences how we act and react in daily interactions as gendered
individuals. These characteristics also seem to be dynamic in nature, ever changing to
accommodate the social situation, cultural context or historical situation.

Similarly to this, Craib (1998) argues that people (men) are not simply the product of role
expectations, ideologies, taken for granted knowledge or discursive practices, but these
are also absorbed through a complex inner process for which he uses the term
‘experience’. It would seem then, that experience also shapes which roles men choose to,
or are influenced to perform. Taking up the expected gender role is thus, among other
things, linked to previous experience of how people responded to these roles, how men
believe they are expected to be, and societal dominant ideologies.

**Hegemonic masculinity and male violence**

In Lutya’s (2001) study with women survivors of intimate partner violence, the
researcher found that an acceptance of rigid gender roles by both men and women
motivates a desire to resolve conflict in intimate relationships with violence. She suggests
that understanding the context of violence is of fundamental significance to studying
violence against women, as violence does not occur in a vacuum but is supported by
socially constructed gender roles. Violence is thus considered to be normative in relation to masculinity. Following this, violence can also be seen as a legitimate means to reassert authority, as well as an acceptable way of resolving conflict (ibid).

This thinking is apparent in some of the research done regarding families and violence that is informed by Bandura’s (1971) Social Learning Theory. From this perspective, violence is understood as being learnt through the observation of others. As individuals develop and mature within familial and social groups, they gain considerable knowledge and skills vicariously. Thus researchers have found that male perpetrators of domestic violence are likely to have experienced violence in their families of origin, including witnessing violence between their parents and/or experiencing harsh punishment or abuse as children (Dixon & Browne, 2003; Osofsky, 1995). In essence, children who grow up in violent homes model their behaviour on the actions and behaviour of significant others, such as caregivers, parents and older siblings. Children who observe partner violence in their families or are subject to violence in the form of corporal punishment or physical abuse, tend to be desensitised to the consequences of aggression and are likely to regard violence as legitimate, as a means of achieving one’s goals or resolving disputes. The legitimacy of violent behaviour is further perpetuated when children see caregivers, older siblings and parents’ violent behaviour go unpunished, and without any serious consequences (Dawes et al., 2004). It is thus evident that the legitimacy of violence is influenced by the performative history.
Shefer, Strebel and Foster’s (2000) study on heterosexual sexual relationships with university students in the Western Cape, shows a significant connection between heterosexual relationships, violence, power and inequality. The study illuminates how violence, coercion and male control over sexuality are perceived to be widespread and an expected and assumed part of heterosexual relationships.

Correspondingly, the findings of research conducted by Jewkes, Levin and Penn-Kekana (1998) found that intimate partner violence was most strongly related to the status of women in society and to the normative use of violence in conflict situations or as part of the exercise of power. Furthermore, in survey research conducted by Dawes, Kafaar, de Sas Kropiwnicki, Pather and Richter (2004) found a link between intimate partner violence, child maltreatment and corporal punishment by caregivers. Some men are excused for resorting to violence as this is seen as a masculine way of dealing with a situation, whereas women are held responsible for some provocation or failure (Vogelman & Eagle, 1991).

Artz (2001) contends that male violence is a method in maintaining social control. These social controls shape, maintain and restrict women. Different social arrangements, particular times in history, and different political contexts, also produce a variety of masculinist behaviours, which shape the use of violence against women and children in different societies (ibid). Furthermore, Artz (2001) argues that violence assumes a gendered form, as it entrenches the notion that gendered power relations are natural and non-negotiable, hence the notion of it being a form of social control. These modes of
thinking in favour of male dominance are manifested in noticeable social and economic inequalities (ibid).

As illustrated above, theories on the relationship between masculinity and violence are contradictory as well as complimentary. The extent of the discussion is limited and brief, and thus only an overview of the extensive amount of literature available on the topic. The following chapter outlines the methodology utilised in this study.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This research takes the form of an explorative study following an inductive theme of inquiry. The research was undertaken with a view to advance scholarship on the production and reproduction of notions of masculinity through everyday experience. In the context of this research experiences of violence in the domestic sphere were examined.

Participants

Eight young men between the ages of twenty-one and twenty-five years participated in this study. Because the focus of the study is on constructions of masculinity in talk on the topic of young men’s experiences of violence in the home and because constructions of masculinity are to some degree contingent on variables such as age, socio-economic status, education and language it was necessary to control for these variables. The researcher thus limited the sample to a small group of men of similar age, language, education, etc. Moreover, as universities are prime locations for accessing a homogenous group as far as education, language, age, geographical location, socio-economic status are concerned, the researcher’s situation on campus made for a convenient platform from which to identify individuals who were appropriate participants for the study.
The criteria for the participation in the study were as follows: Men who have experienced (directly) or witnessed (observed) violence in the homeplace. For the purposes of this research the ‘homeplace’ is regarded as any place where either the primary caregiver or the parents or both are present. For ethical reasons participants had to be adults (above the age of majority), but for theoretical purposes participants could not be older than twenty-five years of age (as explained in the previous paragraph).

While much social science research in South Africa is careful to take racial differences of participants into consideration, the high rates of interpersonal violence occurring within all racial groups in South Africa (Human Sciences Research Council [HSRC], 2004) meant that it was not necessary to delimit a racial profile for participation in the study, for example by sampling from a single racial group.

A short profile of each participant is provided below. The participants’ real names have been replaced with pseudonyms in order to protect their identities and the identities of their families.

*Thabo* is a twenty-four year old Social Work student. He experienced physical and emotional violence at the hand of his father and also witnessed his father meting out punishment to his siblings as well as physically and emotionally abusing his mother. He presented a picture of a family gathering, with neighbours, cousins, aunts, grandparents, parents, and siblings posing happily for the camera.
Bertram is a twenty-two year old law student who was given regular hidings by his father for either misbehaving or for playing with girls. He presented three pictures. One is of his first day at school; one is of his fifth birthday, and another of his thirteenth birthday.

Xavier is a twenty-four year old Zoology student. He was beaten by a day-mother, experienced what he regarded as emotional abuse from his step-grandmother, and witnessed his father physically abuse his mother on a regular basis. He presented two pictures. One of the pictures is of his very young mother and his four year old cousin standing on the stairs of the flat where they used to live. The other is of him and a few cousins and friends standing in the sun, posing for the camera.

