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'They say you are not a man'
Hegemonic Masculinity and Peer Pressure amongst Male Adolescents in
KwaZulu-Natal: Implications for the HIV Epidemic

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degree of Master of Philosophy in HIV/AIDS and Society

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Compulsory Declaration

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this study to the memories of my father, Bram, and my brother, Scott. My father is responsible for my interest in the field of HIV/AIDS since 2000, when he suggested AIDS dissidents as a topic for my Matric English oral exam. I hope he would have been happy with where his suggestion has led me. I decided to focus this research on male adolescents in KwaZulu-Natal after speaking to my brother about a phone conversation he had with his good friend S'phiwe. I was always immensely proud of my younger brother and of all he achieved. I hope this would have made him proud.

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Abstract

This study explores the links between masculinity and the spread of HIV/AIDS by examining adolescents' conceptions of manhood and the ways in which hegemonic masculinity manifests itself through peer pressure. The study employed qualitative methods, including in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Interviews were conducted with fifteen adolescent males between the ages of twelve to sixteen, who live in areas with high levels of HIV prevalence outside Pietermaritzburg in KwaZulu-Natal. A team of facilitators, who conduct HIV/AIDS awareness and education workshops with learners in the Durban and Pietermaritzburg region, were also interviewed. Efforts to understand the position and experiences of adolescent males aim to aid and inform HIV prevention programmes.

It was found that the hegemonic masculinity within the respondents' conceptions of manhood is damaging in terms of HIV/AIDS. Notions of masculinity that call for men to be strong, respected, in control, able to provide and able to attract multiple sexual partners justify and reproduce men's dominance over women. Such notions are detrimental to gender equity and similarly to HIV/AIDS prevention efforts. The respondents reported experiencing peer pressure to engage in sex from a young age and with multiple partners. Combined with negative attitudes towards condoms, such behaviour patterns are dangerous in terms of the spread of HIV. Similar findings reported by other studies are discussed.

The study illustrates how boys are often influenced to measure their self-worth according to how successfully they can embody hegemonic notions of masculinity. It is argued that the dominance of gender within boys' identities can have negative repercussions for the HIV/AIDS epidemic in South Africa. Despite peer pressure and prevailing notions of masculinity, many of the respondents chose not to conform to the expected forms of hegemonic behaviour by abstaining from sexual engagement. Such choices are greatly beneficial in terms of curbing HIV spread. The study also examines the enabling and constraining factors that affect the emergence of such alternatives to hegemonic masculinity.

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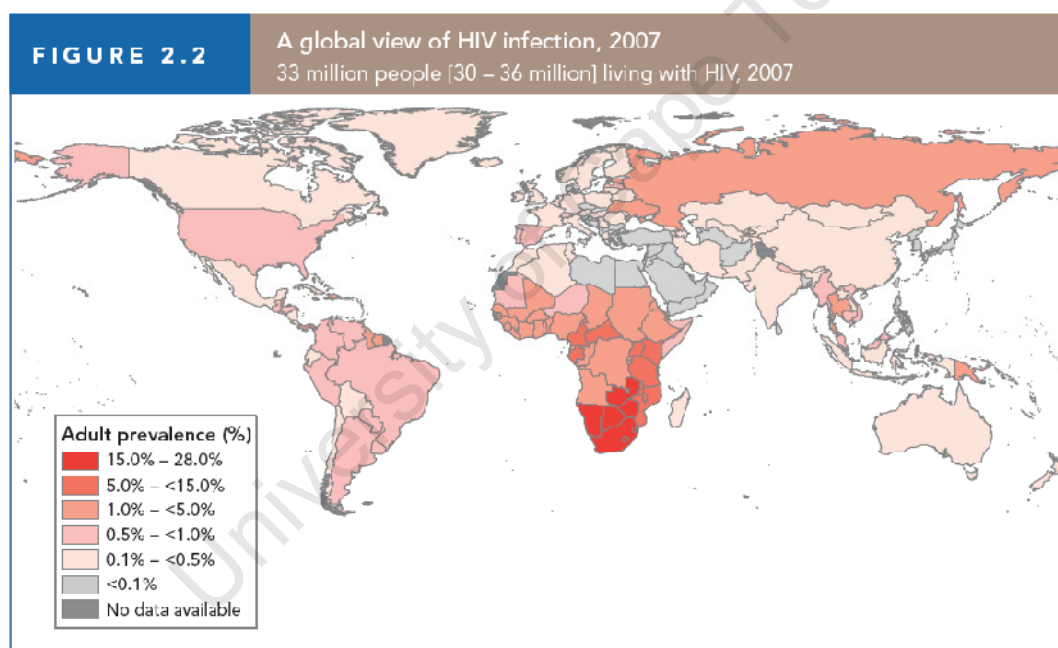
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Introduction

In August 2008, UNAIDS published their 'Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic'. The UNAIDS Executive Director and Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations stated that:

Today, for every two people who start taking antiretroviral drugs, another five become newly infected. Unless we take urgent steps to intensify HIV prevention we will fail to sustain the gains of the past few years, and universal access will simply be a noble aspiration.¹

While the report acknowledged the progress made in the rollout of antiretroviral treatment,² it emphasised that prevention is integral to curbing the rate of new infections and continues to require further attention.³ Globally, in 2007, thirty-three million⁴ people were living with HIV.⁵ Sub-Saharan Africa remains the most severely affected region, accounting for 67 percent of all people living with HIV in 2007.⁶



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¹ 2008 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic, UNAIDS, Foreword by Peter Piot, http://www.unaids.org/en/KnowledgeCentre/HIVData/GlobalReport/2008/2008_Global_report.asp.

² The annual number of AIDS deaths has declined in the past two years from 2.2 million [1.9 million–2.6 million] in 2005 to 2.0 million [1.8 million–2.3 million] in 2007, in part as a result of the substantial increase in access to HIV treatment in recent years, 2008 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic, UNAIDS, p. 15.

³ The UNAIDS report stated that 'In 2007, the estimated number of new HIV infections was 2.5 times higher than the increase in the number of people on antiretroviral drugs in that year, underscoring the need for substantially greater success in preventing new HIV infections', 2008 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic, UNAIDS, p. 15.

⁴ [30.3 million–36.1 million]

⁵ 2008 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic, UNAIDS, p. 16.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

⁷ 2008 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic, UNAIDS, p. 33.

The extreme nature of the epidemic in Sub Saharan Africa, compared with the rest of the world, is clear. In 2007 Nigeria had the second largest HIV positive population in the world with an estimated 2.6 million people,⁸ but in 2006 Nigeria's HIV prevalence rate stabilised at approximately 3.1 percent.⁹ South Africa's HIV prevalence rate in 2008 was estimated to be 11 percent, with the following breakdown according to age and sex.

Estimated adult HIV-prevalence rates (percent), South Africa, 2008

Women 15–49	Women 20–64	Men 20–64	Adults 20–64	Adults 15–49	Total population
19,6	19,3	18,8	19,1	18,8	11,0

¹⁰

The UNAIDS report confirmed that 'the world is, at last, making some real progress in its response to AIDS' and that in 'more and more countries, HIV infection levels are falling'.¹¹ However, South Africa continues to have the largest population of HIV positive people in the world.¹² In 2007, it was estimated that there were 5.7 million people living with HIV in South Africa.¹³ The UNAIDS report cited data from antenatal clinics in South Africa that suggest HIV prevalence rates may be stabilising,¹⁴ but at 'extraordinarily high levels'.¹⁵

Statistics reveal that South Africans are unequally affected by HIV, with young adults and females experiencing disproportionately high levels of infection.¹⁶ Contrastingly, in virtually all regions outside sub-Saharan Africa, HIV disproportionately affects injecting drug users, men who have sex with men and sex workers.¹⁷ Globally, young adults aged fifteen to

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 214.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 43. Nigeria has a large population of HIV positive people, but due to the size of Nigeria's general population, Nigeria's HIV prevalence rate is approximately 3%. Nigeria is estimated to have a population around three times the size of South Africa. <http://www.iss.co.za/Af/profiles/Nigeria/Population.html>; <http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0302/P03022008.pdf>.

¹⁰ *Statistical release P0302, Mid-year population estimates, South Africa, 2008*, Statistics South Africa, Pretoria, p. 6,

<http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0302/P03022008.pdf>.

¹¹ *2008 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic*, UNAIDS, p. 40.

¹² *Ibid.* In 2007 there were 5.7 million [4.9 million–6.6 million] South Africans living with HIV.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 214.

¹⁴ *National HIV and syphilis antenatal prevalence survey*, Department of Health South Africa, (Pretoria, 2006), cited in *2008 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic*, UNAIDS, p. 40.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

¹⁶ *2008 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic*, UNAIDS, p. 42.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

twenty-four accounted for an estimated 45 percent of all new HIV infections in 2007.¹⁸ This prompted the UNAIDS report to emphasise that the global epidemic cannot be reversed without sustained success in reducing new HIV infections amongst young people.¹⁹ The UNAIDS report stated that 'the epidemic has continued to expand, largely due to the failure to tackle societal conditions that increase HIV risk and vulnerability'.²⁰

The report identified behaviours associated with traditional expectations of masculinity as a societal condition particularly worthy of increased attention; and emphasised the 'importance of involving men and boys in any effort towards change'.²¹ It asserted that such intervention efforts are especially important in 'hyperendemic settings where marginal changes in risk behaviour are likely to have only limited impact on the epidemic's trajectory'.²² Hence, the need to examine and respond to the epidemic remains crucial as there is still little evidence of HIV-related behaviour changes in South Africa.²³

To achieve major changes in behaviour patterns we should endeavour to understand 'the complexity and depth'²⁴ of social behaviour in South Africa, in order to counter superficial interpretations of the disease.²⁵ As the South African HIV epidemic is driven by heterosexual sex, the exploration of gender dynamics between males and females is critical to curbing the spread of HIV infection. Much work has focussed on women and their position within the epidemic, but less research has involved men. It is understandable that organisations often focus their attention on women as they feel it is where their resources are most needed, but this may unwittingly promote the idea that sexual health is a 'women's issue'.²⁶ As women's behaviour patterns are often directly affected by male behaviour, the neglect of males in

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 27.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

²⁴ Shula Marks, 'An Epidemic Waiting to Happen? The Spread of HIV/AIDS in South Africa in Social and Historical Perspective', *African Studies*, 61, 1, 2002, p. 22.

²⁵ L. Grundlingh, 'The Nature and Development of AIDS Historiography', *Acta Academia*, 29, 2, 1997, p. 23.

²⁶ Graham Lindegger & Justin Maxwell, 'Teenage Masculinity: The Double Bind of Conformity to Hegemonic Standards', in Tamara Shefer, Kopano Ratele, Anna Strebel, Nokuthula Shabalala & Rosemarie Buikema (Eds.), *From Boys to Men: Social Constructions of Masculinity in Contemporary Society*, (Cape Town, 2007), p. 95; Katherine Wood & Rachel Jewkes, 'Violence, Rape and Sexual Coercion: Everyday Love in a South African Township', *Gender and Development*, 5, 2, 1997, p. 45.

health promotion campaigns can cause intervention efforts to fail in eliciting behaviour change.²⁷

The UNAIDS report suggested that influencing male sexual behaviour is essential to reduce the number of new HIV infections. A reason for this is that encouraging men to avoid unsafe sexual behaviours is vital in preventing new HIV infections in women. It highlighted that various prevention models have been developed to provide support for men who have sex with men, but that few HIV prevention programmes have been 'specifically designed to take into account the values heterosexual men attach to sex, the pleasures they derive from it, and the social pressures associated with sex'.²⁸ The report emphasised that because HIV prevention methods are often under the control of men, the importance of promoting safer, responsible sexual behaviour patterns amongst men is essential.²⁹

More recently, research has begun to include men, and indeed focus on men, in discussions and studies relating to HIV. This project aims to add to that body of literature, and strives to understand some of the pressures and difficulties that males, specifically adolescent males, experience; and the effect these have on the spread of HIV.

Factors that contribute to the spread of HIV include gender roles and notions of masculinity that: allow men to determine the reproductive-health choices of women; justify men having multiple sexual partners; encourage men to equate risk-taking behaviour with being 'manly'; cause men to view health-seeking behaviour as weak; condone or encourage sexual violence, contractual sex and the abuse of alcohol.³⁰ These aspects of hegemonic masculinity exacerbate the spread and impact of HIV, in that they 'legitimate women's subordination and simultaneously foster models of masculinity that justify and reproduce

²⁷ Wood & Jewkes, 'Violence, Rape and Sexual Coercion', p. 44.

²⁸ *2008 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic*, UNAIDS, p. 121.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Manisha Mehta, Dean Peacock & Lissette Bernal, 'Men As Partners: lessons learned from engaging men in clinics and communities', in Sandy Ruxton (Ed.), *Gender Equality and Men: Learning from Practice*, (Oxford, 2004), p. 90; *2008 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic*, UNAIDS, p. 121; Lindegger & Maxwell, 'Teenage masculinity', p. 95; Alan Greig, Dean Peacock, Rachel Jewkes and Sisonke Msimang, 'Gender and AIDS: Time to Act', *AIDS*, 22, 2, 2008, p. 35.

men's dominance over women'.³¹ In order to challenge these forms of hegemonic masculinity, movement towards gender equity is imperative and thus any form of behaviour that undermines gender equity is detrimental to the fight against HIV/AIDS. The need for men to assert their masculinity is similarly harmful to gender equity and HIV prevention efforts. It is thus problematic if men feel the need to define their identity and bolster their self-esteem through the enactment of their masculinity.

If interventions are to be effective and sustainable, they need to 'critically engage the very construction and performance of masculinity that appears to drive and maintain these behaviours'.³²

Individual men's attitudes and behaviour largely emerge as a by-product of the very construction of masculinity in various cultures and contexts. Therefore, if the risk behaviours of men are to undergo substantial modification, these constructions of masculinity itself must be revealed, called into question and challenged.³³

This research aligns itself with the UNAIDS report, and other literature,³⁴ which advocates that devoting more attention to the prevention needs of heterosexual males does not suggest that less attention should be paid to females. Rather, effective prevention programmes for males should complement and support initiatives that aim to empower females to prevent HIV transmission.³⁵ If we continue to empower women without acknowledging that many men are resistant to this change, we not only fail in our objective, but ignore the detrimental effect this approach may have on women.

³¹ Greig et al, 'Gender and AIDS: Time to Act', p. 35; Quarraisha Abdool Karim, 'Heterosexual transmission of HIV – the importance of a gendered perspective in HIV prevention', in S.S Abdool Karim & Q. Abdool Karim, (Eds.), *HIV/AIDS in South Africa*, (Cape Town, 2005), p. 254.

³² Lindegger & Maxwell, 'Teenage masculinity', p. 95.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Jeff Hearn, 'The problems boys and men create, the problems boys and men experience', in Shefer et al. (Eds.), *From Boys to Men: Social Constructions of Masculinity in Contemporary Society*, (Cape Town, 2007), p. 25; Robert Morrell, 'Foreword', in Graeme Reid & Liz Walker (Eds.), *Men Behaving Differently*, (Cape Town, 2005), p. xi; Rob Pattman, 'Researching and working with boys and young men in southern Africa in the context of HIV/AIDS: A radical approach', in Shefer et al. (Eds.), *From Boys to Men: Social Constructions of Masculinity in Contemporary Society*, (Cape Town, 2007), p. 46.

³⁵ *2008 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic*, UNAIDS, p. 121; Lynellyn Long & E. Maxine Ankrah, *Women's Experiences with HIV/AIDS: An International Perspective*, (New York, 1996), p. 395.

Statistics show that KwaZulu-Natal has consistently had the highest HIV prevalence rate in the country.³⁶ For this reason the research was conducted in KwaZulu-Natal, outside Pietermaritzburg. Interviews were conducted with fifteen boys ranging from the ages of twelve to sixteen, as well as with a team of facilitators who conduct HIV/AIDS awareness and education workshops in schools in and around Durban and Pietermaritzburg.

As statistics show that HIV predominantly affects young people,³⁷ it is important to remember that interventions cannot be effective without a thorough understanding of the various pressures affecting the target age group. Thus, more research needs to be conducted into adolescent attitudes and decision-making processes, so as to identify ways of impacting on adolescents' environments, which would 'allow for greater activation of choices that might work as HIV/AIDS prevention measures'.³⁸ This research seeks to better understand the positions and experiences of adolescent males in order to aid and inform HIV prevention programmes.

Literature related to the study of masculinity is introduced; and literature connecting masculinity with HIV/AIDS, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa. The methodology employed in the research is described; followed by a discussion of the issues raised in the interviews, linking the project's findings with those of other studies and research.