Grant is a twenty-one year old Finance student. He received regular hidings from his father for either misbehaving or for bullying his younger brother. He also submitted two pictures that he had taken himself. The pictures were of the belt with which he had been given the hidings and the bed in his bedroom where he retreated to after the hidings.

Craig is a twenty-three year old Computational Science student. He got regular hidings from his mother at church for not sitting still and misbehaving, and also at home for fighting with his brother. He also submitted two pictures that he had taken himself. The pictures were of the church where the hidings took place and of a doll with a crocheted dress used as a toilet paper holder in the bathroom.
**Khalid** is a twenty-one year old Accountancy student. He submitted three pictures, one of a wooden spoon, one of a belt and another of a slipper. All these items were used for the beatings he received. His mother disciplined him by giving him hidings and he witnessed his father beating his younger sisters for misbehaving.

**Blaine** is a twenty-four year old Zoology student. He submitted a picture of himself in his bedroom sitting on his BMX bicycle looking very impressed with himself. He received regular hidings from his mother as a means of discipline. He also witnessed regular arguments between his now divorced parents.

**Kyle** is twenty years old and the youngest participant. He submitted pictures of him and his brother watching wrestling on television. He received hidings from his mother for misbehaving. Kyle is studying towards a degree in Sports Science.

**Sampling strategy**

Sampling for this study took the form of snowball sampling which is a type of non-probability sampling (Craven & Coyle, 2007). Snowball sampling is a sampling technique in which the researcher identifies one or more individuals who are appropriate candidates for participation in the study (ibid). After they have been interviewed, they are used as informants to identify other members of the population who are themselves then used as informants (ibid). This technique is used when a population is difficult to identify or access (ibid).
Photo-elicited interviews

Data was collected from personal face-to-face interviews with eight young men, using participant generated images to elicit discussion. According to Ewald (cited in Frohman, 2005), participant generated images provide an opportunity for participants to document their lives and the environments they live in. Discussion of visual images (photographs) provides insight into social interactions, social relationships, social structures, and cultural norms.

The interviews were semi structured as an interview guide informed the sort of open-ended questions posed to each participant and which each participant was asked to respond to. The interviews were based on empathic interviewing techniques (Fontana & Frey, 2005). Fontana and Frey (2005) purport that two people are involved in the interview process, and their exchanges lead to a collaborative effort called the interview, which is an active process that leads to a contextually bound and mutually created story.

As the interviewer is a person who is historically and contextually located, carrying unavoidable conscious and unconscious motives, desire, feelings and biases, s/he is thus unable to be neutral. If we proceed from the view that neutrality is not possible, then taking a stance becomes unavoidable. Empathic approaches to interviewing take an ethical stance in favour of the person or group being interviewed. Fontana and Frey (2005) argue that the word “empathic” emphasises taking a stance, contrary to the scientific image of interviewing which is based on the concept of neutrality. Empathic interviewing is not merely the neutral exchange of asking questions and getting answers, but it allows
for the researcher to become an advocate and partner in the study, hoping to be able to use the results to advocate social policies and possibly improve the position of the interviewee.

A semi-structured form of interviewing was utilised and an interview schedule was therefore followed. This is a strategic, goal oriented schedule, which employs established open-ended questions to elicit data relevant to the purpose of the research and the research question (Fontana and Frey 2005). Consequently, interview questions were developed in order to produce information relevant to the research question, thereby ensuring that the nature of the data extracted would be data relevant to the aims of the research. The strategy was to invite participants to recollect one particular incident that has significance - and to relay it to the researcher in narrative form. This strategy was appropriate because it allowed the researcher to investigate constructions of violence and masculinity in the context of a single incident rather than a plethora of possible incidents, which would have made it difficult to maintain the focus of this research. The questions appear in Appendix 4.

**Computer-assisted analysis of qualitative data**

A programme called ATLAS.ti was used to manage the transcribed interview texts. ATLAS.ti is a qualitative analysis programme developed to assist in the analysis of large bodies of textual data (Buhr, 1997). This analysis software enables the researcher to
analyse textual data with more rigour, for example, by keeping track of codes and the relations between codes and code categories. ATLAS.ti also makes it possible to map out the results diagrammatically in order to elucidate those relations.

**Discourse analysis**

The interview questions provided the researcher with three discursive objects of which to be mindful during the initial reading of the texts during analysis. The discursive objects are ‘the construction of masculinity’, ‘the influences on the construction of masculinity’, and ‘the construction of violence within the home-space’. These themes were analysed by means of a discourse analysis.

In keeping with the social constructionist perspective employed in this study the reading of the results of the study were approached as one reading among many other potential readings. Informed by multiple academic and social inputs, it was not viewed as an objective or authoritative reading but one out of numerous other potential readings (Shefer, et al, 2000). Indeed, a discourse analysis involves a particular way of reading. Rather than reading the data to uncover participants’ attitudes, beliefs, or thoughts the data is read in order to uncover the action orientation of the talk (Willig, 2001). In other words, the researcher asks, ‘what is the text doing?’ In this study the orientation was to identify how masculinity was constructed in participants talk about violence in the homespace.
The analysis proceeded by first reading and re-reading the transcribed interview texts. Willig (2001) argues that reading a text before analysing it allows us to become aware of what the text is doing. The purpose of the analysis is to identify exactly how the text manages to accomplish this.

The reading and re-reading of the transcripts is followed by the selection of material for analysis, or coding. The way in which coding proceeds is informed by the research question. In this study particular attention was given to constructions of masculinity and violence in the participants narratives. Thus the research question identifies a particular aspect of the discourse which the researcher decides to explore in detail and coding helps the researcher to select the relevant sections of the texts for analysis. The analysis of the data proceed according to Parkers (1992) provisions for a discourse analysis, which involved identifying the constructions of masculinity and violence.
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

In this chapter the discursive constructions of violence and masculinity in participants’ narratives are reported on. From a social constructionist viewpoint knowledge is understood to be constructed through social interaction and social processes. Thus Burr (1995) argues that meanings are not static but instead constantly changing and open to interpretation and reinterpretation and so the truth cannot be viewed as absolute but relative to contexts and dynamic in nature. The findings of this research and well as the discussion of those findings, is therefore not presented with the intention of providing evidence of the objective truth about the participants’ identities and/or their experiences. They are an attempt to elucidate the locatedness of particular notions of masculinity as related through the personal narratives of men who have experienced violence in the home-space.