The discussion focuses on male adolescents' conceptions of masculinity and their wider implications for gender equity and the spread of HIV. It also explores the pressure placed upon boys to embody hegemonic forms of masculinity; the possible effects on boys if they fail to do so and the consequences thereof for the HIV epidemic. The polarisation of male and female within conceptions of masculinity is also discussed, as well as the significance of

³⁶ KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health Annual Report 2006/2007, Part B, Situational Analysis, p. 8, <http://www.kznhealth.gov.za/ar0607/PARTB1.pdf>.

³⁷ A. Harrison, J. Cleland, E. Gouws, & J. Frohlich, 'Early sexual debut among young men in rural South Africa: heightened vulnerability to sexual risk?', *Sexually Transmitted Infections*, 81, 2005, p. 259; Audrey E. Pettifor, Helen V. Rees, Immo Kleinschmidt, Annie E. Steffenson, Catherine MacPhail, Lindiwe Hlongwa-Madikizela, Kerry Vermaak & Nancy S. Padian, 'Young people's sexual health in South Africa: HIV prevalence and sexual behaviours from a nationally representative household survey', *AIDS*, 19, 14, 2005, p. 1526.

³⁸ Suzanne Leclerc-Madlala, 'Youth, HIV/AIDS and the Importance of Sexual Culture and Context', *CSSR Working Paper*, 9, 2002, p. 14.

society's tendency to categorise behaviour into either feminine and masculine and the repercussions this has for the spread of HIV.

The peer pressure experienced by male adolescents to engage in sex is explored, as is the power of this peer pressure, the forms in which it manifests itself and the reasons why it is so powerful and damaging. It is then discussed how boys are required to demonstrate their knowledge and involvement in sex from an early age and the justifications circulated for why male engagement in sex is necessary. The effects of peer pressure on boys' lives and their self-esteem is also considered. The relevance of these issues to HIV/AIDS is discussed throughout, as well as how hegemonic masculinity serves to construct and perpetuate these pressures.³⁹ Attitudes surrounding condoms is then discussed, as well as various misconceptions regarding condom use and issues concerning HIV education that emerged from the interviews.

Lastly, and importantly, the ways in which the respondents represent emerging alternatives to hegemonic masculinity is explored. These alternatives are seen as beneficial in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Factors which enable boys to eschew hegemonic forms of masculinity are considered, as well as factors that challenge and hinder attempts to bolster gender equity.

³⁹ There are various aspects to 'masculine' behaviour that contribute to the spread of HIV, such as men's reluctance to appear 'weak' through seeking help in the form of testing, counselling or even antiretroviral treatment. However, these issues will not be focussed on within the scope of this research.

Related Literature

Writers and researchers have handled the concept of masculinity in a variety of ways and it has come to have different meanings over time. Until recently, men were understood as 'universal representatives of humanity',⁴⁰ rather than gendered beings, and academics tended to present the world from a male perspective.⁴¹ Since the 1960's and 1970's, the advent of feminism, the Women's Liberation Movement, and the Gay Liberation Movement,⁴² gender has been brought into focus as a field of study in its own right, being shown to play an integral role in politics, culture and economics.⁴³ As women had historically been sidelined they were initially the chief focus of gender studies, with women's experiences, voices and narratives, which had previously been silenced, taking centre stage. During this period, men as gendered beings were largely ignored. Only recently have men specifically been focussed upon as part of the gendered system, with substantive gender research on men following research focused on women by at least ten years.⁴⁴

One of the earliest pieces of literature dealing with masculinity was *The Limits of Masculinity* by Andrew Tolson in 1977, which expressed a concern that while feminism was attracting much intellectual interest, no research or discussion was focussing on men.⁴⁵ Amongst other important ideas, it examined the psychodynamics of masculinity, focusing on 'peer relations as sources of the emotional reactions that sustain masculinity'.⁴⁶

⁴⁰ Raewyn Connell (formerly R.W. Connell), 'Foreword', in Shefer et al. (Eds.), *From Boys to Men: Social Constructions of Masculinity in Contemporary Society*, (Cape Town, 2007), p. vii.

⁴¹ Tamara Shefer, Kopano Ratele, Anna Strelbel & Nokuthula Shabalala, 'Masculinities in South Africa: A critical review of contemporary literature on men's sexuality', in Diana Gibson & Anita Hardon (Eds.), *Rethinking Masculinities, Violence and AIDS*, (Amsterdam, 2005), p. 75.

⁴² For a detailed analysis of the impact of the Gay Liberation Movement on masculinity literature see Tim Carrigan, R.W. Connell (currently known as Raewyn Connell) & John Lee, 'Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity', *Theory and Society*, 14, 1985, especially pp. 583 – 589.

⁴³ Connell, 'Foreword', p. vii.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Robert Morrell, 'Of Boys and Men: Masculinity and Gender in Southern African Studies', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 24, 4, 1998, p. 606.

⁴⁶ Carrigan, Connell & Lee, 'Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity', p. 576.

The study of masculinity began to grow, with more and more work focussing upon men.⁴⁷ For example, *Achilles Heel*, a British magazine published in the late 1970's, dedicated itself entirely to discussing issues regarding masculinity.⁴⁸ However, the majority of this literature was written from within the 'sex role theory' framework, which was dominant at the time. This thinking around masculinity was to undergo a major paradigm shift.

The shift began with Joseph Pleck, an American psychologist, who had already published *Men and Masculinity*, with Jack Sawyer, in 1974. By 1981 Pleck began to suggest a possible change in the approach to masculinity studies. Until then, sex role theory posited that men and women's differing roles were well-defined and that sex role socialisation was a positive phenomenon: 'Internalized sex roles contributed to social stability, mental health and the performance of necessary social functions'.⁴⁹ The sex role paradigm posited that *male* and *female* were roles that all men and women fitted into and that it was through socialisation that we come to fit into these pre-existing roles. However, the theory fails to account for:

The extent to which our conceptions of masculinity and femininity...are relational; that is, the product of gender relations that are historically and socially conditioned...and minimizes the extent to which gender relations are based on power.⁵⁰

The 'political complacency'⁵¹ within this approach was disrupted by feminism in the 1970's, which argued that the female sex role functioned to oppress women and girls, socialising them to internalise feelings of subordination and inferiority. It was suggested that the female role needed to be adjusted through education and positive role models.⁵² This in turn led to the popularity of men's liberation groups, who sought to draw attention to the oppressive nature of the male sex role. However, throughout this literature there was little interrogation of the existence of sex roles, until 1981, when Pleck published *The Myth of*

⁴⁷ For a detailed description of this literature see Carrigan, Connell & Lee, 'Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity', especially pp. 551 – 577.

⁴⁸ Robert Morrell, 'The Times of Change: Men and Masculinity in South Africa', in Robert Morrell (Ed.), *Changing Men in Southern Africa*, (Scottsville, 2001), p. 4; Carrigan, Connell & Lee, 'Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity', p. 574.

⁴⁹ R.W. Connell, *Masculinities*, (Cambridge, 1995), p. 23.

⁵⁰ Michael S. Kimmel, 'Rethinking "Masculinity": New Directions in Research', in Michael S. Kimmel (Ed.), *Changing Men: New Directions in Research on Men and Masculinity*, (Newbury Park, 1987), p. 12.

⁵¹ Connell, *Masculinities*, p. 23.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 23.

Masculinity, in which he criticised sex role theory for its assumption that conformity to sex role norms was positive and useful. Instead, he suggested that sex roles are not categories we adhere to automatically; but instead that people are criticised when they violate sex role norms; and that this can cause people to over-conform to perceived gender norms.⁵³ He argued that sex role theory prevented people from challenging dominant norms because society's reaction to their deviance caused them to feel 'inadequate and insecure'.⁵⁴

Pleck theorised another important concept: within masculinity there functions a power hierarchy. In his 1977 essay 'Men's power with women, other men, and society', he made a connection between the way men oppress women, but also oppress other men, including gay and black men. He proposed that 'this hierarchy is maintained in terms of wealth, physical strength, age and heterosexuality, and the competition among men to assert themselves on these terms produces a considerable amount of conflict'.⁵⁵ Pleck was one of the only writers outside of the gay liberation literature to distinguish the dichotomy between heterosexual and homosexual as a symbol used 'within *all* rankings of masculinity'⁵⁶: that any failure to live up to heterosexual male role norms is immediately associated with homosexuality, bringing negative associations upon that person, discouraging them from repeating such behaviour.

By the early 1980's sex role theory was slowly being replaced by an emphasis on the importance of social factors in the construction of gender roles: 'Effectively, this brought sociological and psychological perspectives together in some of the earliest attempts to theorise masculinity'.⁵⁷ The best example is an article written by Tim Carrigan, Bob Connell and John Lee, in 1985, which is considered a landmark in the development of gender studies focussing on masculinity. 'Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity' not only gave a detailed summary of all types of literature dealing with masculinity in all its different forms, up to that point, but focused on the issue of power within gender. It highlighted that previous literature using sex role theory focussed on the differences between men and women rather

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 26

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁵⁵ Carrigan, Connell & Lee, 'Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity', p. 571. Bob Connell, also known as R.W. Connell, is now known as Raewyn Connell.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 587.

⁵⁷ Morrell, 'Of Boys and Men', pp. 605 – 606.

than the relations between them, ignoring issues of power.⁵⁸ The authors made the point that almost all previous literature regarding masculinity worked within the sex role framework, which they wholly rejected, concluding that ‘The “male sex role” does not exist’.⁵⁹ The authors effectively offered an alternative to sex role theory and rejected essentialist understandings of men. They felt that any attempt to interrogate the concept of masculinity from within the sex role framework was impossible because, within the framework, sex roles were taken for granted. It therefore remained ‘trapped within the ideological context’ of what it was attempting to analyze.⁶⁰ Additionally, they introduced their understanding of hegemonic masculinity:

What emerges from this line of argument is the very important concept of *hegemonic masculinity*, not as ‘the male role’, but as a particular variety of masculinity to which others – among them young and effeminate as well as homosexual men – are subordinated. It is particular groups of men, not men in general, who are oppressed within patriarchal sexual relations, and whose situations are related in different ways to the overall logic of the subordination of women to men.⁶¹

They argued that hegemonic masculinity is far more complex than ‘the accounts of essences the masculinity books would suggest’,⁶² and is instead a question of how particular ‘groups of men inhabit positions of power and wealth, and how they legitimate and reproduce the social relationships that generate their dominance’.⁶³ Furthermore, the paper argues strongly in favour of the idea that multiple masculinities exist: that the differentiation of masculinities is psychological, institutional, as well as geographical and historical;⁶⁴ and that these different masculinities arrange themselves hierarchically, with hegemonic masculinity subordinating all other forms of masculinity.⁶⁵ The authors suggest that while most men are not able to demonstrate this level of hegemonic masculinity, they still support it, because they generally benefit from it:

⁵⁸ Carrigan, Connell & Lee, ‘Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity’, p. 580.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 581.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 580.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 587.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 592.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 592.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 591.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 590.

The culturally exalted form of masculinity, the hegemonic model so to speak, may only correspond to the actual characters of a small number of men...there is a distance, and a tension, between the collective ideal and actual lives...yet very large numbers of men are complicit in sustaining the hegemonic model...there are various reasons...but the overwhelmingly important reason is that most men benefit from the subordination of women, and hegemonic masculinity is centrally connected with the institutionalization of men's dominance over women.⁶⁶

R.W. Connell followed this article with his book *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics* in 1987, where he developed the theory that: 'One of the central facts about masculinity, then, is that men in general are advantaged through the subordination of women'; that being a man bestows one with power.⁶⁷ However, Connell proposed that this power is not shared amongst men equally and that certain men are victims of oppression themselves, at the hands of other men.⁶⁸ He expanded upon these theories, as well as the idea of multiple masculinities, in his much celebrated book *Masculinities*, which was published in 1995. Relevant to this study are his explanations of hegemonic masculinity, which derive from Antonio Gramsci's analysis of class relations and cultural dynamics 'by which a group claims and sustains a leading position in social life'.⁶⁹ Connell utilised this concept to illustrate how 'at any given time, one form of masculinity rather than others is culturally exalted'.⁷⁰ This hegemonic masculinity subordinates women, at the same time as oppressing other forms of masculinity; providing the dominant standard of acceptable masculinity to which boys and men are expected to conform in order to be viewed as 'real' men.⁷¹

Connell's contribution to the study of masculinity has been immense, and subsequent to his publication of *Masculinities*, the field has expanded greatly. Additional authors, who have impacted on this field internationally, include Michael Kimmel, Jeff Hearn, Máirtín Mac an Ghail, David Buchbinder and Victor Siedler, amongst many others.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 592.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 590.

⁶⁸ Morrell, 'The Times of Change', p. 7.

⁶⁹ Connell, *Masculinities*, p. 77.

⁷⁰ Connell, *Masculinities*, p. 77.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 76 - 77.

More recently authors have proposed that men do not simply align with hegemonic masculinity or are marginalised by it. Rather authors such as Wetherell and Edley, and Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, amongst others, have suggested that men may adopt various identity positions, as well as maintaining multiple, opposed positions simultaneously, especially in private spaces.⁷² Thus the differentiation between masculinities is 'not only found between boys but also internally within boys'.⁷³

An Expanding Field of Study

Beginning in first world countries, where the economic funds and political and cultural traditions existed to support such research,⁷⁴ masculinity studies began to grow. By the 1990's the importance of addressing issues of masculinity became clear and masculinity became recognised as a key aspect of gender.⁷⁵ This was reflected in the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, which formally recognised the role of men in promoting gender equality and better reproductive health for men and women. The way in which this field has grown is reflected in the wide array of masculinity topics that have been explored: for example researchers have focussed on different patterns of masculinity; the social settings of masculinities; the social processes that maintain masculinity; the diversity and complexity of masculinities; the relationships between different forms of masculinity; the embedding of masculinities in economics and culture;⁷⁶ the emergence of new dominant and resistant masculinities; gay history and the history of masculinity within different colonial settlements.⁷⁷

⁷² Margaret Wetherell & Nigel Edley, 'Negotiating Hegemonic Masculinity: Imaginary Positions and Psycho-Discursive Practices', *Feminism Psychology*, 9, 335, 1999; S. Frosh, A. Phoenix & R. Pattman, *Young Masculinities: Understanding Boys in Contemporary Society*, (London, 2002); Rob Pattman, 'Researching and working with boys and young men in southern Africa in the context of HIV/AIDS: A radical approach', p. 43; Lindegger & Maxwell, 'Teenage masculinity', p. 97.

⁷³ Diana Gibson & Marie Rosenkrantz Lindegaard, 'South African boys with plans for the future: why a focus on dominant discourses tells us only a part of the story', in Shefer et al. (Eds.), *From Boys to Men: Social Constructions of Masculinity in Contemporary Society*, (Cape Town, 2007), p. 144.

⁷⁴ Connell, 'Foreword', p. vii.

⁷⁵ Morrell, 'The Times of Change', p. 4.

⁷⁶ Connell, 'Foreword', p. vii.

⁷⁷ Michael S. Kimmel, Jeff Hearn & Raewyn Connell, 'Introduction', in Michael S. Kimmel, Jeff Hearn & Raewyn Connell (Eds.), *Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities*, (Thousand Oaks, 2005), pp. 5 – 6.

Furthermore, the study of masculinity has penetrated a wide variety of disciplines and areas of study, including History, Theology, Cultural Studies, Sexuality and Gender, Gender and Development, Indigenous Knowledge and Development and Psychology.⁷⁸ Masculinity theory has developed diverse applications, being utilised to give a deeper understanding of various social issues, including: war, fatherhood, counselling and psychotherapy, gender based violence, crime, education, culture, government, citizenship and development, public sector organisations, and health, particularly sexual health and HIV/AIDS.⁷⁹ By 2004 the United Nation's commission on the status of women adopted a position on 'The role of men and boys in achieving gender equality', reflecting the acknowledgment of masculinity as a global issue.⁸⁰

Over the last ten years less developed countries have become more involved in this research, linking masculinity and men's place in the gender order to their own contexts, and noting how different gender practices operate in particular situations and how men will draw on them in differing ways.⁸¹ Although much empirical research takes place in developed countries, 'global perspectives are now possible'.⁸²

South Africa and HIV/AIDS

In Africa the field of masculinities has grown but 'the idea of studying men and masculinities is still viewed with scepticism, if not outrightly dismissed, in many academic programmes in Africa'.⁸³ The resistance to this field of study is demonstrated by the fact that, unlike in Europe and other countries, masculinities in Africa are mainly studied by women. Exceptions such as Morrell and Ratele in South Africa do exist however.

⁷⁸ Shefer et al., 'Masculinities in South Africa', p. 75; Robert Morrell & Lahoucine Ouzgane, 'African Masculinities: An Introduction', in Robert Morrell & Lahoucine Ouzgane (Eds.), *African Masculinities: Men in Africa from the Late Nineteenth Century to the Present*, (New York, 2005), p. 6.

⁷⁹ For more information regarding the various applications of masculinity theory please see Raewyn Connell, 'Foreword', in Shefer et al. (Eds.), *From Boys to Men: Social Constructions of Masculinity in Contemporary Society*, (Cape Town, 2007), p. vii.

⁷⁹ Connell, 'Foreword', p. viii.

⁸⁰ Morrell, 'Foreword', p. xi.

⁸¹ Connell, 'Foreword', p. viii.

⁸² Kimmel, Hearn & Connell, 'Introduction', p. 6.

⁸³ Akosua Adomako Ampofo & John Boateng, 'Multiple meanings of manhood among boys in Ghana', in Shefer et al. (Eds.), *From Boys to Men: Social Constructions of Masculinity in Contemporary Society*, (Cape Town, 2007), p. 52.

In South Africa, masculinity has been explored in a number of different contexts. For example: the interplay between gender and race relations; different forms of heroic and militant masculinity associated with the armed struggle during Apartheid;⁸⁴ the history of colonialism in shaping masculinities;⁸⁵ mining and masculinity;⁸⁶ violence and masculinity;⁸⁷ and prisons and masculinity.⁸⁸ However, since HIV/AIDS has become such an important issue in South Africa, the importance of addressing issues relating to masculinity has taken on a new impetus.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic in the sub-Saharan region has redefined understandings of sexuality in all its complexity. More recently, research into gender and AIDS has highlighted the importance of including men, male sexuality and masculinity in HIV/AIDS preventions and education programmes.⁸⁹

It is acknowledged that the link between destructive forms of masculinity and the spread of HIV is one we can no longer ignore, and owing to this, literature focussing on the intersection of these two issues has become more common.

While not wholeheartedly embraced by all feminists, the focus on the construction of masculinities has constituted an important shift in the local (South African) and

⁸⁴ Thokozani Xaba, 'Masculinity and its malcontents: the confrontation between "Struggle Masculinity" and "Post-Struggle Masculinity" (1990-1997)', in Robert Morrell (Ed.), *Changing Men in Southern Africa*, (Scottsville, 2001); Elaine Unterhalter, 'The Work of the Nation: Heroic Masculinity in South African Autobiographical Writing of the Anti-Apartheid Struggle', *The European Journal of Development Research*, 12, 2, 2000; Raymond Suttner, 'Masculinities in the ANC-led liberation movement', in Shefer et al. (Eds.), *From Boys to Men: Social Constructions of Masculinity in Contemporary Society*, (Cape Town, 2007).

⁸⁵ Robert Morrell, *From Boys to Gentlemen: Settler Masculinity in Colonial Natal*, (Pretoria, 2001).

⁸⁶ Catherine Campbell, 'Migrancy, masculine identities and AIDS: the psychosocial context of HIV transmission on the South African gold mines', *Social Science and Medicine*, 45, 2, 1997; "'Going Underground and Going After Women" Sexuality & HIV Transmission Amongst Mineworkers', in Catherine Campbell, *Letting Them Die: Why HIV/AIDS Intervention Programmes Fail*, (Bloomington, 2003); Keith Breckenridge, 'The allure of violence: men, race and masculinity on the South African goldmines, 1900 – 1950', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 24, 4, 1998; Robert Morrell, 'The Times of Change: Men and Masculinity in South Africa', in Robert Morrell (Ed.), *Changing Men in Southern Africa*, (Scottsville, 2001); Robert Morrell, 'Men, Movements and Gender Transformation in South Africa', *Journal of Men's Studies*, 10, 3, 2002; Liz Walker, Graeme Reid & Morna Cornell, *Waiting to Happen, HIV/AIDS in South Africa: The Bigger Picture*, (Cape Town, 2004).

⁸⁷ Catherine Campbell, 'Learning to Kill? Masculinity the family and violence in Natal', *Journal of southern African Studies*, 18, 1992.

⁸⁸ Isak Niehaus, 'Renegotiating Masculinity in the South African Lowveld: Narratives of Male-Male Sex in Labour Compounds and in Prisons', *African Studies*, 61, 1, 2002; Sasha Gear, 'Rules of Engagement: Structuring Sex and Damage in Men's Prisons and Beyond', in Reid & Walker (Eds.), *Men Behaving Differently*, (Cape Town, 2005).

⁸⁹ Graeme Reid & Liz Walker, 'Masculinities in Question', in Graeme Reid & Liz Walker (Eds.), *Men Behaving Differently*, (Cape Town, 2005), p. 5.

international study of gender... In South Africa, the focus on gendered identities and sexualities has been accelerated by the imperatives of challenging HIV/AIDS and the growing awareness of the extent and severity of gender-based violence.⁹⁰

Despite the increased attention masculinity has begun to receive, many feel that much work still remains to be done in this area. In South Africa, as in the rest of the world, gender studies have historically been associated with women. Women are understandably prioritised because they are often the victims of 'gender-based violence and coercive, inequitable and unsafe sexual practises'.⁹¹ Approaches in the prevention of HIV, until recently, have 'stressed the necessity of focusing on and working with females, who are more at risk'⁹² and more vulnerable.⁹³ The predominant focus has been on HIV prevention, birth control, and sexual health promotion through the education of women: by encouraging them to use contraception, condoms and seeking medical care to ensure their physical well being.⁹⁴ However, the success of these attempts has been thwarted by the failure to account for women's lack of control in many situations regarding sexual health.

All too frequently, health promotion interventions fail to acknowledge sexual encounters as sites in which unequal power relations between women and men are expressed. It is these power relations which determine women's ability - or inability - to protect themselves against sexually transmitted disease, pregnancy and unwelcome sexual acts.⁹⁵

Recently, work has been conducted into the effects of such female-focussed research. For example, researchers have pointed out that this approach unintentionally causes women to be blamed for the spread of HIV, and furthermore 'inadvertently lays the responsibility of challenging and mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS on women.'⁹⁶

⁹⁰ Tamara Shefer, Kopano Ratele, Anna Strelbel, Nokuthula Shabalala & Rosemarie Buikema, 'Introduction' in Shefer et al. (Eds.), *From Boys to Men: Social Constructions of Masculinity in Contemporary Society*, (Cape Town, 2007), p. 1.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁹² Morrell & Ouzgane, 'African Masculinities: An Introduction', p. 6.

⁹³ Reid & Walker, 'Masculinities in Question', p. 5; Shefer et al., 'Masculinities in South Africa', p. 76.

⁹⁴ Katherine Wood & Rachel Jewkes, 'Violence, Rape and Sexual Coercion: Everyday Love in a South African Township', *Gender and Development*, 5, 2, 1997, p.41.

⁹⁵ Wood & Jewkes, 'Violence, Rape and Sexual Coercion', p. 41.

⁹⁶ Shefer et al., 'Introduction', p. 2; Wood & Jewkes, 'Violence, Rape and Sexual Coercion', p. 45; Lindegger & Maxwell, 'Teenage Masculinity', pp. 95 & 98.

By failing to focus on men, the very projects that sought to ‘free’ women have, unwittingly, led to their further victimisation.⁹⁷

While many studies have described the power dynamics involved in heterosexual relationships, gender discourse can often be uncritical and essentialist in the way it approaches male dominance⁹⁸ and thus researchers can ‘inadvertently reproduce traditional constructions of masculinity and femininity’.⁹⁹ Owing to the extreme disempowerment of many women in South Africa, the singular focus on women and girls in HIV/AIDS intervention campaigns and Women in Development projects has caused many projects to fail.¹⁰⁰ The HIV epidemic continues to ravage South Africa, and many development programmes have recognised their projects, which solely focus on women, as inadequate.¹⁰¹ Researchers began to suggest that more attention should rather be paid to influencing the attitudes and practises of men.¹⁰²

Subsequent to a colloquium on ‘Masculinities in Southern Africa’, held in 1997, publications relating to masculinity in South Africa increased.¹⁰³ Initially HIV/AIDS prevention efforts focussed on educating people about the medical facts surrounding the disease. More recently this approach has been replaced by the realisation and understanding that, ‘men’s actions, like those of women, are constrained by traditional beliefs and expectations and influenced by divisive cultural beliefs and social norms’ and thus knowledge does not necessarily lead to behaviour change.¹⁰⁴ This encouraged more research into the social norms that impact on the spread of HIV, such as issues relating to gender. In recent years in

⁹⁷ Gaetane le Grange, ‘Taking the bull by the horns: working with young men on HIV/AIDS in South Africa’, in Sandy Ruxton (Ed.), *Gender Equality and Men: Learning from Practice*, (Oxford, 2004), p. 103, http://www.oxfam.org.uk/what_we_do/resources/downloads/gem-12.pdf.

⁹⁸ Katherine Wood & Rachel Jewkes, ‘“Dangerous” Love: Reflections on Violence among Xhosa Township Youth’, in Robert Morrell (Ed.), *Changing Men in Southern Africa*, (Scottsville, 2001), p. 317.

⁹⁹ Shefer et al., ‘Introduction’, p. 2; for examples of ways in which researchers have inadvertently reproduced traditional constructions of masculinity and femininity please see Reshma Sathiparsad & Myra Taylor, ‘“Diseases come from girls”: perspectives of male learners in rural KwaZulu-Natal on HIV infection and AIDS’, *Journal of Education*, 38, 2006.

¹⁰⁰ Wood & Jewkes, ‘Violence, Rape and Sexual Coercion’, p. 44.

¹⁰¹ Shefer et al., ‘Introduction’, p. 5; Andrea Cornwall, ‘Men, Masculinity and “Gender in Development”’, *Gender and Development*, 5, 2, 1997, p. 8.

¹⁰² Wood & Jewkes, ‘Violence, Rape and Sexual Coercion’, p. 45.

¹⁰³ Morrell, ‘Foreword’, p. x.

¹⁰⁴ Purnima Mane & Peter Aggleton, ‘Gender and HIV/AIDS: What do men have to do with it?’, *Current Sociology*, 49, 6, 2001, p. 26.

South Africa and Africa there have been a number of important works that have ‘paved the way for the further work on masculinities’.¹⁰⁵

Importantly, masculinity literature, which initially tended to portray men as perpetrators, began to engage with men’s own vulnerabilities, recognising the ‘undeniable pressures’ placed upon males;¹⁰⁶ and males as victims of hegemonic masculinity, which can often place them in dangerous and destructive situations.

Risk is double-edged. It involves: recognising *risk to others* – women, children and other men – and it also involves *risk to the self*, men ourselves/ themselves, individually or more collectively.¹⁰⁷

Robert Morrell’s *Changing Men in Southern Africa* was considered ‘groundbreaking’ at the time of its publication in 2001 and focussed on the concept that ‘there is no one, typical South African man’.¹⁰⁸ This stance opposes literature which has attempted to essentialise African sexuality, portray traditions in Africa as static rather than dynamic, and attempt to construct an overarching interpretation of sexuality in Africa.¹⁰⁹ Instead, more recent work attempts to debunk such approaches and theories, through cultural nuance and historical specificity¹¹⁰ in order to demonstrate the diversity within the African continent: an area ‘diverse enough for us to doubt whether there is any point at all in talking of an “African sexuality”’.¹¹¹ Morrell has subsequently contributed immensely to the field of masculinities in South Africa.

¹⁰⁵ Shefer et al., ‘Introduction’, p. 3. For example, Robert Morrell (Ed.), *Changing Men in Southern Africa*, (Scottsville, 2001); Lisa Lindsay & Stephan Miescher (Eds.), *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa*, (Portsmouth, 2003); Robert Morrell & Lahoucine Ouzgane (Eds.), *African Masculinities: Men in Africa from the Late Nineteenth Century to the Present*, (New York, 2005); Graeme Reid & Liz Walker (Eds.), *Men Behaving Differently*, (Cape Town, 2005); Linda Richter and Robert Morrell (Eds.), *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*, (Cape Town, 2006); Tamara Shefer, Kopano Ratele, Anna Strebel, Nokuthula Shabalala & Rosemarie Buikema (Eds.), *From Boys to Men: Social Constructions of Masculinity in Contemporary Society*, (Cape Town, 2007).

¹⁰⁶ Shefer et al., ‘Introduction’, p. 3.

¹⁰⁷ Hearn, ‘The problems boys and men create, the problems boys and men experience’, p. 17.

¹⁰⁸ Reid & Walker, ‘Masculinities in Question’, p. 1.

¹⁰⁹ For example, see John Caldwell & Pat Caldwell, ‘The Cultural Context of High Fertility in Sub-Saharan Africa’, *Population and Development Review*, 13, 3, 1987; John Caldwell, Pat Caldwell & Pat Quiggin, ‘The Social Context of AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa’, *Population and Development Review*, 15, 2, 1989.

¹¹⁰ Reid & Walker, ‘Masculinities in Question’, p. 3.

¹¹¹ Suzette Heald, *Manhood and Morality: Sex, Violence and Ritual in Gisu Society*, (London, 1999), p. 130.

While important work has been done, by 2007 the editors of *From Boys to Men* still felt that there was a need for more stories and narratives of boys and men. They noted that while the field is growing, the focus on boys and men within gender studies still remains 'relatively marginal'.¹¹² Connell has recently commented that America's reaction to the '9/11' terrorist attacks signified a restored masculinity, 'an authoritative, in-command masculinity' through 'neo-conservatism's appeal to toughness in the face of challenges, the quick resort to violence, the dogmatism, ethnocentrism, and preoccupation with control'.¹¹³ This demonstrates that we have far to go in terms of relinquishing these negative forms of masculinity.

Many writers and researchers generally have concluded that, while it will be difficult, we *need* to challenge the dominant mode of gender identities and gender relations 'which arguably facilitates problematic and dangerous outcomes for both men and women'.¹¹⁴

It involves opening up not just our intellects and minds but our whole selves, bodies, political commitment to 'seeing' the gendering of men, gender power relations that benefit men, and the need to change men – in other words, to see the world differently. It involves denaturalising, critiquing and deconstructing boys and men.¹¹⁵

While changes in gender relations can be slow, Morrell feels:

There are important reasons to believe that the social experiments such as the TRC, movements like ADAPT founded by young men to combat domestic violence, and discourses of peace will push South African men in the direction of emancipatory masculinity.¹¹⁶

In October 2009 The MenEngage Africa Symposium, held in Johannesburg, addressed various issues relating to gender and masculinity. The symposium drew up a declaration and a call to action emphasising the importance of including men and boys in intervention efforts addressing gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS. It called upon:

¹¹² Shefer et al., 'Introduction', p. 3.

¹¹³ Connell, 'Foreword', p. ix.

¹¹⁴ Shefer et al., 'Introduction', p. 2.

¹¹⁵ Hearn, 'The problems boys and men create, the problems boys and men experience', p. 17.

¹¹⁶ Morrell, 'The Times of Change', p. 33.

Individual men and women, youth, media, civil society, donors, private sector, governments and UN agencies to support the MenEngage Alliance and reaffirm their commitment to preventing gender-based violence and HIV by committing to working with men and boys.¹¹⁷

The HIV/AIDS epidemic in South Africa demands action from across society. If we are able to harness the HIV crisis into galvanising a revolution in the way we think about gender we will begin to make progress in terms of curbing HIV spread, as well as benefitting South African society in numerous other ways. It is thus incredibly important to support further research into the ways in which notions of masculinity impact on HIV/AIDS, in order to enable gender to take a more central position in HIV/AIDS education programmes.

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¹¹⁷ *Johannesburg Declaration and Call to Action*, Sonke Gender Justice Project and MenEngage, 9 October 2009, p. 9, <http://www.genderjustice.org.za>.

Methods

Qualitative Methods

This study explores the possible links between masculinity and the spread of HIV/AIDS, by examining the ways in which hegemonic masculinities manifest themselves through peer pressure within the lives of a few respondents. Since the study did not aim to discover common properties of a large population, an intensive research design¹¹⁸ was employed and qualitative methods were used to explore a number of 'individual properties'¹¹⁹ pertaining to the lives of the respondents. I attempted to gain an understanding of the way 'causal processes and meaning structures'¹²⁰ operated within the lives of the respondents, in order to draw certain conclusions relating to the probable links between hegemonic masculinities and HIV spread; rather than attempting to prove the existence of a small number of common properties within a large population.