The constructions of masculinity evident in the participant’s narratives of violence are presented first. These constructions are presented first because they facilitate contextualising the participant’s experiences which creates a point of reference from which the researcher can explore some of the implications of the participants’ experiences of violence for those notions of masculinity. These constructions are discussed - each in turn - along with extracts from the actual interviews to illustrate the way in which the constructions are achieved. Following this, the participant’s constructions of violence are presented - extracts are provided in order to illustrate the
way in which these constructions are achieved. The discussion then leads to the implication of these experiences for the participants’ notions of masculinity. Additionally, a discussion of the results is presented in the conclusion of each section of the results chapter.

Constructions of masculinity

Masculinity has been constructed in various ways by the participants. In this section the researcher will examine this. Masculinity was constructed as Hegemonic; as Rite - which is associated with Hegemonic Masculinity; as Fallible; and as Distance. The discussion starts with the concept of Hegemonic masculinity because it provides a good overview of the dominant beliefs regarding masculinity in the communities the research participants grew up in. Following this, the discussion examines masculinity as Rite, which is an extenuation of Hegemonic Masculinity. This is followed by masculinity as Fallible, which refers to instances in the participants’ narratives where masculinity is constructed as a more contingent type of identity, and finally, Masculinity as Distance which speaks to a marginalised masculinity.

Hegemonic masculinity

Hegemonic masculinity is one that dominates other masculinities and which succeeds in creating prescriptions of masculinity which are binding, and which create cultural images
of what it means to be a ‘real’ man (Connell, 1995). It is an ideal or set of prescriptive social norms, symbolically represented, but a critical part of the nature of many mundane everyday social and disciplinary activities (ibid). It is thus important to examine hegemonic masculinity first; as it provides a good impression of the dominant beliefs regarding masculinity in the communities the research participants’ are from.

Extract 1: Khalid

> Here, in this community, most of the time males provide for their families, so because of that they are seen as dominant and superior

In Extract 1 Khalid explains that in his community men are viewed as “dominant” and “superior”. He further explains that the super-ordinate status that men are afforded is related to their ability to provide for their families. The imperative that men be the providers or main breadwinners in their families is associated with traditional notions of masculinity (Connell, 1987).

Extract 2: Thabo

> where I'm from, especially in [redacted] what people normally do, like-especially men - for them to be violent it’s a form of or a way of showing that they are the ones that are powerful and in control of everything...

In Extract 2, Thabo explains that where he comes from, men utilise violence as a form of control and as a means to indicate to women (and children) that they have power over them. This is in line with Connell’s (1987) argument that men enjoy and oftentimes exploit the benefits patriarchy affords them.
Extract 3: Kyle

I dunno for me a man is...he’s I dunno exactly how to put what a man is but he should be a provider, a giver a helper... a ruler kinda thing... a ruler ja, and someone who punishing you, so you know what is wrong and right, what to do and what not to do...so that you know that’s right and that’s wrong...

In the above extract, Kyle’s statement also reflects the notion of hegemonic masculinity. He explains that a man is not only a provider, giver and helper – a “ruler” as such- but also someone who does out punishment in order to teach others what is expected of them and what is socially acceptable/unacceptable. A man is thus seen as a powerful being and as a stalwart of social morality. This not only correlates with the notion of hegemonic masculinity as an ideal or set of prescriptive social norms (Connell, 1995), but also places men at the centre of this as the beings that uphold and reinforce this ideal.

Interestingly, this dominant notion of masculinity can be traced across all the participants’ narratives and is therefore a good example of the pervasiveness and tenaciousness of this notion of masculinity in South African society. It also reinforces the argument of not taking ‘race’ as a super-ordinate factor in sampling for this study because it is quite clear that this notion of masculinity is not specific to any particular race group.

Masculinity as rite

‘Masculinity as rite’ is included as a further example of ‘Hegemonic masculinity’. While this example of masculinity as rite is a culturally specific one (refers to Xhosa
circumcision) masculinity as rite is evident in many other cultures. Seminal fluid ingestion ceremony of the Sambia tribe from Papua New Guinea for example which males adolescents participate in in order to become men (Herdt, 1998).

Extract 4: Thabo

In my culture there’s a thing that when one of your sons went for circumcision, then now at your house, there now started to be two men, because I’m also a man, so we must start reaching that equality that when I respect him, he must also respect me. Not now as a child, but as a man.

In the above extract Thabo explains that in his culture, after returning from circumcision he has become a man and should be treated accordingly. His father should thus respect him in a manner he would another man, an equal, and that he should receive the same respect he gives his father. It would seem as though he is not respected as much as a child, but that as a man, he deserves greater respect than before, and the same kind of respect his father receives. In the complete narrative, Thabo explains that his father should consult with him when making important decisions, because he is also a man, and men make decisions.

*Masculinity as fallible*

‘Masculinity as Fallible’ refers to instances in the participants narratives where masculinity is constructed as a more contingent type of identity, for example, contingent on the ability to provide for one’s family. Furthermore, the effect of the construction of masculinity as contingent is that it undoes some of the assumed superiority of a
masculine identity (as per hegemonic masculinity) in other words, it is not given but achieved. The implication is that a failed masculinity (or risk of failure) is evidence of its fallibility.

Extract 5: Thabo

Financially, ja, he was the one that was supporting us... and I think the other thing that made him more, more angry was that my mother started to get a job and my mother started working and I think that was one of the reasons that contributed to his anger, and to be insecure.