Many researchers have acknowledged the appropriate nature of qualitative methods for the study of gender and sexuality.¹²¹ Qualitative research was suitable for this project, in order to elicit the detailed and nuanced responses that were necessary to explore the theme of masculinities, peer pressure and HIV. It was also appropriate to achieve a range and complexity of data, which I hoped would give voice to experiences and feelings that possibly would have been sidelined in a quantitative study.¹²²

In-depth and focus group interviews were appropriate for the discussion of sensitive and complex topics, as well as the exploration of a world I was set apart from.¹²³ These methods also lent themselves to the study's exploratory approach. Diary entries would have been a useful qualitative method to employ for a topic of this nature, but unfortunately one I could not utilise in this study, due to time constraints and language barriers.

¹¹⁸ Andrew Sayer, *Method in Social Science*, (London, 1992), p. 242.

¹¹⁹ Raymond Morrow, *Critical Theory and Methodology*, (Thousand Oaks, 1994), p. 250.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ Jane Pilcher & Amanda Coffey, 'Introduction', in Jane Pilcher & Amanda Coffey (Eds.), *Gender and Qualitative Research*, (Aldershot, 1996), p. 1; Andrew Sayer, *Realism and Social Science*, (London, 2000), p. 23.

¹²² Bella Dicks, 'Coping with pit closures in the 1990s: Women's perspectives', in Jane Pilcher & Amanda Coffey (Eds.), *Gender and Qualitative Research*, (Aldershot, 1996), p. 41.

¹²³ Herbert Rubin & Irene Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*, (Thousand Oaks, 1995), p.

1.

I employed an informal and interactive approach to the research through the use of semi-structured interviews. In doing so I was better equipped to learn the significance and relevance of certain situations particular to the respondents' lives, rather than imposing my own significance onto prescribed topics set out in a rigid, standardized questionnaire.¹²⁴ The interview guide did however focus on certain topics and included a set of suggested questions.¹²⁵ The qualitative interview process, as described by Kvale, served to function as a conversation revolving around certain themes with a 'specific approach and technique of questioning'.¹²⁶ This approach allowed the respondents to portray certain aspects of their lived world in open and nuanced ways,¹²⁷ in order for the research to ultimately 'describe and understand the meanings of central themes in the life world of the subjects'.¹²⁸

Site and Sample Selection

Interviews were conducted with fifteen male adolescents ranging between the ages of twelve to sixteen, who attend three different co-educational schools outside Pietermaritzburg in KwaZulu-Natal. School A was in Imbali, a township outside Pietermaritzburg; School B was in Mpophomeni, a more rural township near Howick in the Natal Midlands; and School C was in KwaHaza, an area on the outskirts of Mpophomeni. Five respondents were interviewed at each school.

Interviews were also conducted with a team of men and women who facilitate HIV/AIDS awareness and education workshops at schools in and around Durban and Pietermaritzburg. For the purposes of this study I will refer to them as The Team.

KwaZulu-Natal, and more specifically, Imbali and Mpophomeni were chosen as interview sites due to their high levels of HIV prevalence.¹²⁹

¹²⁴ Sayer, *Method in Social Science*, p. 245.

¹²⁵ See Appendix B for a copy of the interview schedule.

¹²⁶ Steinar Kvale, *Interviews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*, (Thousand Oaks, 1996), p. 27.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

¹²⁹ *KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health Annual Report 2006/2007*, p. 8. For example Edendale Hospital, Imbali's closest hospital, is currently rolling out Anti-Retrovirals to approximately 10 000 patients, one of the largest ARV programmes in the country, <http://www.kznhealth.gov.za/edendale/arv.htm>. Friends For Life, <http://www.cindi.org.za/?q=friendsforlife>, a Non-Profit Organisation based in Mpophomeni Township, which

Young people here [KwaZulu-Natal], as everywhere in the world, are apt to live for the moment and take chances. The problem arises when the environment is marked by high rates of HIV, as is the case in the KwaZulu-Natal province. Then, the chances and risks being taken by young people are nothing less than gambles with one's own life and the lives of others.¹³⁰

Additionally, I selected these sites because of their proximity to my home town; my familiarity with the area; and because they are in no way exceptional areas, but rather similar to many communities in KwaZulu-Natal.

This age group was selected because, for many, adolescence is a time of transition and development, where attitudes and identities are still forming.¹³¹ I wanted to explore the processes that could possibly be affecting the formation of the respondents' attitudes and behaviour patterns. Sexual socialisation amongst adolescents has been found to be an important contributing factor for sexual behaviour patterns later in life.¹³² Furthermore, it is an important age group because it represents a population assumed to have lower rates of HIV infection but also on the threshold of active adolescent sexual engagement. For this reason, this age group is sometimes referred to as the 'window of hope' for managing HIV/AIDS.¹³³ They are a generation cohort whose members, with successful intervention programmes, may avoid infection and thus avoid infecting others.

strives to help people living with issues related to HIV/AIDS, functions assuming Mpophomeni has a HIV prevalence rate of 60% (Friends For Life Background Information Sheet, obtained from organisation premises in hard copy). See <http://www.fotac.org/The-HIV-Crisis/Community-Stories/4/Trying-to-change-things-in-Mpophomeni> for an anecdotal account of HIV levels in Mpophomeni.

¹³⁰ Suzanne Leclerc-Madlala, 'Masculinity and AIDS in KwaZulu-Natal: A Treatise', *University Library Passages*, 2, 2005, p. 1, Scholarly Publishing Office, University of Michigan, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=passages;cc=passages;q1=leclerc-madlala;rgn=main;view=text;idno=4761530.0010.015>.

¹³¹ Liz Walker, Graeme Reid & Morna Cornell, *Waiting to Happen, HIV/AIDS in South Africa: The Bigger Picture*, (Cape Town, 2004), p. 54; Abigail Harrison, 'Young people and HIV/AIDS in South Africa: Prevalence of infection, risk factors and social context', in S.S Abdool Karim & Q. Abdool Karim, (Eds.), *HIV/AIDS in South Africa*, (Cape Town, 2005), p. 264.

¹³² Richard White, John Cleland and Michel Carael, 'Links between premarital sexual behaviour and extramarital intercourse: a multi-site analysis', *AIDS*, 14, 15, 2000, pp. 2323 & 2324; Harrison et al., 'Early sexual debut among young men in rural South Africa: heightened vulnerability to sexual risk?', p. 260.

¹³³ Ampofo & Boateng, 'Multiple Meanings of Manhood Among Boys in Ghana', p. 52; Jonathan Tillotson & Pranitha Maharaj, 'Barriers to HIV/AIDS protective behaviour among African adolescent males in township secondary schools in Durban, South Africa', *Society in Transition*, 32, 1, 2001, p. 88. This age group can be especially important, as they may often be neglected from HIV/AIDS education programmes. This is often caused by the reluctance of adults to discuss issues relating to sex with young adolescents.

This age group represents adolescence, the time period in which the development and formation of sexuality is taking place. This developmental period may be constructed and conducted in such a way as to offer some protection against HIV/AIDS, or it may promote a sexuality that enhances vulnerability and makes people prime candidates for new infection.¹³⁴

According to available statistics, South African men between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four have relatively low HIV prevalence rates.¹³⁵ In 2006, men in KwaZulu-Natal were estimated to have an HIV prevalence rate of 5.9 percent. Prevalence rates for men between the ages of fifteen and forty-nine were much higher at 22.3 percent. Female youth in KwaZulu-Natal between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four had a prevalence rate of 24.4 percent, which was much higher than their male counterparts. Women between the ages of fifteen and forty-nine had the highest prevalence rate of any group.¹³⁶

Prevalence	EC	FS	GT	KZ	LM	MP	NC	NW	WC	SA
Total population	10.0%	13.9%	14.5%	15.7%	6.9%	13.4%	6.9%	12.7%	5.4%	11.2%
Adults (20-64)	19.2%	23.1%	21.7%	28.0%	13.7%	23.5%	11.5%	21.5%	8.5%	19.2%
Adult men (20-64)	17.2%	22.2%	20.9%	27.0%	11.7%	22.0%	10.1%	20.9%	6.7%	17.8%
Adult women (20-64)	20.9%	23.9%	22.7%	28.9%	15.2%	25.0%	12.9%	22.1%	10.2%	20.4%
Adults aged 15-49	17.4%	22.2%	22.2%	26.2%	12.1%	21.8%	11.2%	20.5%	8.6%	18.3%
Men aged 15-49	13.2%	19.1%	20.0%	22.3%	8.7%	18.3%	9.0%	18.1%	6.4%	15.4%
Woman aged 15-49	21.2%	25.1%	24.5%	29.7%	14.9%	25.1%	13.3%	22.9%	10.8%	21.2%
Youth (15-24)	10.3%	12.4%	11.9%	15.2%	7.2%	12.4%	5.1%	11.2%	4.1%	10.4%
Male youth (15-24)	3.4%	4.5%	4.6%	5.9%	2.4%	4.6%	1.8%	4.1%	1.3%	3.7%
Female youth (15-24)	17.2%	20.1%	19.0%	24.4%	12.0%	20.0%	8.4%	18.1%	6.9%	16.9%
Antenatal clinics	27.7%	33.7%	35.8%	40.2%	19.6%	32.5%	19.9%	29.2%	15.5%	28.3%

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A possible explanation for this is the tendency for men to have sexual relationships with younger women.¹³⁸ This increases women's risk of infection because of the possibility of

¹³⁴ Leclerc-Madlala, 'Youth, HIV/AIDS and the Importance of Sexual Culture and Context', p. 4.

¹³⁵ Pettifor et al., 'Young people's sexual health in South Africa', p. 1527.

¹³⁶ Rob Dorrington, Leigh Johnson, Debbie Bradshaw & Timothy-John Daniel, *The Demographic Impact of HIV/AIDS in South Africa: National and Provincial Indicators for 2006*, Cape Town: Centre for Actuarial Research, South African Medical Research Council and Actuarial Society of South Africa, p. 28, http://www.commerce.uct.ac.za/Research_Units/CARE/RESEARCH/PAPERS/ASSA2003Indicators.pdf.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ Abdool Karim, 'Heterosexual transmission of HIV – the importance of a gendered perspective in HIV prevention', p. 256; Leclerc-Madlala, 'Youth, HIV/AIDS and the Importance of Sexual Culture and Context', p. 6; Abigail Harrison, Lucia F. O'Sullivan, Susie Hoffman, Curtis Dolezal & Robert Morrell, 'Gender Role and Relationship Norms among Young Adults in South Africa: Measuring the Context of Masculinity and HIV Risk', *Journal of Urban Health: Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine*, 83, 4, 2006, p. 710; Shefer et al., 'Masculinities in South Africa', p. 80; Abigail Harrison, Nonhlanhla Xaba, Pinky Kunene & Nelly Ntuli, 'Understanding Young Women's Risk for HIV/AIDS: Adolescent Sexuality and Vulnerability in Rural KwaZulu-Natal', *Society in Transition*, 32, 1, 2001, p. 76; Pettifor et al., 'Young people's sexual health in South Africa', p. 1528.

unequal power relations¹³⁹ and the possibility that older men may have larger sexual networks.¹⁴⁰ If men's behaviour patterns could be altered, less women may become infected, preventing further infection among men. Thus explorations of various factors affecting male behaviour patterns are necessary. In order to achieve this, examining the possible origins of attitude and behaviour pattern formation is crucial to create 'evidence informed programmes'¹⁴¹.

Selection Criteria

It is unknown whether any of the adolescent respondents were HIV positive. The selection criteria for the adolescent respondents were: male learners, between the ages of twelve and sixteen, who could engage in a conversation in English. Purposive convenience sampling was used because I felt it was important to interview the respondents myself. Thus for the purposes of the study, I needed assistance to identify learners who could converse with me in English. Respondents from School A were selected with assistance from Phumi,¹⁴² The Team Leader; and respondents from Schools B and C with assistance from the schools' teachers. I also requested that learners be selected who were dissimilar to each other. I gave examples such as boys who enjoy sport, boys who enjoy schoolwork, shy boys and gregarious boys in order to explore various identities and experiences. In this way I was able to capture diversity within my sample group, without examining outliers or extreme cases.

I had no evidence to suggest that the respondents would be exceptional in any way, having arrived at typical schools in those areas and having requested to speak to typical boys of that age-group. Once completing the interviews, I felt inspired by the respondents' determination, resilience, courage and spirit, but I have no evidence that would suggest similar boys would not be found in similar circumstances all over the country.

¹³⁹ Lucia O'Sullivan, Abigail Harrison, Robert Morrell, Aliza Monroe-Wise & Muriel Kubeka, 'Gender dynamics in the primary sexual relationships of young rural South African women and men', *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 8, 2, 2006, p. 101; Wood & Jewkes, 'Violence, Rape and Sexual Coercion', p. 44.

¹⁴⁰ Walker, Reid & Cornell, *Waiting to Happen*, p. 56; Harrison et al., 'Gender Role and Relationship Norms among Young Adults in South Africa: Measuring the Context of Masculinity and HIV Risk', p. 710; Pettifor et al., 'Young people's sexual health in South Africa', p. 1531.

¹⁴¹ *2008 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic*, UNAIDS, p. 67.

¹⁴² Phumi was familiar with the students because this was the third workshop they were conducting at the school.

For the purposes of this study I aimed to explore common forms of peer pressure, that occur amongst ordinary male adolescents living in Imbali and Mpophomeni, in order to better understand the dominant notions of masculinity and typical socialisation processes that exist there. The study did not aim to discover exceptional experiences or rare phenomena. Thus the respondents were not selected for any reason beyond their age, sex, location and ability to converse in English. The respondents come from areas and schools similar to many all over the country and especially in KwaZulu-Natal: areas with high levels of unemployment, high levels of HIV, few resources, and few amenities. They did however, have many teachers and parents trying their best under difficult circumstances to give children as many opportunities as possible to succeed. The context that the respondents function within will not be ignored or its effect on the respondents diminished, but rather acknowledged within the research.¹⁴³

Size

A sample of fifteen adolescent respondents was employed due to time constraints and the small number of cases associated with intensive qualitative research.¹⁴⁴ Although small, the sample generated sufficient data to match the limited scope of the study. The learners were responsive and thus the interviews were rich in data. The descriptions of masculinity that emerged were internally consistent, consistent with each other, with my expectations and with the existing literature. Such corroboration was appropriate to establish validity for an intensive study of this size.¹⁴⁵

It would be difficult to extrapolate findings from a sample of fifteen male adolescents, but as it was an intensive study, the findings are not intended to be representative of an entire population, but rather offer insight into the lives of the respondents. Nevertheless, studies involving small groups have been found to successfully capture normative beliefs and attitudes.¹⁴⁶ Through interviewing The Team I hoped to corroborate my findings, as well as learn about a larger group of adolescents than the fifteen I interviewed. The Team

¹⁴³ Sayer, *Method in Social Science*, p. 248.

¹⁴⁴ Sayer, *Realism and Social Science*, p. 21; Morrow, *Critical Theory and Methodology*, p. 250.

¹⁴⁵ Sayer, *Method in Social Science*, p. 246; Sayer, *Realism and Social Science*, p. 21.

¹⁴⁶ Harrison et al., 'Gender Role and Relationship Norms among Young Adults in South Africa: Measuring the Context of Masculinity and HIV Risk', p. 710.

predominantly works with Grades Six to Ten, which normally includes learners between the ages of ten and sixteen. The Team Co-ordinator explained that they target areas where resources are scarce, and schools that other organisations have found too difficult to access. They conduct four-day-long workshops with each facilitator ideally working with ten to fifteen students. In these smaller groups, the learners are able to share their own stories or issues in a more relaxed and safe environment. The members of The Team are all Zulu speaking,¹⁴⁷ originate from KwaZulu-Natal, and are all between the ages of twenty and twenty-five years old. There are six women and four men. In addition to my interviews with The Team, I attended the four-day-long workshop they held at School A; observed some of the smaller group discussions; and conducted an interview with The Team Co-ordinator.

The Team works with learners who are of a similar age to my respondents; who live in the same region; and because they discuss many of the topics I raised in my interviews within their workshops, their corroboration was relevant and valuable. The facilitators are specifically selected on the basis of how well the schoolchildren will be able to relate to them. Their insight was significant because of the understanding and affinity The Team develops with the learners they work with, through their closeness in age; the length of the workshops; and because The Team members grew up, and currently live, in a similar context and culture to their workshop participants, as well as my own respondents. The strategy The Team employ to interact with the learners places them in a unique position to be able to describe the learners' attitudes and feelings. Within this environment, they find the learners eventually start to feel comfortable enough to share their feelings and experiences.