In Extract 5 Thabo explains that his father was initially the sole provider and the one supporting the family financially, but he (father) became somewhat insecure, and “more angry”, when Thabo’s mother started working. This meant that he was no longer the sole provider, and possibly may not have as much power as when he was the sole provider. His father was brought up in what seems to be a traditionally patriarchal environment, which prescribed to the hegemonic ideal which according to Connell (1995), dominates other masculinities and which succeeds in creating prescriptions of masculinity which are binding, and which create cultural images of what it meant to be a ‘real man’. Not being the sole provider may have been seen by Thabo’s father as an affront to him being ‘real man’.

Extract 6: Khalid

Like ja, like for instance, he is a glazer, which I will never ever do. I went to work with him one day; I basically did nothing, nothing because it’s not for me! I could see like, like it was a total disappointment to him.
From the above extract it is clear that Khalid views his father’s occupation as somewhat inferior and low in status, as something that is not for him (he is a university student). His father is thus a disappointment (fallible) to him.

Fallibility of masculine ideals is also evident in the narrative of Bertram. Bertram identifies as a gay man and recounted a number of instances where he perceived that his emerging sexuality had the effect of eliciting anxious responses from his father.

Extract 7: Bertram

So my sister was sixteen when I was four...and she said: “Let’s put the Barbie doll in your cake” and my dad overheard that... she was joking... I was serious... and I dunno she was just always there, she could understand me... that’s the first time, he didn’t beat me, but just that look... particular look, and like fear...it just got to me...

Masculinity as distance

In this study the above construct of masculinity (which will be illustrated below) speaks to a marginalised masculinity. The term marginalised is used, because these participants had described instances where their father’s masculinity had been contested (Thabo had become a man through circumcision usurping his father’s identity as the only man in the household and Khalid had become aware of the low status of his father’s job). Thus ‘Masculinity as distance’ speaks to a sense of defeat - which their father’s identities no longer held the requisite power to impose on others. So ‘Masculinity as distance’ is a construct that illustrates the fallibility and marginality that threatens hegemonic notions
of masculinity. Parker (1992, p.14) argues that “discourses reflect on their own way of speaking” denoting that even when we are constructing something in one particular way (hegemonic notion of masculinity) we are at the same time aware that it exists in relation to other types of masculinity (failed masculinity).

Extract 8: Thabo

it was like the first time that something like that happened to my family - like they all come together and be there in one place - and also for me it was a starting point of separation, because after that my father decided not to see anyone after that, he wanted to be left alone - but it was a family reunion and separation - it was also the last time that we had something like that.

In Extract 8 Thabo explains that his father wanted to be left alone, and that the ‘family reunion’ marked the point of separation between him and the rest of the family, and his father. His father thus distanced himself from the family, and didn’t want to see anyone after that. It almost appears as if Thabo’s father feels defeated, and therefore withdraws.

Extract 9: Khalid

Because like his (father’s) facial expression is like he’s got this look on his face that’s like just don’t bother with me. I don’t know if it’s naturally like that or if it’s just what he’s portraying but his facial expression is just like that...

In Extract 9 Khalid describes his father’s facial expression as “a look on his face that’s like, just don’t bother me”. Khalid is also not sure whether his father’s facial expression is naturally like this or if it is just what he portrays to others. This is undoubtedly an indication that his father prefers to be left alone and not be bothered. He thus distances himself from his family.
In this research masculinity has been constructed as hegemonic: men are viewed as “dominant” and “superior”; men utilise violence as a form of control and as a means to indicate to women (and children) that they have power over them; man is not only a provider, giver and helper, but a ruler, and also someone who doles out punishment in order to teach others what is expected of them and what is socially acceptable/unacceptable. Masculinity has also been constructed as Rite (which is associated with hegemonic masculinity and an extenuation thereof) leads to respect and equality among other men. Masculinity has been constructed as Fallible which is a more contingent type of identity, for example, contingent on the ability to provide for one’s family, not being able to provide suggests fallibility; equally so having a low status job or not understanding your child. Masculinity has also been constructed as Distance refers to a marginalised contested and failed masculinity that threatens hegemonic notions of masculinity.

Constructions of violence in the homeplace

In this section we will examine how violence has been constructed in the home space. From the narratives of the participants violence has been constructed as legitimate, as something that is justifiable, reasonable and necessary; and something that needed to happen in order for the specific outcome to be achieved (change in behaviour, discipline, obedience, etc.) It has also been constructed as excessive: as something that was
unnecessary, extreme and undue; as something that could have been expressed or dealt with in a different manner.

**Legitimate violence**

Violence is constructed as a phenomenon that is legitimate and rightful, as a valid means to an end, as something that the participants deserved because of their actions.

Extract 10: Blaine

Ja, like I said it was a big thing – this bunking – it was the first time I’d ever tried something like it – so ja I figured that I deserved it, even though I knew I deserved it, I didn’t want to get hit – but I was the kid and she was the parent so there was nothing I could do... so...no, I didn’t like it but at the same time I figured I’d done something bad so that was, I mean I was me getting disciplined, so I felt that I deserved it as well.... But I definitely didn’t like it...

In the above extract, Blaine explains that he knew he had done something wrong and felt that he deserved to get the hiding, even though it wasn’t a pleasant experience, he figured that he had done something bad and was getting disciplined for it. His parents’ action was thus legitimated.

Extract 11: Kyle

but from a young age I was disciplined like I would think like strongly like... as soon as I did something wrong I was like corrected kinda thing from a early age... and that’s what made me like know what’s wrong and what’s right and to make own choices properly, I would think...
Kyle expresses that he was disciplined from a young age so he would know what was right from wrong, and so he would acquire the ability to make his own choices properly. The hidings he received at the hands of his parents (which may not be explicit in the extract), are thus legitimated and regarded as something that was essential in the shaping of his character.

Extract 12: Bertram

I believe - strongly believe - that if I didn't get those hidings, I would've been more rebellious...

In the above extract Bertram vehemently explains that he would have been more rebellious had he not received the hidings, explaining that he “strongly believe(s)” that this would in fact have happened. His parents’ actions are also legitimated and I would like to argue, even commended as having contributed to him being less rebellious than what he would have been had he not been given the hidings.

Extract 13: Craig

...it sort of instilled a fear in me...you know that I’m supposed to be obedient and respectful and not back-chat you know... it instilled more obedience you know looking up like that’s my parents and if I don’t do that right there, they are going to punish me, so...it kinda sort of, sort of like fear, but also in a way respect for them as well at the end of the day...

In Extract 13 Craig explains that the hidings he received led to him being more obedient, and that it instilled a fear and respect in him for his parents. His parents’ actions are thus also legitimated as it made him more respectful and obedient.
From the above it is clear that violence has been constructed as legitimate, justifiable, necessary and good. It fostered respect and obedience; it produced less rebellion; it was essential in the shaping of character; and it disciplined. Additionally, it helped in discernment of right from wrong and it was a catalyst in proper decision making.

**Violence as excessive**

In direct contrast to violence as being necessary, violence was also constructed as a phenomenon that is excessive and illegitimate, uncalled for, extreme, and unnecessary and the participants have indicated that there are different forms of action or behaviour which could achieve similar results.

Extract 14: Bertram

I was playing outside, and obviously I was playing with girls, I was playing you know the rope game... and my dad didn’t like me doing that because it had to be soccer... or you know the guy things... and my dad was picking up: “Listen here, something’s happening to my boy...” So I was playing with the chicks rope um in the street... and you know that little pantyhose game that they jump over... and my dad called from outside and he said: “Come inside here now!”... And I was like: “But I’m playing and I’m gonna win this game”... and he called me back in and said: “I don’t want you playing that game”..... And then I went inside. My mom was downstairs, and I went upstairs with him and he pulled me one side and started hitting me... and I was like “What’s that for, I was just playing!” So my sister always knew something was up with me so she came and said: “Just leave him”, and my dad beat me, so I was like okay now I know I can’t play this game...

Bertram explains that he got a beating in this particular instance because he was playing rope with the girls. His father seems to have been anxious about his son’s sexuality and
thought that he could change this by punishing him for his behaviour - even though it is obvious that Bertram enjoyed playing this game - it was made apparent that he should not be playing it as he was a boy. He asked his father what the beating was for, not understanding what it was that he had done wrong. It seem that he feels getting a beating for what he enjoyed doing was excessive and unnecessary and discriminatory in hindsight.

Extract 15: Thabo

he (my father) had an argument with my mother and they fought. And the neighbour came to intervene, ja came to intervene then ja, what he did, he beat the neighbour and the neighbour was like.... Ah... killed, he died at the scene.

In the above extract Thabo relays an incident which started off with his parents having an argument. A neighbour intervenes, possibly to help his mother. Thabo’s father beats the neighbour so badly that he dies at the scene which is quite extreme and totally unnecessary.

Extract 16: Khalid

I saw him as the disciplinarian but I also saw it as unnecessary because he didn’t have to hit them that badly! He could’ve just spoken to them.

From the above extract it is clear that Khalid felt that his father didn’t have to hit his siblings as badly as he did. He saw him as a disciplinarian, but he also felt that his behaviour was unnecessary and uncalled for and that it could possibly have been dealt with in a different, possibly less violent manner.
Violence has also been constructed as illegitimate or excessive. These constructions are
different to the earlier constructions of violence as necessary and good – and are in fact in
direct contrast to these constructions of violence as serving a purpose. The different
forms these constructions took were (a) illegitimate, discrimination/anxiety about
sexuality, (b) excessive and extreme physical violence causing death, (c) as an
inappropriate response Khalid suggests that his father “could have just spoken to them”.

Influence on own masculinity

In this section the researcher will outline and examine the influences the participants
exerted on their own masculinity and how this may have had an influence on their
respective masculinities. Participants withdraw, become more introverted, become
quieter, and hide emotions. Participants even cry when others are not around - even when
told to “take it like a man” or that “boys don’t cry”.

Rejection of hegemonic masculinity

Participants exert influence on their own masculinity by rejecting the forms of hegemonic
masculinity they have been exposed to, either by vowing to be different to their fathers,
trying to change and influence others conceptions and perceptions of masculinity, or
simply by defying the dominant ideas of hegemonic masculinity as exercised in their
communities.
Extract 17: Khalid

Well I promised myself that I would never raise a hand to anyone.

In Extract 17 Khalid promises never to raise a hand to anyone after having witnessed and experienced violence at the hands of his father. He thus rejects some of the characteristics of hegemonic masculinity he has been exposed to.

Extract 18: Thabo

For me, I adopted like a motto, an objective - a goal - in my life not to be part of any form of abuse, for instance fighting someone and also anything that might lead to violence...

Similarly to Khalid, Thabo explains that he adopted an objective – made it his goal – not to participate in any form of abuse or violence, thus rejecting the masculinity portrayed by his father, who murdered their neighbour for interfering in an argument between him and his wife.

Extract 19: Thabo

Many of the women in my area believe that like that men are useless, they can do nothing. The only thing that they can do fight with the women. And I wanted to change that - there are other ways of settling an argument - that is without fighting or violence

In Extract 19 Thabo indicates that he wanted to change the way men are perceived in his community; he wanted to illustrate to them that there are other ways of settling an argument and solving a problem. Although the extract does not indicate this, Thabo has
worked with men and women in his community to help educate them specifically around masculinity and violence.

Extract 20: Khalid

For instance when you came here and you saw me, what was I busy doing? Cleaning... for instance... uh... normally men don’t really do that, that’s like the female department, yet I’m doing it... for me, is it something wrong that I’m doing? I dunno this is a question I ask myself: “Is it something wrong that I’m doing? Is it acceptable? I dunno... but yet I continue to do it...

Khalid explains in the above extract that he cleans even though it is something for “the female department”. He does question the acceptability and correctness of doing cleaning as a man, but continues to do so nonetheless.

Extract 21: Khalid

so the expression like ‘Take it like a man’ and ‘Boys don’t cry’ that’s like really strong in that community. Men don’t cry in my community but they don’t know what I do behind close doors, so they don’t need to know.

Khalid explains that in his community constructs such as “Take it like a man” and “Boys don’t cry” are commonplace. He does not however adhere to this, and defies this by crying in his room when no-one is around. In so doing he exercises influence over his masculinity and defies what is expected of him (even if no-one is aware of this)

Extract 22: Bertram

So boy-boy would be like just sitting with... to me a boy-boy would be like just sitting with the boys and try to rip off girls... like to me - I didn’t enjoy it... even though.... But after hiding, that that specific hiding, I was like no, this is what I
have to... be a... whenever my dad was around... um... so, for me boy-boy for me was just to be whatever boys did or whatever it was defined as boys doing, I would just follow their trend... like rip off girls, make fun of girls... and I didn't enjoy it... I would rather be on their side to protect them kinda or to be part of their fun... and not to do whatever the guys did...