The learners that The Team work with live in similar conditions to many children in South Africa and KwaZulu-Natal, including this study's adolescent male respondents. All the

¹⁴⁷ 'Zulu' is both a linguistic category and an ethnic group. Zulu people are the predominant ethnic group in KwaZulu-Natal and South Africa. The population census of 2001, which was cited in *South African Statistics 2006*, found that over 10 million South Africans' home language was IsiZulu, *South African Statistics 2006*, (Pretoria, 2006), p. 2.18, <http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/StatsInBrief/StatsInBrief2004.pdf>. *Stats in Brief 2004*, which also cites the 2001 census, states that 23% of South Africans speak IsiZulu as their home language, making it the largest language group in the country (p. 17); while 80% of people living in KwaZulu-Natal speak IsiZulu as their home language *Stats in Brief 2004*, (Pretoria, 2004), p. 20, <http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/StatsInBrief/StatsInBrief2004.pdf>. The adolescent respondents' home language was also Zulu.

adolescent respondents came from financially disadvantaged backgrounds, and the majority did not live with both parents.

Thus while the study's findings cannot be statistically extrapolated to a larger population, it can be assumed that the possibility of discovering similar findings in similar contexts around KwaZulu-Natal are high. For this reason, despite eliciting a small group of respondents, the study is of interest and relevance.¹⁴⁸

Data Collection

Consent forms,¹⁴⁹ describing what the interviews would involve, were written in Zulu and English, and sent home with the adolescent respondents. These were returned having been signed by a parent or guardian. All respondents' names have been changed in order to preserve anonymity. It was explained to each respondent that they were in no way obligated to answer any questions they felt uncomfortable answering and if they wished to leave the interview they should feel free to do so without needing to justify their reasons for leaving. I explained that I was very grateful to them for agreeing to be interviewed but that if they changed their mind about participating, removing themselves from the interview would not result in any form of negative repercussion. I also explained that I would use their contributions in a project I was conducting as part of my studies but that their name would be changed and anything they told me would not be linked back to them. I assured them that what they shared with me would not be divulged to their teachers, parents, guardians or peers and that I was not there to test them, but to listen and hear what they felt and thought.

The first five adolescent respondents from School A were interviewed together in two 45-minute focus-group discussions, due to time constraints.¹⁵⁰ I hoped to emulate other studies by using the initial focus-group interviews to discern attitudes and develop insight into

¹⁴⁸ Sayer, *Realism and Social Science*, p. 25.

¹⁴⁹ Please see Appendix A for a copy of the consent form.

¹⁵⁰ Limited time was available in that I was only granted permission to be on school property while The Team conducted their workshop. I was allowed to conduct interviews during the school's break-time. Focus group discussions still fell within my qualitative approach and therefore I did not feel that I was compromising my methods by employing them. The dynamic between the respondents, and the ways in which they discussed the topics within a group, was also interesting and relevant for the purposes of the research.

certain topics and issues, in order to determine particularly relevant themes, which could then be explored further during the in-depth interviews.¹⁵¹ Schools B and C allowed respondents to be interviewed during lesson periods and thus sufficient time was available for individual sessions. The in-depth interviews were semi-structured and approximately one hour long. In order to symbolically demonstrate a willingness on my part to learn from the respondents, the adolescent respondents were interviewed at their schools, and The Team was interviewed at the house they were staying in while in Pietermaritzburg.¹⁵²

The respondents were informed that the interviews would explore the question: What is it like growing up as a boy in KwaZulu-Natal? Framing the interview with this question gave the interview direction, without prescribing a specific topic, or suggesting what I expected the respondents to focus on. I felt if I was more open about the purpose of the interview, this may inadvertently lead the respondents towards certain answers.¹⁵³ It also allowed the respondents to feel important: that they were, in a small way, representing boys in KwaZulu-Natal, and that they were important enough to be spoken to. I wanted them to know I was interested in their lives and opinions. In this way, I hoped to make the interview a positive experience for them.¹⁵⁴ Their lives being the topic of conversation, and the respondents being experts on their own lives, I hoped this would help them to feel comfortable and less threatened by the possibly intimidating prospect of an interview.¹⁵⁵

We began our discussions by talking about their families, siblings, and parents, in order to create natural involvement,¹⁵⁶ become better acquainted, and more relaxed before delving into sensitive issues. The issues of HIV or sex were not raised at the outset. The interview initially focussed on the respondents' challenges and worries and what they perceived as difficult about being a boy specifically. This usually lead into questions related to sex: whether engaging in sex is considered part of being a man, and part of growing up; at what age are you expected to have sex; and what the repercussions are if you do not engage in

¹⁵¹ Christine Varga, 'How Gender Roles Influence Sexual and Reproductive Health Among South African Adolescents', *Studies in Family Planning*, 34, 3, 2003, p. 162.

¹⁵² Benjamin Bowser & Joan Sieber, 'AIDS Prevention Research', in Claire Renzetti & Raymond Lee (Eds.), *Researching Sensitive Topics*, (Newbury Park, 1993), p. 169.

¹⁵³ Kvale, *Interviews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*, p. 113.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 36; Bowser & Sieber, 'AIDS Prevention Research', p. 172.

¹⁵⁵ Rubin & Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*, p. 131.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

sex? Usually the issue of peer pressure was raised by the respondents without prompting. When asked about their challenges, 'not having a girlfriend' was often cited as one of the more difficult problems to cope with on a daily basis. The interviews therefore predominantly focussed on the different forms of this peer pressure and the effects it has on the respondents. I introduced discussions related to masculinity through including questions around the concept of 'what is a real man?' I asked how did the respondents define a 'real man', and how do their peers, families, communities, and media, such as magazines and television, define a 'real man'? Through using the expression 'real man' I aimed to explore notions of hegemonic masculinity in terms of how the respondents perceive the expectations of the world around them relating to men and masculine behaviour. I then asked them who their role models were, and what kind of man *they* want to be in the future, in order to allow them the space to express their own conception of manhood, in case it differed from their perception of society's ideal of masculinity. Issues surrounding HIV/AIDS were also discussed.

The Team, which consisted of ten people, were interviewed in two focus-group discussions, each lasting over two hours. During these discussions I asked the respondents to discuss how they perceive the attitudes of the learners they interact with in their workshops, regarding issues of gender, masculinity, peer pressure and sex. The team also expressed their own views on these topics. I hoped to emulate other studies that had solicited similar respondents, with the aim of obtaining insights from people who are slightly older than the target group, thus having gained perspective on adolescence but who are still able to identify with the issues faced by contemporary teenagers.¹⁵⁷ The four men in The Team were interviewed individually, also in hour-long semi-structured in-depth interviews. These interviews centred round similar themes to the adolescent interviews. They focussed on their experiences in the workshops and how they perceive the attitudes of the male learners they work with. The men also related their own experiences, growing up and presently, as young men living in KwaZulu-Natal.

¹⁵⁷ Varga, 'Gender Roles', p. 162.

Self-reflexivity

I was aware that I might encounter certain obstacles due to my age, sex, race and socioeconomic background being different to that of the respondents. These issues, especially my sex, may have been accentuated because I was going to discuss sensitive topics.¹⁵⁸ However, being female may have caused me to seem less intimidating or threatening to the respondents, than a male. I aimed to accentuate qualities in my interviewing style that would help me to be perceived as understanding and gentle, in order to make the interviews as comfortable as possible. I did not want the fact that I am a woman to stop me from interviewing males:

Good quality research on boys and men is not to be done by men alone. Studies on men are not owned by men; women have been extremely important in developing this field.¹⁵⁹

I expected the fact that I was an outsider not to interfere with the interviews, but instead to aid the interview. I feel this is what occurred during the interviews. Being an outsider I sensed the respondents felt safe telling me about their experiences: because I was a stranger to them and their situations I had less potential for judgement, or for betraying confidences, compared with a teacher or fellow resident in their community. It required the respondents to explain their experiences and feelings to me carefully because, having no apparent insider knowledge, there was no automatic assumption that I was familiar with their descriptions or experiences.

However, I do acknowledge that the respondents may have felt more comfortable speaking with a male researcher. I did not employ a male research assistant, or a translator, in order to effectively establish a direct connection with the respondents. In order to maintain the outsider relationship which I felt would be beneficial, it was important for me to be alone with the respondents, without someone they considered a link between their own context and mine.

¹⁵⁸ Rosalind Edwards, 'An Education in Interviewing', in Claire Renzetti & Raymond Lee (Eds.), *Researching Sensitive Topics*, (Newbury Park, 1993), pp. 187 – 189.

¹⁵⁹ Hearn, 'The problems boys and men create, the problems boys and men experience', p. 16.

Successful qualitative interviewing requires an understanding of culture and context.¹⁶⁰ I was familiar with the context of the respondents, but did not share it, and thus lacked a certain level of understanding. Arriving as an outsider, I was aware that I risked demonstrating a gap in my cultural comprehension, which may suggest to the respondents that it could be difficult to explain certain phenomena in such a way that I would understand.¹⁶¹ However, I felt I could avoid this to a certain extent through a sufficient level of familiarity with the context of the respondents, which I obtained through my age; having grown up in Pietermaritzburg; having previously spent time in Mphoheni; having read around the issues that were to be raised within the interviews; and having conducted an interview with Sam, The Team Co-ordinator.

While recognising this risk, I found the respondents to be extremely open and responsive, which I attribute to this particular distance between myself and the respondents. Walker experienced a similar situation during her study of masculinity, in 1999, in Alexandra Township.

The social distance between me as a white, middle-class woman and the respondents seemed to facilitate the discussion rather than restrict it. My being an outsider created a non-threatening space in which to converse.¹⁶²

By choosing not to employ a translator however, I risked imposing my own meaning onto the interviews through my own 'specialized vocabulary and cultural assumptions', or emotions and cultural understandings.¹⁶³ I avoided this by asking open ended questions in order to steer clear of leading the respondents. I also needed to be aware of my vocabulary and the way I phrased my questions. Conversing in the respondents' second language, I was forced to make my questions succinct and clear, thus avoiding inadvertently hinting at what I expected the answer to be through overly long questions or explanations. The downfall however, was that if either I or the respondents failed to make ourselves clear after several attempts, we tended to move on, possibly failing to delve deeper into certain issues.

¹⁶⁰ Rubin & Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*, p. 19.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹⁶² Liz Walker, 'Negotiating the boundaries of masculinity in post-apartheid South Africa', in Graeme Reid & Liz Walker (Eds.), *Men Behaving Differently*, (Cape Town, 2005), pp. 167 – 168.

¹⁶³ Rubin & Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*, p. 19.

While attempting to remain impartial, I could not remain silent when some of the respondents displayed flawed knowledge of HIV/AIDS. I decided that if I remained silent I may give the impression that this information was correct, and so I felt it was important to provide the respondents with accurate information. There were also times when the respondents described their own behaviour or feelings and I felt the overwhelming need to respond positively, rather than respond impartially. It became apparent that for some of the respondents, they often lacked positive reinforcement or affirmation in their lives, and so I felt that a failure to respond positively on my part could have caused damage to their self-esteem, especially when they had revealed something private, possibly rendering themselves vulnerable. I felt this especially when they described behaviour that was being met with derision from their peers, but that I perceived as responsible and constructive behaviour patterns, which I strongly believe required positive affirmation. It was also difficult to strike a balance between trying to demonstrate emotional understanding by being empathetic, using a tone of voice that showed I recognized the difficulties of their situation,¹⁶⁴ while at the same time seeming impartial; but I was at pains to avoid the interview becoming a negative experience for them. I did not want to add harm to the transaction by damaging their self-esteem or allowing them to believe incorrect information concerning HIV/AIDS. In order to counteract these feelings and in an attempt to make the interview experience a positive one,¹⁶⁵ I provided snacks and treats during the interview and presented each respondent with a small gift, such as a set of coloured markers, or a pencil case, as a way of saying thank you. I presented the schools with cake and flowers, as well as The Team with food, drinks and treats as a way of showing my appreciation and gratitude for all they had done for me.

I acknowledge that there is no way for me to verify what my respondents told me is true. I acknowledge that the interview situation represents a space within which the male respondents may have felt more comfortable expressing views, which outside the interview situation would be more problematic. Thus the responses cannot always be seen as a reflection of possible behaviour on their part. They may also have said certain things because they imagined I wanted or expected to hear them. I acknowledge that I may have

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

¹⁶⁵ Kvale, *Interviews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*, p. 36.

been perceived as inexperienced and thus an easy target for manipulation. However, confidence in the responses results from consistency within the responses, as well as between the respondents, despite them living in different areas and attending different schools.

Data Analysis

All the interviews were recorded and transcribed. The transcriptions were coded using QSR Nvivo 7. I transcribed and coded the interviews myself, feeling these to be important and useful steps in the data analysis process. The use of coding aided the analysis of the transcripts, as well as improved the manageability of the data.¹⁶⁶ Through coding the interviews the similarities between them became apparent, and owing to this they are analysed together, with themes linking them rather than interview sites separating them. The aim is to provide a platform for the voices of the respondents to be heard, and a glimpse into the everyday pressures and difficulties of these young men. The respondents' quotes have been reproduced verbatim and no changes have been made for grammatical purposes. Punctuation has been used to aid easier comprehension of the quotes.

¹⁶⁶ Earl Babbie & Johann Mouton, *The Practice of Social Research*, (Cape Town, 2001), p. 503.

Discussion

The major finding of this study is that the respondents' conceptions of masculinity have serious implications for the spread of HIV and that many male adolescents are under immense pressure to engage in sex. The respondents' attitudes and opinions are currently developing into the attitudes and opinions they may carry with them throughout their lives. The experiences and pressures they face may be similar to what many current adult males experienced when they were younger. As such, exploring adolescent opinions and experiences offers great insight into some of the behaviour patterns that currently contribute to the spread of HIV; the possible origins of these behaviour patterns; and possible ways to change them.

As HIV/AIDS in South Africa is driven by heterosexual sex, the examination of gender dynamics between men and women is extremely relevant for HIV prevention efforts. Behaviour patterns that promote or condone gender inequality are problematic in terms of curbing the spread of HIV. It will be shown that various aspects of the respondents' conceptions of masculinity hinder the accommodation of gender equality. Failing to recognise the effects of these dominant and dangerous notions of masculinity greatly impairs our ability to curb the spread of HIV. In order to make progress in the fight against HIV/AIDS within Sub-Saharan Africa, the need to address and challenge these notions of masculinity can no longer be ignored.

Herein lies the challenge; addressing the context which gives rise to and reproduces the enactment of such a high risk, unhealthy sexuality amongst the youth.¹⁶⁷

The pressure the respondents feel to engage in sex stems predominantly from their peers. The insults they receive for choosing to abstain from sex directly oppose the qualities they perceive as embodying masculinity. Thus the ways in which they are ridiculed and demeaned undermines their self confidence and challenges their perceptions of their own identity. This could propel adolescent males into risky behaviour patterns in an attempt to gain respect and affirmation from their peers and wider society. If they succeed in withstanding peer pressure while at school, their experiences of ridicule and exclusion could

¹⁶⁷ Leclerc-Madlala, 'Youth, HIV/AIDS and the Importance of Sexual Culture and Context', p. 14.

continue to shape their behaviour in the future, possibly motivating them to engage in dangerous behaviour patterns later in life.

This chapter will discuss the ways in which the respondents' conceptions of masculinity affect the spread of HIV; as well as the implications of the peer pressure they are subjected to. These findings will be compared with those of other studies conducted in Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa. The findings of these studies are similar, with recurring themes and attitudes illustrating how similar forms of hegemonic masculinity are entrenched within numerous cultures, contexts, settings and time periods.¹⁶⁸

These studies utilised qualitative methods including in-depth interviews, focus-group discussions, letter or diary writing and ethnographic research. These methods allowed the researchers to explore the individual perceptions and feelings of their respondents, uncovering detail and nuance, which is especially useful when researching issues that concern complex and private issues, such as sexual behaviour patterns and conceptions of masculinity. While they may not be as easily representative as quantitative studies that can include thousands of respondents, the greater depth of insight and understanding achieved by qualitative methods are ideal for the research of more sensitive and multifaceted attitudes and behaviours.¹⁶⁹

Conceptions of Masculinity

Within any society different masculine ideals may exist, across different race groups, communities, socioeconomic strata, religions, ages or geographic locations and what is considered 'masculine' can change depending on circumstance.¹⁷⁰ The hegemonic masculinity within a society or group can also change over time or within different conditions. However, there are certain masculine attributes that seem to be hegemonic across a variety of situations and contexts: these include toughness, stoicism, the ability to

¹⁶⁸ Walker, Reid & Cornell, *Waiting to Happen*, pp. 24- 25; David Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making: Cultural Concepts of Masculinity*, (New Haven, 1990), p. 3.