In the above extract, Bertram indicates that he would rather be with girls, play girl games, and be part of their fun, and that he did not enjoy being a “boy-boy” as his father had wanted him to be – even though he got many a hiding for playing girl games with the girls, and pretends to be a “boy-boy” when his father is around. He thus rejects the hegemonic masculinity his father wanted him adopt and prefers a masculinity that is in line with how he wishes to express himself and live out his masculinity in a way he sees fit.

**Withdrawing**

Participants exert influence on their own masculinity by means of withdrawing, retreating, having a tough exterior, and isolating themselves. It appears that this is utilised as a manner of coping, and that it is something that they have been exposed to in their home environments as some of their fathers also seem to withdraw.

**Extract 23: Khalid**

I am also an emotionally distant person; I’m like distant to the world. Um, I like don’t share my feelings with others and keep it bottled up.
Khalid explains that he is an emotionally distant person who does not share his feelings with others. He also feels distant to the world and prefers to keep things bottled up and to himself. He also isolates himself. In doing these things, he exerts influence on his own masculinity and how is perceived by others.

Extract 24: Craig

I found myself being sort of more introverted... I’d find myself in a corner just sort of wanting to make a change, so the only thing was to actually just sort of withdraw...

Craig felt that the only thing he could do to make a change was to withdraw, and become more introverted. Withdrawing is possibly something that he has been exposed to. By doing this he exerts influence over how he is perceived by others and consequently over his masculinity.

Extract 25: Khalid

so the expression like “Take it like a man” and “Boys don’t cry” that’s like really strong in that community. Men don’t cry in my community but they don’t know what I do behind close doors, so they don’t need to know.

Khalid explains that he goes behind closed doors and does what he wants to. He thus removes himself from others. This exerts influence on how he is perceived and also over his masculinity.

Extract 26: Khalid

I would always go into quiet mode and isolate myself from everybody else - I’ll sit in the corner, do my own thing; take note of no-one. I still do it up until today.
Similarly in this extract he indicates that he goes into quiet mode and isolates himself from everybody else by either sitting in a corner and doing his own thing or not taking note of anyone.

Extract 27: Khalid

like I tend to hide my emotions well and I think that’s the reason why...I don’t open up very easy to anyone... that gives me the impression that a man must have a tough exterior, he has this certain ability... like he doesn’t cry, that’s what it made me believe...

In the above extract Khalid explains that hiding his emotions and by not opening up easily to anyone gives him the impression, and makes him believe, that a man must have a tough exterior. This is also an indication of him influencing his masculinity in some way.

Extract 28: Kyle

Once I get a hiding I just look for my own space kinda thing...

It is evident that in Extract 28 Kyle like some of the other participants, also looks for his own space and also withdraws from the world.

Participants exert influence on their own masculinity by withdrawing (by becoming more emotionally distant or more introverted, going into quiet mode, hiding emotions from others, by retreating into their own space, etc.); and by the rejection of hegemonic masculinity they were exposed to by doing things differently to their masculine role-
models (playing with girls and liking it; crying even though it is considered un-masculine; cleaning although it is considered to be for the “female department”; by educating people in the community that there are ways other than fighting to settle an argument and solve a problem)

To summarise, it is evident that masculinity has been constructed as hegemonic: men are viewed as “dominant” and “superior”. They are seen to utilise violence as a form of control and as a means to indicate to women (and children) that they have power over them. Man is not only a provider, giver and helper, but a ruler, and also someone who doles out punishment in order to teach others what is expected of them and what is socially acceptable or unacceptable. It is also interesting to note that hegemonic masculinity as a theme occurred in all the participants’ narratives.

Masculinity has also been constructed as ‘Rite’ (which is associated with hegemonic masculinity and an extenuation thereof). The successful completion of, and participation in this rite, leads to respect from and equality among other men.

Additionally, masculinity has been constructed as ‘Fallible’ which is a more contingent type of identity, for example, being contingent on the ability to provide for one’s family. If a man is seen as not being able to provide, this suggests fallibility. Having a job that is considered low status also lends to the notion of fallibility.
Furthermore, masculinity has also been constructed as ‘Distance’. This refers to a marginalised, contested and failed masculinity that threatens hegemonic notions of masculinity in the forms of withdrawing and isolating oneself from social situations - in a sense going into hiding. The discussion now turns to violence.

Violence has been constructed as legitimate, justifiable, necessary and good. It seems to have been constructed as a phenomenon that fostered respect and obedience. It also appears to have contributed to less rebellious behaviour and was ostensibly an essential element in the shaping of character. Furthermore, it was seemingly used as an effective disciplinary measure. In addition to this, violence was constructed as something that appeared to have helped in discerning what was right from wrong and moreover, it was an apparent catalyst in proper decision making.

In direct contrast to this, violence has been constructed as excessive, as a phenomenon that was in effect unnecessary and undue. Participants argued that there were numerous other ways in which the desired effect of the act of violence could have been achieved. Now a look at how participants influenced their own masculinity.

Participants exert influence on their own masculinity by the rejection of hegemonic masculinity they were exposed to while growing up and by withdrawing. The former is achieved by doing things differently to their male role-models, like playing with girls and liking it, crying even though it is considered un-masculine, cleaning although it is considered to be for the “female department”, and by educating people in the community.
that there are ways other than fighting to settle an argument and solve a problem. The latter, withdrawing, is achieved by participants becoming more emotionally distant or more introverted, going into quiet mode, hiding emotions from others, and by retreating into their own space.
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This research aimed to examine the constructions of masculinity in men’s narratives of their experience of violence within the domestic sphere.

It is clear from the research findings that the way masculinity is constructed is indeed fluid and therefore not to be considered as fixed (the participants seem to engage with the masculinities they were exposed to, and are trying to change them). This is in line with Brickell’s (2005) supposition and preferred use of the term *Masculinities*, which suggests different types or ways to be masculine. Kimmel (2001) confers, arguing that the use of the plural term – masculinities – acknowledges that masculinity means different things to different groups of men at different times. Therefore, it is fair to deduce that within any society at any one moment there are multiple meanings of manhood.

Masculinity is thus socially and historically constructed in a process which involves contestation between rival understandings of what being a man should involve. It therefore can and does change, and as a result is not a fixed, essential identity that all men have (Morrell, 2001).

It seems that masculinity is also not inherited (see how different Khalid is from his father for example), nor acquired in a one off way. It seems to be something that is constructed in the context of class, race and other factors which are interpreted through the prism of
age. Boys thus seem to develop a masculine gender identity which is seen to be deficient relative to the adult masculinity of men (Morrell, 2001).

From the research it appears that the participants do indeed come from communities where hegemonic notions of masculinity are still very dominant. For example, men are viewed as “dominant” and “superior” and are seen to utilise violence as a form of control and as a means to exert power over women and children which is in line with Connell’s (1995), hegemonic masculinity which is one that dominates other masculinities and which succeeds in creating prescriptions of masculinity that are binding, and that create cultural images of what it means to be a ‘real’ man.

It is possibly for this reason that they can accept much of the violence they experienced - in other words, this could be why they ascribe to the belief that it is a man’s place to tell people what is right and what is wrong and also why they believe that men have the right to discipline people in order to maintain and uphold these principles they believe in. Violence has been constructed, in this research, as legitimate, justifiable, necessary and even as good. It has also been constructed as a phenomenon that fostered respect and obedience. Essentially then, it has been constructed as something that is acceptable and in fact necessary, and it is seen as legitimate when it is used to this end (upholding and maintaining structure, ethics and principles).

This corresponds to Hamber’s (2007) assertion that in South Africa particularly, the acceptance of patriarchal beliefs and principles is seen to be a significant influencing
factor behind intimate partner violence and child maltreatment or corporal punishment. It would seem then, that the risk of violence in the home space increases when it is coupled to a belief that men can assault their partners and possibly their children, when they (the children and partners) are seen to be failing in their roles and duties (Vogelman & Eagle, 1991). Similarly, Artz (2001) argues that male violence is a method in maintaining social control.

Even though many of the research participants prescribe to some form of traditional hegemonic masculinity (as indicated earlier) they are also in the process of, or have already re-defined for themselves, what their masculinity is (many of them do not wish to be like their fathers, who seem to prescribe more rigidly to traditional hegemonic masculinity).

It can be said that some of the participants subscribe to a “softer masculinity” (Evans & Wallace, 2008, p.502), even though they do not readily share this with others (e.g. crying when you’re alone or just crying occasionally; cleaning house but questioning whether it is acceptable) This caution may be a concern that their masculinity may be judged as inadequate by their fellow males, which Evans and Wallace also found in their study of male prisoners. Kimmel (1997) confers, arguing that other men are the primary audience for whom men do masculinity, and that masculinity is a ‘homosocial’ enactment. He purports that men test themselves by performing heroic feats and by taking enormous risks, all because they want other men to grant them their manhood.
This is in line with the research finding that masculinity has been constructed as Rite, a ritual and a practice, the successful completion of which, and participation in, leads to respect from and equality among other men (the primary audience for whom they perform masculinity (as per Kimmel, 1997)).

This may well be, but I would like to argue that men may additionally be concerned that the women in their lives and those women they come into contact with, may also judge their masculinity as either adequate or inadequate. Men might be the primary audience, for whom masculinity is enacted, but I don’t believe they’re the only audience for whom men perform masculinity; men do not enact masculinity exclusively for men, but for women also. Morrell (2001) confers, saying that masculinity is not only made by men, but that women also oppose certain aspects of masculinity and supports others.

In this research violence has also been constructed as excessive, and as a phenomenon that was in effect unnecessary. Participants have however argued that there were numerous other ways in which the desired effects of the act of violence could have been achieved. It would be a reasonable supposition to say that because of their experiences of excessive violence they (the participants) question some of the legitimacy of this power. This is done by rejecting the hegemonic masculinity they were exposed to. They accomplish this by undertaking to perform masculinity differently to their male role-models. This in turn, is achieved by the doing of things that would be regarded as un-hegemonic, like playing with girls and liking it, crying even though it is considered un-masculine, cleaning although it is considered to be for the “female department”, and by
educating people in the community that there are ways other than fighting to settle an argument and solve a problem in order to change perceptions about the dominant forms of masculinity within specific communities.

Nevertheless, it seems that they then resort to another way of coping that they have been exposed to and that is to withdraw. In the process of withdrawing they become more emotionally distant or more introverted; they go into “quiet mode”, by hiding emotions from others; and they do this by retreating into their “own space”. Although social withdrawal may be an effective coping strategy (Tobin, Holroyd, Reynolds & Wigal, 1989), in the long term it is possibly not advisable, and not healthy for that matter. This may be an indication of a need to have programmes in schools, universities and communities, whereby men (young and old) could debunk masculinity, review what it means to be a ‘real man’, assess the hegemonic masculinity of our fathers and forefathers, examine violent behaviour, and discuss coping mechanisms and alternative ways to deal with difficulties (such as arguments, stress, insecurities), with the intention to advance social change. South African statistics of violent deaths, intimate partner violence, and violence against children (Dawes, Kafaar, de Sas Kropiwnicki, Pather & Richter, 2004) also indicate that there may be a need for such a forum.

On the premise of Kimmel’s (1997) argument that other men are the primary audience for whom men do masculinity and the view that masculinity is a ‘homosocial’ enactment, it can only be beneficial to have such a platform or platforms, to formulate or devise, not necessarily a “softer masculinity” as per Evans & Wallace, 2008: 502, but an improved
masculine ideal, that does not rely on violence, domination and superiority and the like, to express and affirm itself, and as methods of maintaining social control.

**Reflexivity**

Parker (1992), in Social Constructionist tradition, urges the researcher to be reflexive of the research process. The researcher acknowledges that his own bias and ideological perspective has influenced the research process. The researcher is aware of the fact, as Shefer, et al (2000) suggests, that the findings of this research may be open to other interpretations, which may be equal and legitimate.