¹⁶⁹ Babbie & Mouton, *The Practice of Social Research*, p. 309.

¹⁷⁰ Jill Brown, James Sorrell & Marcela Raffaelli, 'An Exploratory Study of Constructions of Masculinity, Sexuality and HIV/AIDS in Namibia, Southern Africa', *Health and Sexuality*, 7, 6, 2005, p. 586; Ampofo & Boateng, 'Multiple meanings of manhood among boys in Ghana', p. 52; Walker, Reid & Cornell, *Waiting to Happen*, p. 20.

bear physical and emotional pain, strength, independence, invincibility, courage, authority, power, leadership, the ability to offer protection and sustenance, intelligence, wisdom, sexuality, heterosexual attraction, virility, confidence, dominance and aggression.¹⁷¹

Specific attributes emerged from the respondents' conceptions of masculinity, which can be understood as the 'culturally exalted'¹⁷² hegemonic masculinity that exists within their particular context and circumstances. These attributes are seen as constituting an ideal form of manhood for the respondents, against which all others are judged;¹⁷³ a particular version of masculinity which has supremacy and greater legitimacy.¹⁷⁴ As such the respondents, and the boys and men around them, are required to demonstrate these attributes in order to be accepted as 'real' men. Similarly, boys and men may often feel that they are required to demonstrate these attributes in order to accept themselves as 'real' men.

The respondents believed that men should be strong, respected, in control, able to provide for their family and should perform 'manly' tasks. The respondents explained they wish to grow up to be men who embody these qualities, as well as responsible and honest men who are respected by their communities. However, the respondents expressed the view that many people feel a 'real' man should also drink and have girlfriends. In isolation, these qualities need not be damaging, but it shall be argued that united and in conjunction with a high prevalence of HIV, they form a masculine ideal that fuels the HIV epidemic. The varying and often contradictory qualities that form the basis of the respondents' understanding of masculinity underscore the many mixed messages they are required to process on a daily basis. It shall be argued that the confusion this can create is detrimental for boys who are attempting to forge new forms of masculine identity.

Strength

Many respondents cited strength as an attribute that men should possess.

¹⁷¹ Brown, Sorrell & Raffaelli, p. 586; Rob Pattman, 'Making pupils the resources and promoting gender equality in HIV/AIDS education', *Journal of Education*, 38, 2006, <http://www.ukzn.ac.za/joe/JoEPDFs/JoE%2038%20pattman.pdf>, p. 104; Ampofo & Boateng, 'Multiple meanings of manhood among boys in Ghana', p. 54; Abdool Karim, 'Heterosexual transmission of HIV – the importance of a gendered perspective in HIV prevention', p.253.

¹⁷² Connell, *Masculinities*, p. 77.

¹⁷³ Brown, Sorrell & Raffaelli, p. 586.

¹⁷⁴ Ampofo & Boateng, 'Multiple meanings of manhood among boys in Ghana', p. 54.

A man who's not strong,...he's just like a rejected person, or a neglected person, you will struggle to find a wife ...We're told that if you a man you have to fight every time. That's why Hayley, you hear that Zulus are very very violent. So we're taught to fight, a man doesn't cry, you have to fight...If you're not strong your wife will use you and take you for nothing. You will be a weak man.¹⁷⁵

Many boys are taught from a young age that strength is required for survival and that strength can be used to solve conflict:

In this school it is survival of the fittest. The stronger you are, the harder you fight. If you are weak you lose. (Teacher at a primary school in Durban).¹⁷⁶

Strength, however, does not always refer to physical strength. In Simpson's study of Zambian men, he describes how, as children, his respondents were taught to fight and be strong. However, they also learned that the ability to fight was associated with the courage required to approach girls; that the conquest of women was a central element in male sexual identity expression;¹⁷⁷ and that male 'superiority' should be demonstrated at all times.¹⁷⁸ Consequently strength carried connotations of dominance, conquest and confidence, as well as physical strength.

For certain behaviours to be defined as strong, others need to be seen as weak. Encouraging men to be strong, because they are *men*, can encourage them to feel they need to be *stronger* than women. It can also encourage men to feel they need to place themselves in opposition to women: 'You are like a woman if you can't fight'.¹⁷⁹ In a quest to appear strong, men may feel they need to avoid behaviour they, or others, perceive as 'weak' or feminine: such as seeking assistance or advice; admitting fear; or compromising.¹⁸⁰ As such,

¹⁷⁵ Nkosi, The Team, 25.

¹⁷⁶ Deevia Bhana, 'Violence and the Gendered Negotiation of Masculinity among Young Black School Boys in South Africa', in Robert Morrell & Lahoucine Ouzgane (Eds.), *African Masculinities: Men in Africa from the Late Nineteenth Century to the Present*, (New York, 2005), p. 208.

¹⁷⁷ Anthony Simpson, 'Sons and Fathers/Boys to Men in the Time of AIDS: Learning Masculinity in Zambia', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 31, 3, 2005, p. 576.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 584-585.

¹⁷⁹ Nkosi, The Team, 25.

¹⁸⁰ Dean Peacock, 'Urgency and Optimism: Masculinities, Gender Equality and Public Health', *Agenda*, Special Focus, 2005, p. 147; Lindegger & Maxwell, 'Teenage Masculinity', p. 101; Dean Peacock & Mbuyiselo Botha, 'The new gender platforms and fatherhood', in Linda Richter and Robert Morrell (Eds.), *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*, (Cape Town, 2006), p. 283; Sakhumzi Mfecane, Helen Struthers, Glenda Gray &

men may avoid seeking information regarding sexual health; may be unwilling to admit they fear the risk associated with unsafe sex; or may be reluctant to compromise with their partner's wishes to get tested, use a condom or delay sexual intercourse.

It is tempting to encourage boys to use their strength in positive ways: in chivalrous rather than chauvinistic ways, and encourage boys to embrace traits like strength for the purposes of responsibility and protection, rather than dominance and violence. However, the danger in doing so is the inherent assumption that women are weak and need men to protect them, which essentially subordinates women and allows men to maintain dominance as if it were their natural right.

Boys are supposed to protect girls...men must protect girls, that is how it is.¹⁸¹

It is challenging to encourage boys to be strong, while simultaneously requiring them to pick and choose the appropriate situations and contexts to exert this strength.

Respect

The respondents reported that men require respect.

We talk about having equal rights but they know that at home it is their father that has to be respected the most.¹⁸²

Zulu men they are very respected, they always want to be treated with respect.¹⁸³

Respondents from a study by Dahlbäck et al. described 'real' men as possessing power and status, and that as a man, 'his position makes it possible to get what he wants'.¹⁸⁴ Gibson & Rosenkrantz Lindegaard found some of their respondents reacted negatively to what they perceived as disrespect:

James McIntyre, 'The Practice of Masculinity in Soweto Shebeens: Implications for safe sex', in Diana Gibson & Anita Hardon (Eds.), *Rethinking Masculinities, Violence and AIDS*, (Amsterdam, 2005), p. 89; Greig et al., 'Gender and AIDS: Time to Act', p. 35; Elisabeth Dahlbäck, Patrick Makelele, Phillimon Ndubani, Bawa Yamba, Staffan Bergström & Anna-Berit Ransjö-Arvidson, "'I Am Happy that God Made Me a Boy": Zambian Adolescent Boys' Perceptions about Growing into Manhood', *African Journal of Reproductive Health*, 7, 1, 2003, p. 53.

¹⁸¹ Gibson & Rosenkrantz Lindegaard, 'South African boys with plans for the future', p. 140.

¹⁸² Nomusa, The Team, 22.

¹⁸³ Nkosi, The Team, 25.

¹⁸⁴ Dahlbäck et al., 'I am Happy that God Made Me a Boy', p. 53.

Sometimes I hit her but only when I have to. I mean if she disrespects me in public I have to react immediately. Otherwise people might think I am weak and then they can get away with anything.¹⁸⁵

If men are unable to demonstrate the expected level of hegemonic masculinity, they may consider themselves a failure, and could perceive that they have lost respect from those around them.

So by the time they [women] get the chance to get that power, that ok now I've got my salary, a certain percentage over my husband, I drive a car more expensive than him, then that automatically, no matter how hard she tries to fake it, but automatically it decreases the respect you're supposed to have for your husband.¹⁸⁶

Feelings of failure may cause them to resort to damaging forms of hegemonic masculinity or hypermasculine activities, which they *are* able to demonstrate, such as violence or sexual coercion, in a quest to regain respect and reassert their dominance. Behaviour patterns such as this serve to aid the spread of HIV.

Control

The respondents expressed the view that men should be in control.

Even us men as men, you have men who say, ... *endlini*, in the house, I won't be told by a woman.¹⁸⁷

In our culture the man's word is the final word, so women can say but final word is from the man.¹⁸⁸

In a study by Simpson, he explains how his respondents:

continued to experience peer pressure to demonstrate that they were not 'under' any woman inside or outside the household, anxious not to be accused by fellow men - and indeed by other family members, both male and female - of acceding to 'petticoat government' in their households.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁵ Gibson & Rosenkrantz Lindegaard, 'South African boys with plans for the future', p. 142.

¹⁸⁶ Vusi, The Team, 22.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁸ Nkosi, The Team, 25.

¹⁸⁹ Simpson, 'Sons and Fathers/Boys to Men in the Time of AIDS', p. 585.

Simpson found his respondents believed the mark of a man is his independence.¹⁹⁰ Many of his respondents refused to communicate with their wives about their whereabouts or activities, and some engaged in extra-marital sex as a way to demonstrate their freedom.¹⁹¹ Hearn has described power over women as being fundamental in poorer, marginalised men's constructions of masculinity.¹⁹² This is substantiated in other studies.¹⁹³ If a man feels he needs to be in control, this can easily extend to domination over all decision making, including sexual decision making, location and timing of sex and whether or not to use a condom.¹⁹⁴

Head of the Household

Many of the respondents felt strongly that a household should be headed by a man.

Another thing that happens is men believe they are the head of the house...they've got that power.¹⁹⁵

The Team had strong opinions on this topic, which led to an intense debate between the male and female members. The men argued that a male is naturally ordained as the head of the household and used the Bible as a justification for their argument. The women, however, remained unconvinced, arguing that the male members felt this way because they were taught as children that men should be the head of the household.

Nkosi: We can say all of these things but the fact remains, women will always be women, because when you go back to the Bible -

Phumi: What does the Bible say?

Nkosi: It doesn't say that men were cooking and women were sitting, we see that women were always in the kitchen, unless you are a lesbian.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 575.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 585.

¹⁹² Hearn, 'The problems boys and men create, the problems boys and men experience', p. 20.

¹⁹³ Lindegger & Maxwell, 'Teenage Masculinity', p. 102; Walker, 'Negotiating the boundaries of masculinity in post-apartheid South Africa', p. 171.

¹⁹⁴ Harrison, 'Young people and HIV/AIDS in South Africa: Prevalence of infection, risk factors and social context', p. 275; L. Machacha, 'Power Sharing, Decision Making, Gender and HIV/AIDS: An Assessment of Targets, Progress Made and Power Relations', *Republic of Botswana: Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs' Report of the First National Conference on Gender and HIV/AIDS, 21st – 23rd June, 2001, Boipuso Hall, Gaborone*, pp. 88-89.

¹⁹⁵ Thandi, The Team, 22.

Phumi: Which scripture says this?

The women quickly handed Nkosi a Bible, demanding that he find proof of his claim. He eventually found a scripture where Abraham told Sara to quickly get some flour and bake some bread,¹⁹⁶ but the argument continued:

Thandi: Actually who said you're the head, who said man must be the head?

Vusi: Nobody said that, you know why, it's something that's there. Remember when God created Earth, he said I am going to make a person whose gonna help you.

Thandi: Just tell me who said you're the head, tell me the person?

Nkosi: Who said I'm *not* the head? God said man is the head.

Nomusa: Explain where he said that!

Vusi: My answer is it's one of those things where nobody has to say something, it's just as it is.

Thandi: You've got it when you were raised that man must be the head, so I was raised by a woman, I never knew a father, so what I know is that my mum was the head, since she was the head, I'm gonna be the head. God said you are the head? God told you that you are the head? Which God?

Nkosi: The Bible says women should submit.¹⁹⁷

At this point it became impossible to hear what anyone was saying over the exclamations of indignation and dissonance.

Research has shown that men often feel they should be the head of the household.¹⁹⁸ Again, such attitudes can affect decision making in a relationship, rendering the power balance

¹⁹⁶ 'So Abraham ran back to the tent and said to Sarah, "Hurry! Get three large measures of your best flour, knead it into dough, and bake some bread", Genesis 18: 6.

¹⁹⁷ 'Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord, for a husband has authority over his wife just as Christ has authority over the church', Ephesians 5: 22-23.

¹⁹⁸ Dahlbäck et al., 'I am Happy that God Made Me a Boy', p. 53; Ampofo & Boateng, 'Multiple meanings of manhood among boys in Ghana', p. 65; Kopano Ratele, Elron Fouten, Tamara Shefer, Anna Strelbel, Nokuthula Shabalala & Rosemarie Buikema, "'Moffies, jocks and cool guys": boys' accounts of masculinity and their resistance in context', in Tamara Shefer, Kopano Ratele, Anna Strelbel, Nokuthula Shabalala & Rosemarie Buikema (Eds.), *From Boys to Men: Social Constructions of Masculinity in Contemporary Society*, (Cape Town, 2007), p. 114; Elizabeth Mumbengegwi, *Analyzing how notions of masculinity influence the vulnerability of men to HIV/AIDS. A study of Zimbabwean Shona men living in Cape Town*, MPhil Thesis, Faculty of Humanities, University of Cape Town, 2008, pp. 25 & 26; Tina Sideris, "'You have to change and you don't know how!": Contesting what it means to be a man in a rural area of South Africa', in Graeme Reid & Liz Walker (Eds.), *Men Behaving Differently*, (Cape Town, 2005).

unequal. The heated argument between The Team members illustrates the difficulty surrounding gender equality. Even men who believe that women are entitled to equal rights still struggle to come to terms with the change associated with relinquishing certain masculine roles. Sideris proposes that 'the anxiety induced by discovering the fragile foundations on which their sense of sexual difference is based' will motivate men to seek reasons why they are entitled to their position.¹⁹⁹ In the words of the male Team members, 'it's something that's there... nobody has to say something, it's just as it is'. This illustrates the common view that men and women's behaviour is natural, eternal and fixed.²⁰⁰ Ratele et al. suggest the contradiction between believing men should be the head of the household, yet having been raised by women, stems from what boys and men learn about the broader structure of society: that men and women are unequal and that women 'need' to be cared for by men.²⁰¹ This resistance and belief that men's roles and entitlements are innate is problematic when attempting to encourage change and gender equality.

The concept of a female-headed household was contentious and my respondents had strong opinions regarding the possible effects of a female providing for her family.

Because if the man is not working and asks the woman for money, that leads to a divorce, because it seems like when he said those vows, he said he would take care of the woman, but the woman is taking care of him so it will lead to a divorce. The woman will be very upset because she is doing what the man is supposed to be doing.²⁰²

Dahlbäck et al. found that 'disturbing threats to the traditional gender roles emerge when women start to earn money and become economically independent' and that 'some boys expressed worries that women who earn their own money may start to see men as useless'.²⁰³ Similar attitudes were expressed by my own respondents:

How does the man feel whose wife is the one working and providing?

Victor J Siedler, *Unreasonable men: Masculinity and Social Theory*, (London, 1994), pp. 122 – 123; le Grange, 'Taking the bull by the horns: working with young men on HIV/AIDS in South Africa', p. 105; Dicks, 'Coping with pit closures in the 1990s: Women's perspectives', p. 26 – 28.

¹⁹⁹ Sideris, "You have to change and you don't know how!", p. 133.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 111 & 129; Connell, *Masculinities*, p. 45.

²⁰¹ Ratele et al., "Moffies, jocks and cool guys", p. 115.

²⁰² Lucas, School A, 12.

²⁰³ Dahlbäck et al., p. 53.

He feels terrible because he is being provided by the woman, in his mind he is saying I made vows, I said I'm gonna take care of her, but she is taking care of me, that is a problem to him. He is saying in his mind, I have to go and find work, he's stressing himself, giving himself a lot of stress...Sometimes you may find the man will feel depressed, cos every time everything he needs he has to ask his wife, even if he needs R1 for a cigarette, he has to go to the wife and say, 'My wife, I need R1 for a cigarette'. That will depress a man. That will make a man feel worthless cos if every time you go to the woman you say I need this, I need this...That will make a man feel angry, depressed, and committing suicide, shouting and being an abusive man.²⁰⁴

This was a particularly interesting comment that Mandla made, that when men are forced to ask someone for money, this may cause them to feel depressed or angry, which can possibly lead to abuse.