Subsequently, the researcher is aware that his own reality may have influenced the research process, even though he attempted to maintain a stance of open inquisitiveness, and remain unbiased during the interviews conducted. The researcher’s own views on masculinity, gender, and violence, inevitably prejudiced the literature reviewed, the analysis undertaken, and the review of the findings. Whereas such subjectivity on the part of the researcher may be seen as a limitation, which it may well be, it also serves as a reiteration of the subjectivity of truth, and the impossibility of conducting research that is value free.
Additionally, being male, like the participants, may have influenced the way the young men engaged with the researcher, what they felt comfortable to share, and what they may have felt inappropriate to share.

Furthermore, the researcher’s subjective experience of this research should also be examined. Whilst the research process and the interviews conducted were interesting, the nature of the subject matter is such that the researcher inevitably reacted to it. Numerous aspects of the narratives were reasonably displeasing and affected the researcher unfavourably. The researcher is however, optimistic, and hopes that having dealt with such a relevant topic, a process of conscious engagement with the subject matter continues.

The researcher hopes that in undertaking this research he has contributed to the advancement of scholarship on the production and reproduction of notions of masculinity/femininity/gender through everyday experience.

**Limitations and difficulties**

Even though the research participants agreed to do a series of interviews, the researcher found it extremely difficult to get some of the participants to return for follow-up interviews. Four participants thus came for all the interviews and four of the participants came for only two of the agreed upon three interviews. This resulted in poorer transcribed
narratives than the researcher had anticipated and subsequently affected the findings of the research. After transcribing the narratives from the second interview, the researcher found that a number of issues had not been explored in the interviews, and for this reason it would have been beneficial to conduct follow-up interviews. In retrospect, it may have been ambitious, on the part of the researcher, to expect participants, who are full time students, to find time in their exhausting schedules for three interviews, respectively. As a matter of interest, it may also have been informative to compare the constructions of masculinity from this research with a similar study of about twenty years ago, which would have aided in the formulation of a comparative argument, possibly providing a different dimension to the discussion.
REFERENCE LIST


APPENDIX 1: COVERING LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

Dear ______________________________,

Your participation has been invited for the purpose of research. The topic of this research focuses on masculinity and violence in the home space. This research is being conducted by Lorenzo Stride who is a Psychology Masters student at the University of Fort Hare, East London campus. The research is being conducted in part fulfilment of the degree of Masters in Psychology.

In this research your participation will be limited to a series of three interviews which will be conducted over a three week period. Each interview will take approximately one to one and a half hours to complete. The interview will take the form of a conversation between the participant and the researcher. Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary.

Although no discomfort or stress is foreseen in the participation process, you have the right to discontinue the interview at any time or refuse to answer any question with which you do not feel comfortable. In the event that you experience discomfort or distress you can inform the researcher who will furnish you with information and contact details with regards to counselling services available at the Centre for Student Support, University of the Western Cape.

You will not be remunerated for your participation. Indirect benefits can be obtained from personal reflection that occurs during the process of participation.

Your participation will be kept confidential. While it is necessary to tape record the interviews for the purposes of analysis, identifying information such as your name will be omitted or changed from the transcript. The interview tapes will be destroyed once they have been transcribed. The transcripts will be kept on record in a secure file which will be stored in my office.

The findings of this research can be made available to you. This requires that you notify the researcher of your wish to have a copy of the findings as well as furnish the researcher with your postal details. The researcher will answer any further questions that you may have about the research during the course of the project.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study.

Signature of the researcher ______________________________ Date ______________________

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APPENDIX 2: CONSENT FORM

I _______________________________ agree to participate in this research.

The following points have been explained to me:

• Participation is entirely voluntary and that I can withdraw my consent at any time.

• The focus of this research is on experiences of violence within the home space.

• Participation is limited to a series of four interviews. Each interview will take approximately one to one and a half hours to complete.

• Although no discomfort or stress is foreseen, talk about practices in my home may be a sensitive topic for me to discuss. Therefore, I reserve the right not to answer any question at any time during the interview process.

• Participation in this research will be completely confidential and will not be released in any individually identifiable form.

• The researcher will answer any questions I wish to ask about this research now or during the course of the interview.

Signature of Participant ________________________________ Date______________________

Signature of Researcher ________________________________ Date______________________
APPENDIX 3: PERMISSION AND RELEASE FORM

USE OF TAPE RECORDINGS, VISUAL AND WRITTEN MATERIAL FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES
PERMISSION AND RELEASE FORM

Participant Name: ____________________________________________________________

Contact Details:
Address: ______________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________

Telephone number: ____________________________________________________________

Name of Researcher: Lorenzo Stride
Level of Research: Masters
Brief title of project: Masculinity and violence within the home-space.
Supervisor: Ms. Jacqueline Marx

DECLARATION
• The nature of the research and the nature of my participation have been explained to me both verbally and in writing.
• I agree to be interviewed and to allow audio-tape recordings to be made of the interviews.
• The tape recordings may be transcribed only by the researcher.
• I agree to bring photographs and for these images to be used for interview purposes only.
• The photographs may not be reproduced in their original visual format in any publication whatsoever.

Participant signature: __________________________________________________________

Date: ________________________________________________________________________

Researcher signature: __________________________________________________________
APPENDIX 4: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

a. *Introductions*

b. *Discuss ethical provisions*

c. *Ask the participant if he has any questions/concerns that he would like clarified.*

1. Introductory question:
   Ask the participant to show me his photographs and ask him why he chose to bring this/these photographs along with him. In other words how do they link with the story he wants to tell?

2. Open question:
   Ask the participant to describe one particular incident of violence that he experienced/witnessed in the home he grew up in.

3. Probing questions:
   - How long ago
   - Where
   - Who
   - How
   - What is the significance of the story?
   - How has the violence affected the way you saw the person?
   - How has it affected you as a man?

As the interviews were semi-structured, the rest of the questions asked depended on the narrative told by the participants and the relevance of the narrative to the research subject.

4. Closing question:
   Do you have anything that you think is important to say that has not come up in the interview so far?