Men are disempowered by having to depend on the very women that a patriarchal culture designates as inferior to them. The dissonance between the cultural expectations of gender power relations on the one hand, and the reality of powerlessness on the other, sets off a vicious cycle of low self-esteem, resentment, anger and abuse of the very source of your support – the woman: mother, sister, wife, lover.²⁰⁵

Mandla also expressed the view that it is the person earning money who will control a relationship:

Sometimes other women take this as an advantage to control the man, cos if I don't have money, and you have money you are my wife and I come and say, 'I need R50 for petrol' and you say, 'Ah you need R50? I gave you R50 yesterday!'.

This attitude may be one of the reasons why men feel it is so important to be the provider in their family.

Providers

The respondents noted that they are expected to provide for their families after they leave school.

When I'm away, like in far places, I will send some money to my family so they could be OK. It's my responsibility to take care of my family.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁴ Mandla, School A, 16.

²⁰⁵ Mamphela Ramphele & Linda Richter, 'Migrancy, family dissolution and fatherhood', in Linda Richter & Robert Morrell (Eds.), *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*, (Cape Town, 2006), p. 80.

²⁰⁶ Lucas, School A, 12.

A real man is someone who can provide...My parents want me to grow up to be a responsible man who will provide for my family; and for my family which I will have made by getting married. It's difficult to be a man cos you have to provide everything.²⁰⁷

Hegemonic views of masculinity maintain that men should be the breadwinner within a household or family. Research has shown that many males internalise this expectation, placing pressure on themselves to provide for their family, and believing that it is their duty, as a man, to do so.²⁰⁸ This pressure can often be exacerbated by families and communities, who explicitly place pressure on men to provide for their family, and in some cases, provide for their extended family.²⁰⁹

While the respondents have been taught that they should be able to look after themselves and those around them, many believed that girls will be cared for by other people:

They say you can make this on your own, you are a man now, you are strong, at the time when you are fourteen years.²¹⁰

It's easier to be a girl, everyone loves girls, like my sisters, they take care of them because they say they are girls. They always give them money and they like them, everyone loves girls, even boys they love girls. Parents always give girls care, they take care of them.²¹¹

When you are a guy, you are a boy, you have to act like a man, you have to be strong, you have to be strong for your sister, like I grew up with my brother and people were saying you have to be strong for your sister, you have to do this, when my brother was eight years he was working.²¹²

²⁰⁷ Sandile, School 1, 12.

²⁰⁸ Varga, 'How Gender Roles Influence Sexual and Reproductive Health Among South African Adolescents', p. 165; Martin Foreman, *AIDS and Men*, (London, 1999), p.16; Peacock, 'Urgency and Optimism: Masculinities, Gender Equality and Public Health', p. 147; Siedler, *Unreasonable Men: Masculinity and Social Theory*, p. 116; Pattman, 'Researching and working with boys and young men in southern Africa in the context of HIV/AIDS: A radical approach', p. 34; Ampofo & Boateng, 'Multiple meanings of manhood among boys in Ghana', p. 59; Robert Morrell, 'Do you want to be a father? School-going youth in Durban schools at the turn of the 21st century', in Shefer et al. (Eds.), *From Boys to Men: Social Constructions of Masculinity in Contemporary Society*, (Cape Town, 2007), pp. 83 & 88; Lindegger & Maxwell, 'Teenage Masculinity', p. 101; Robert Morrell & Linda Richter, 'Introduction', in Linda Richter and Robert Morrell (Eds.), *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*, (Cape Town, 2006), p. 5; Mfecane et al., 'The Practice of Masculinity in Soweto Shebeens: Implications for safe sex', p. 99; Greig et al., 'Gender and AIDS: time to act', p. 36.

²⁰⁹ Brown, Sorrell & Raffaelli, p. 590; Simpson, 'Sons and Fathers/Boys to Men in the Time of AIDS: Learning Masculinity in Zambia', p. 580.

²¹⁰ Kwanele, School B, 14.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

²¹² Thandi, The Team, 22.

It is difficult to expect males to accept female empowerment and embrace gender equality when they are expected to provide for the females around them. This encouragement of males to support women is dangerous when placed in conjunction with the belief that a woman who accepts financial support has consented to sex.²¹³ Young boys are encouraged to grow up quickly, provide for themselves, for their families and to behave like adults. Thus as sex is perceived as an adult activity,²¹⁴ specifically one that males should engage in, it should not be surprising that many young males are having sex.

Most of them they are praising themselves about sex, I've done this so I know. They think after sex you know everything. Sex is the part where everyone must be serious about it, so it's like something, I don't know how to explain it, but if they've done it they feel so special, they've done everything in life, they know how is life, they feel grown up, they can make decisions, they are mans totally.²¹⁵

Connell discusses Wally Seccombe's argument that the concept of the male breadwinner in Great Britain was a fairly recent creation, produced 'in the course of a broad realignment of social forces' around the middle of the nineteenth century.²¹⁶ In Sub-Saharan families, the role of breadwinner may have been formally associated with men during the upsurge in labour migration.²¹⁷ This was aggravated by families often being separated from the father or husband for long periods of time,²¹⁸ allowing men to be little else for their families than the 'geographically distant' provider.²¹⁹

²¹³ 'If a woman accepts support she has consented to having sex', Peacock, 'Urgency and Optimism: Masculinities, Gender Equality and Public Health', p. 148; Mfecane et al., 'The Practice of Masculinity in Soweto Shebeens: Implications for safe sex', pp. 95- 96.

²¹⁴ 'He told me that if I accept him as a lover we have to engage in sexual intercourse, and do the things adults do', Wood & Jewkes, 'Violence, Rape and Sexual Coercion: Everyday Love in a South African Township', p. 42.

²¹⁵ Themba, *The Team*, 21.

²¹⁶ Connell, *Masculinities*, p. 29.

²¹⁷ Simpson, 'Sons and Fathers/Boys to Men in the Time of AIDS: Learning Masculinity in Zambia', p. 572.

²¹⁸ Morrell & Richter, 'Introduction', p. 4.

²¹⁹ Mark Hunter, 'Fathers without *amandla*: Zulu-speaking men and fatherhood', in Linda Richter & Robert Morrell (Eds.), *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*, (Cape Town, 2006), p. 100. It is acknowledged however, that with improvements in transport and leave arrangements, men since in the 1980's have been able to return home to visit their families more often, allowing fathers to have closer relationships and more involvement with their children. However, this interaction can only occur when the fathers are present, which at best is sometimes only once or twice a month. Thus the most tangible contribution a migrant father can make to his family often remains financial support, Marlize Rabe, 'Being a father in man's world: the experiences of goldmine workers', in Linda Richter and Robert Morrell (Eds.), *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*, (Cape Town, 2006), pp. 253 & 256.

However, limiting the ability for working class men to demonstrate their manhood through providing for their families is the high level of unemployment experienced in South Africa in recent years.²²⁰

Fathers said that their inability to live up to the socially defined role of father as a breadwinner undermined their confidence in their role as head of the family and their sense of their right to demand respect from their wives and children.²²¹

In the current economic climate fulfilling the role of provider must certainly be challenging, but the pressure on men to provide seems unwavering.²²²

That is why if you are a man you have to fight, even though you see there are no jobs you have to fight. You have to go and find a job so you can keep your dignity, you can keep it and provide for your family anytime anyhow, you gotta work hard...I have to stand up for myself and I have to go look for a good job and then I come back and provide you with everything.²²³

Themba asserts that an unemployed man will lose his dignity. This is a strong, yet not uncommon opinion.²²⁴ The following quote is taken from a study that took place in Mpophomeni, in 1993 by E.J. Radford, as part of an unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, 'The psychological effects of mass dismissal'.²²⁵

If you are not working, you are as good as dead. I have lost my dignity as a human being. I sometimes think people see me as kind of fool...I cry a lot. Even today I was crying. I have lost my manhood. A man is a man because he can provide for his family.

²²⁰ Morrell & Richter, 'Introduction', p. 8; Hunter, 'Fathers without *amandla*: Zulu-speaking men and fatherhood', p. 103.

²²¹ Mxolisi R. Mchunu, 'Culture change, Zulu masculinity and intergenerational conflict in the context of civil war in Pietermaritzburg (1987 – 1991)', in Shefer et al. (Eds.), *From Boys to Men: Social Constructions of Masculinity in Contemporary Society*, (Cape Town, 2007), p. 234.

²²² Walker, Reid & Cornell, *Waiting to Happen*, p. 26; Ampofo & Boateng, 'Multiple meanings of manhood among boys in Ghana', p. 59; Morrell, 'Do you want to be a father?', p. 90; Lindegger & Maxwell, 'Teenage Masculinity', p. 104; Nlanhla Mkhize, 'African traditions and the social, economic and moral dimensions of fatherhood', in Linda Richter and Robert Morrell (Eds.), *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*, (Cape Town, 2006), p. 184; Walker, 'Negotiating the Boundaries of Masculinity in Post-Apartheid South Africa', pp. 177 – 178; Mfecane et al., 'The Practice of Masculinity in Soweto Shebeens: Implications for safe sex', p. 98; Greig et al., 'Gender and AIDS: time to act', p. 36; Brown, Sorrell & Raffaelli, p. 589.

²²³ Themba, *The Team*, 21.

²²⁴ Francis Wilson, 'On being a father and poor in southern Africa today', in Linda Richter & Robert Morrell (Eds.), *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*, (Cape Town, 2006), p. 26; Rabe, 'Being a father in man's world: the experiences of goldmine workers', p. 262.

²²⁵ Mkhize, 'African traditions and the social, economic and moral dimensions of fatherhood', pp. 185 – 186.

It is important to acknowledge that men are not only socialised to feel superior to women, but also to compete with one another for power, status and prestige. The relationships of alliance, domination and subordination that exist between different forms of masculinity are constructed through practises of exclusion, inclusion and exploitation.²²⁶ Poverty, and the latent effects of Apartheid, may contribute to various men feeling inadequate in terms of their material success due to the way hegemonic masculinity functions to marginalise those who fail to meet its standards.²²⁷ These feelings of inadequacy could prompt men to seek out affirmation and status through alternate means.²²⁸

Disadvantages resulting from such factors as ethnicity, economic status, educational level and sexual orientation marginalise certain men and augment the relevance of enacting other forms of masculinity. Rejecting health behaviours that are socially constructed as feminine, embracing risk and demonstrating fearlessness are readily accessible means of enacting masculinity.²²⁹

Brown et al. conclude that 'the extent to which men are able to meet contemporary notions of masculinities may have an indirect impact on the HIV epidemic';²³⁰ while Peacock has emphasised the possible benefits of men exploring their experiences of unemployment and the possible relationships between perceived loss of self worth and increased sexual risk-taking.²³¹

For a region like Kwa-Zulu Natal this is extremely relevant.²³² Schools B and C are located within Wards Ten and Eleven of the uMngeni Municipality. Statistics adjusted from the 2001

²²⁶ Connell, *Masculinities*, p. 37.

²²⁷ Hearn, 'The Problems Boys and Men Create, The Problems Boys and Men Experience', pp. 23 – 24.

²²⁸ Walker, Reid & Cornell, *Waiting to Happen*, p. 27; Robert Morrell, 'Fathers, Fatherhood and Masculinity in South Africa', in Linda Richter and Robert Morrell (Eds.), *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*, (Cape Town, 2006), p. 17; Hunter, 'Fathers without *amandla*: Zulu-speaking men and fatherhood', p. 103.

²²⁹ Will Courtenay, 'Constructions of masculinity and their influence on men's well-being: a theory of gender and health', *Social Science and Medicine*, 50, 10, 2000, p. 1391.

²³⁰ Brown, Sorrell & Raffaelli, p. 595.

²³¹ Dean Peacock & Andrew Leveck, 'The Men as Partners Program in South Africa: Reaching men to End Gender-Based Violence and Promote Sexual and Reproductive Health', *International Journal of Men's Health*, 3, 3, 2004, p. 180.

²³² For more information on the poverty levels of South Africa, please see Wilson, 'On being a father and poor in southern Africa today', pp. 28 – 30.

Census report unemployment rates in this area of 60 percent.²³³ 47 percent of Kwa-Zulu Natal's population are reported to live on incomes below the poverty line.²³⁴ These statistics illustrate that for many men in KwaZulu-Natal, 'meeting certain definitions of masculinity may be a daunting endeavour'.²³⁵ Hunter suggests:

Men celebrating multiple sexual partners, widely seen as an 'innate' feature of African sexuality, are in their present form, a product of an economic crisis that has ripped the core out of previous expressions of manhood – working, marrying, and building an independent household. Today's tragedy of AIDS cannot be separated from the crisis of development in contemporary South Africa.²³⁶

For these reasons sex with women may be viewed as a more accessible and attainable avenue for masculine demonstration,²³⁷ which men may use in an effort to 'forcibly retain their positions as men'.²³⁸ Hunter and Morrell conclude:

In the void created by men's inability to work and become *umnumzana* (household head), 'success' with multiple women has become a critical marker of manliness.²³⁹

In their desire to "become men", and pressured by peers to claim this status, boys may mobilise their sexuality and power over girls to establish this claim.²⁴⁰

Many of the respondents acknowledged the pressure they are under to provide for their families after they leave school. This awareness will follow them into adulthood and if they are unable to fulfil these expectations, they too may succumb to the need to demonstrate their masculinity in alternative ways.

²³³ *uMngeni Integrated Development Plan: Final Review Report to inform the 2008/2009 Budget, Volume 2*, 2007, p. 54, http://devplan.kzntl.gov.za/idp_reviewed_2008_9/IDPS/KZ222/Adopted/Mng771r6%20final%20Volume2%20Report.PDF.

²³⁴ *Kwa-Zulu Natal Department of Health Annual Report 2006/2007*, p. 8.

²³⁵ Brown, Sorrell & Raffaelli, p. 595.

²³⁶ Mark Hunter, 'Masculinities, multiple-sexual-partners, and AIDS: the making and unmaking of *Isoka* in KwaZulu-Natal', *Transformation*, 54, 2004, p. 145.

²³⁷ Brown, Sorrell & Raffaelli, p. 595. Alternatively men may also choose violence to demonstrate their masculinity. It has been noted that because of our history, violence and masculinity have become enmeshed: Morrell, 'The Times of Change', p. 12. However, violence is not the focus of this study.

²³⁸ Mchunu, 'Culture change, Zulu masculinity and intergenerational conflict in the context of civil war in Pietermaritzburg (1987 – 1991)', p. 234.

²³⁹ Hunter, 'Masculinities, multiple-sexual-partners, and AIDS: the making and unmaking of *Isoka* in KwaZulu-Natal', p. 139.

²⁴⁰ Morrell, 'Fathers, Fatherhood and Masculinity in South Africa', p. 16.

Diminishing Opportunities for Masculine Expression

Socially acceptable forms of masculine expression in South Africa have altered over time. Yet patriarchy and notions of masculinity remain entrenched in South African society. Men are under pressure to demonstrate their masculinity but the opportunities available for doing so have slowly diminished. 'Real' man status is becoming increasingly difficult for many men in South Africa to achieve. To better understand this, it is specifically relevant for this study to review the ways in which Zulu men have enacted their masculinity historically.

Prior to the advent of wage labour, Zulu society was based on self-sufficient homesteads,²⁴¹ where 'bravery and fighting skills were important attributes associated with manliness' due to the periods of military warfare, which characterised nineteenth century Zulu society.²⁴² This society was also characterised by patriarchy: 'public life by and large was a world that belonged to men'.²⁴³ A father was expected to be the leader and protector of his household, pay *ilobolo* for his sons, oversee his daughters' marriages and be a role model to his sons, younger brothers and nephews.²⁴⁴ During this period, there existed in Zulu society, as in many African societies, ways to provide for your family without money.²⁴⁵ However, the process of being coerced into labour migration forced masculine roles to change: Zulu men were required to provide materially for their families, while being separated from their children and the land available to them became severely restricted.²⁴⁶ Thus it became difficult for increasing numbers of men to be judged as being a 'man' or a 'good father' on more than their ability to provide.²⁴⁷ The socially sanctioned form of masculine expression through the protection and running of one's home was denied, whilst the course of providing through migrant labour was forced upon many black men.

²⁴¹ Mark Hunter, 'Cultural Politics and Masculinities: Multiple-Partners in Historical Perspective in KwaZulu-Natal', *Culture, Health and Sexuality*, 7, 3, 2005, p. 212.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 211. 'Yes, cos they say if you're not strong it means you can't protect your home, because long long time ago there used to be war, so if the war comes, what you gonna do?', Nkosi, The Team, 25.

²⁴³ Morrell, 'The Times of Change', p. 13.

²⁴⁴ Hunter, 'Fathers without *amandla*: Zulu-speaking men and fatherhood', p. 101.

²⁴⁵ Wilson, 'On being a father and poor in southern Africa today', pp. 26 – 27. Providing for a family without money is only possible when land is available for growing crops.

²⁴⁶ Hunter, 'Cultural Politics and Masculinities', p. 212.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*; Hunter, 'Fathers without *amandla*: Zulu-speaking men and fatherhood', p. 101; Desmond Lesejane, 'Fatherhood from an African cultural perspective', in Robert Morrell and Linda Richter (Eds.), *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*, (Cape Town, 2006), p. 176.

During South Africa's history there have been other socially sanctioned avenues for masculine demonstration. During the struggle against Apartheid many black men gained masculine status by engaging in militant, anti-apartheid resistance:²⁴⁸ "Comrade" became the catch phrase, the password into "manhood".²⁴⁹ This could be said of KwaZulu-Natal especially, which from 1985 until the early 1990's was 'engulfed' in political violence,²⁵⁰ which directly affected areas such as Imbali and Mpophomeni.²⁵¹ Freund describes how 'for Inkatha, it was vital to bring out the entire male community as *amabutho* (regiments of warriors) to bring discipline to the community'.²⁵² Thus it can be seen that for men in this area, it would have been difficult to escape such activities, or to live without becoming involved in these struggles and violence. However, becoming involved was a powerful, accessible and acceptable way for men to demonstrate their masculinity.²⁵³ Subsequent to 1994 however, this was no longer a viable avenue for masculine expression,²⁵⁴ as the heroic struggle masculinity had been delegitimized,²⁵⁵ leaving many South African men few accessible alternatives for the demonstration of masculinity.

Over time the ways in which men have been expected to demonstrate their masculinity have changed and diminished, despite the pressure to do so remaining constant. Many men may find it increasingly difficult to fulfil the roles expected of them. As Carrigan, Connell and Lee described 'there is a distance, and a tension, between the collective ideal and actual

²⁴⁸ Morrell, 'Fathers, Fatherhood and Masculinity in South Africa', p. 16.

²⁴⁹ Ramphele & Richter, 'Migrancy, family dissolution and fatherhood', p. 79.

²⁵⁰ Bill Freund, 'The Violence in Natal 1985 – 1990', in Robert Morrell (Ed.), *Political Economy and Identities in KwaZulu-Natal: Historical and Social Perspectives*, (Durban, 1996), p. 179.

²⁵¹ During this time in KwaZulu-Natal there was terrible conflict between the Inkatha Freedom Party and its followers, against the United Democratic Front and the African National Congress. This greatly affected many communities, including areas such as Edendale, adjacent to Imbali; and Mpophomeni. For example, by 1985 Edendale is described as becoming 'the centre of an anti-Inkatha nexus'; and in 1986 Inkatha followers killed several ex-Sarmcol militants in Mpophomeni, Freund, 'The Violence in Natal 1985 – 1990', pp. 181 & 182.

²⁵² Freund, 'The Violence in Natal 1985 – 1990', p. 182.

²⁵³ It is suggested however, that the extreme violence perpetrated in areas such as KwaZulu, may have been fuelled by the erosion of traditional forms of masculinity, causing men to resort to violence. For a deeper analysis of this, see Catherine Campbell, 'Learning to Kill: Masculinity, the Family and Violence in Natal', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 18, 3, 1992 & Catherine Campbell, *Identity and Gender in a Changing Society*, PhD Thesis, Doctor of Philosophy, Department of Psychology, University of Bristol, 1992, especially Chapter 8.5.

²⁵⁴ Hearn, 'The Problems Boys and Men Create, The Problems Boys and Men Experience', p. 29.

²⁵⁵ Thokozani Xaba, 'Masculinity and its malcontents: the confrontation between "Struggle Masculinity" and "Post-Struggle Masculinity" (1990-1997)', in Robert Morrell (Ed.). *Changing Men in Southern Africa*, (Scottsville, 2001), p. 107.

lives'.²⁵⁶ At the same time, as female empowerment grows, men are increasingly sidelined. For many men, the combination of these factors can create great levels of anxiety and disillusionment. South Africa possesses a progressive constitution but this liberal version of 'constitutional sexuality' does not speak to the masculinities of the past 'steeped in violence and authoritarianism'.²⁵⁷ The continuing pressure on many men in South Africa to embody hegemonic forms of masculinity may cause them to seek out alternative forms of masculine demonstration that are more readily available to them, such as violence, sex or the domination of women: all of which are detrimental to the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Men and Women's Differing Roles

The respondents commented that men and boys are expected to perform specific chores, tasks that require 'power', such as working in the garden. Research has found boys often feel certain tasks are inappropriate for men, such as cooking, cleaning and other household chores.²⁵⁸ The respondents from the Dahlbäck et al. study expressed the view that the head of the household, the man, should not be responsible for menial tasks: he should not 'cook, sweep or wash up napkins', but that his role is to 'use a spade, a shovel and a hoe, work in the fields or garden and do jobs that only men can do'.²⁵⁹ Phumi, The Team Leader, described the possible ways men may react to a man helping with household chores:

If his [a man's] friends find him washing the napkins, they definitely think that he's lost it...they will laugh at him and they will really think he is stupid. It happens, if men see the next door man putting the washing on the line they really think there is something wrong with that man, or he is bewitched.²⁶⁰

Sideris describes men in Mpumalanga who, because they are prepared to perform what are seen as 'women's chores', are considered by their friends and colleagues in Nkomazi as 'at best mad or bewitched, or at worst, a threat'.²⁶¹

²⁵⁶ Carrigan, Connell & Lee, 'Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity', p. 592.

²⁵⁷ Walker, 'Negotiating the Boundaries of Masculinity in Post-Apartheid South Africa', p. 164.

²⁵⁸ Dahlbäck et al., 'I am Happy that God Made Me a Boy', p. 53; Ampofo & Boateng, 'Multiple meanings of manhood among boys in Ghana', pp. 56 & 62; Ratele et al., "'Moffies, jocks and cool guys'", p. 118; Pattman, 'Researching and working with boys and young men in southern Africa in the context of HIV/AIDS: A radical approach', p. 38.

²⁵⁹ Dahlbäck et al., 'I am Happy that God Made Me a Boy', p. 53.

²⁶⁰ Phumi, The Team Leader.

²⁶¹ Sideris, "'You have to change and you don't know how!'", p. 133.

Ratele et al., and similarly Pattman,²⁶² found their respondents' attitude that certain activities are only suitable for women centred on the need to polarise men and women. One respondent commented, 'When you look after a child, you also have to put on an apron, which makes you look like a moffie'.²⁶³ The authors suggest that such a comment does not derive from the sexual orientation of someone labelled as a 'moffie', but rather what he wears and does, which is perceived as effeminate. Their respondents felt they needed to take part in what are seen as manly activities, in order to avoid being labelled a 'moffie'. The way that society, and thus children, separate simple chores into masculine and feminine emphasises the opposition of men and women. In this way we see that "masculinity" does not exist except in contrast to "femininity".²⁶⁴ Bourdieu describes manliness as an 'eminently *relational* notion':

Constructed in front of and for other men and against femininity, in a kind of *fear* of the female, firstly in oneself.²⁶⁵

Hence, insignificant tasks can have much wider symbolic consequences, especially as children are exposed to these chores and activities everyday throughout their childhood. Studies have shown that 'the power imbalance characteristic of gender relations...has many of its roots in childhood and adolescence'.²⁶⁶ The separation of chores symbolises the separation of masculine and feminine activities or behaviour, allowing boys to believe that engaging in what could be perceived as feminine behaviour is wrong. Thus, due to the polarisation of masculine and feminine and hegemonic notions of masculinity, abstaining from sex, seeking sexual health advice, and other behaviour patterns, are equated with femininity and consequently labelled as unmanly. This could prompt men and boys to avoid such behaviour, which is detrimental in terms of curbing HIV spread.

Drinking

The respondents explained the males around give the impression that in order to be a 'real' man, you need to smoke and drink alcohol.

²⁶²Pattman, 'Researching and working with boys and young men in southern Africa in the context of HIV/AIDS: A radical approach', p. 38.

²⁶³ Ratele et al., "'Moffies, jocks and cool guys'", p. 119.

²⁶⁴ Connell, *Masculinities*, p. 68.

²⁶⁵ Pierre Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination*, (Stanford, 2001), pp. 52 - 53.

²⁶⁶ Ellen Weiss, Daniel Whelan & Geeta Rao Gupta, 'Gender, sexuality and HIV: making a difference in the lives of young women in developing countries', *Sexual and Relationship Therapy*, 15, 3, 2000, p. 234.

The boys will say that a man needs to drink alcohol, and smoke. They say that is a real man.²⁶⁷

Other studies have reported similar findings:²⁶⁸

Recent research on masculinity in Soweto shows that men who do not drink, smoke and hang out with other men are referred to in insulting and belittling terms.²⁶⁹

Excessive drinking is often perceived as a risk-taking activity, and as such 'real' men should be able to take part in it.²⁷⁰ The detrimental effects of alcohol on condom use have been well documented.²⁷¹ Studies have also linked high levels of alcohol consumption and high levels of HIV, which is accounted for by alcohol causing a loss of inhibition. This may result in sexual activity being more likely, as well as condom use being less likely.²⁷² The respondents felt that smoking marijuana and being drunk could influence one's involvement in certain behaviour patterns.

Some of them (boys engaging in sex) are smoking, it's difficult to think when you are smoking, to think the right thing.²⁷³

They sleep with the girls when maybe they are drunk, they don't use the condom they just do it, they don't think properly because when you are drunk your mind is elsewhere, so in that time you are not yourself, at that time you are somebody else.²⁷⁴

Thus the inclusion of drinking within conceptions of masculinity is problematic in terms of HIV/AIDS prevention efforts.

²⁶⁷ Kwanele, School B, 14.

²⁶⁸ Mumbengegwi, *Analyzing how notions of masculinity influence the vulnerability of men to HIV/AIDS. A study of Zimbabwean Shona men living in Cape Town*, p. 28.

²⁶⁹ Walker, 'Negotiating the Boundaries of Masculinity in Post-Apartheid South Africa', p. 176.

²⁷⁰ Walker, Reid & Cornell, *Waiting to Happen*, p. 24; Mumbengegwi, *Analyzing How Notions of Masculinity Influence the Vulnerability of Men to HIV/AIDS*, pp. 51 – 52.; Shefer et al., 'Introduction', p. 3; Hearn, 'The Problems Boys and Men Create, The Problems Boys and Men Experience', p. 25.

²⁷¹ Landon Myer, Catherine Mathews, & Francesca Little, 'Condom Use and Sexual Behaviours Among Individuals Procuring Free Male Condoms in South Africa: A Prospective Study', *Sexually Transmitted Diseases*, 29, 4, 2002, p. 240; Mfecane et al., 'The Practice of Masculinity in Soweto Shebeens: Implications for safe sex', p. 103.

²⁷² S. M. Mbulaiteye, A. Ruberantwari, J. S. Nakiyingi, L.M Carpenter, A. Kamali & J.A.G. Whitworth, 'Alcohol and HIV: A Study Among Sexually Active Adults in Rural Southwest Uganda', *International Journal of Epidemiology*, 29, 5, 2000, p. 914.

²⁷³ Andile, School C, 15.

²⁷⁴ Thulani, School C, 14.

Multiple Sexual Partners

The respondents explained that their peers, as well as the media, send the message that having girlfriends qualifies you as a 'real' man. The effects of television, song lyrics and men's magazines are worthy of examination in further research.

Boys with lots of girls: they say he's a real man.²⁷⁵

TV will say a real man is the type of guy who sleeps around and stuff.²⁷⁶

Research has shown that many men believe the measure of masculinity, or the core of manhood, is heterosexuality and sexual prowess:²⁷⁷

Men and boys strongly believe we are superior to women and girls and that we can show it in the sexual act. There is no secret about it 'be a man' means to have sex.²⁷⁸

Especially that if you are a man you should show sexual prowess you know, and the more women you sleep with makes you more of a man.²⁷⁹

Respondents in a study by Sathisparsad 'adhere to the belief that their identity as men is defined through sexual ability and accomplishment', prompting her to conclude that the 'construction of hegemonic masculinity within this male peer group conveys the perception that a man with many girlfriends is blessed, and that others should aspire to be like him'.²⁸⁰ Research has found that, for men, prestige,²⁸¹ status,²⁸² power and achievement²⁸³ is associated with multiple partners and that this type of behaviour is valorised and can bring

²⁷⁵ Lindelani, School B, 15.

²⁷⁶ Lucas, School A, 12.

²⁷⁷ Dahlbäck et al., 'I am Happy that God Made Me a Boy', p. 55.

²⁷⁸ Brown, Sorrell & Raffaelli, p. 591.

²⁷⁹ Mumbengegwi, *Analyzing How Notions of Masculinity Influence the Vulnerability of Men to HIV/AIDS*, pp. 38 – 40.

²⁸⁰ Reshma Sathisarsad, 'Masculinities in the era of HIV/AIDS: the perspectives of rural male Zulu youth', in Shefer et al. (Eds.), *From Boys to Men: Social Constructions of Masculinity in Contemporary Society*, (Cape Town, 2007), p. 187.

²⁸¹ le Grange, 'Taking the bull by the horns: working with young men on HIV/AIDS in South Africa', p. 104.

²⁸² Christine Varga, 'Sexual decision-making and negotiation in the midst of AIDS: youth in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa', *Health Transition Review*, 3, 7, 1997, p. 55; Liberty Eaton, Alan J. Flisher, Leif E. Aar, 'Unsafe sexual behaviour in South African youth', *Social Science & Medicine*, 56, 1, 2003, p. 159.

²⁸³ Harrison et al., 'Gender Role and Relationship Norms among Young Adults in South Africa: Measuring the Context of Masculinity and HIV Risk', p. 718; Kim Rivers and Peter Aggleton, *Men and the HIV Epidemic*, UNDP HIV and Development Programme, 1999, <http://www.undp.org/hiv/publications/gender/mene.htm>.

with it substantial social rewards.²⁸⁴ Vusi, one of The Team members, explained that men may even convince themselves they *need* to have sex with more women in order to boost their egos, implying that a man should feel positive about his masculinity if he desires more than one woman.

I'm a man...he's telling himself one woman doesn't satisfy me, I'm gonna take another one. If she also doesn't satisfy me, I'm gonna take another one. That's ego, so the more he tells himself that he's not satisfied he boosts his ego.²⁸⁵

Some researchers have suggested that tendencies towards multiple sexual partners in Sub-Saharan Africa may be a reinterpretation of traditional polygamous practises.²⁸⁶ This is debatable,²⁸⁷ but the respondents expressed the view that the ability to support more than one wife is associated with wealth:

You know if you have more than one wife it symbolises your worth, you can afford, you are rich, it's privilege.
So do the wives feel privileged to be married to him?
 Yeah! It's like marrying to a king.²⁸⁸

Multiple partners being perceived as an indication of wealth is supported by other studies' findings. For example, a respondent from a study in Namibia commented:

Multiple sexual partners are part of tradition and to have just one suggests poverty, low status, and weak manhood. If I can support many women I am strong and rich.²⁸⁹

It is therefore possible that in modern settings, multiple girlfriends could be viewed as a sign of wealth and success, and therefore also of masculinity. Men, however, also utilise

²⁸⁴ Walker, 'Negotiating the Boundaries of Masculinity in Post-Apartheid South Africa', p. 170; Ratele et al., "'Moffies, jocks and cool guys'", p. 122.

²⁸⁵ Vusi, The Team, 22.

²⁸⁶ Brown, Sorrell & Raffaelli, p. 590; Walker, Reid & Cornell, *Waiting to Happen*, p. 26.

²⁸⁷ For a thorough discussion of this topic, see Peter Delius & Clive Glaser, 'The myth of polygamy: A history of extra-marital and multi-partnership sex in South Africa', Paper presented at The International Association for the Study of Sexuality, Culture and Society Fourth Biennial Conference: Sex and Secrecy, Johannesburg, South Africa, 2003, Volume 1. Within this paper is the interesting note that while many South African societies permitted extra-marital relationships, Zulu culture historically did not allow adultery, divorce or illegitimacy and perpetrators of such acts were severely punished. However, there is an emphasis on the punishment of married *women* who were unfaithful. Men were also discouraged from adultery, but were allowed to marry more than one wife.

²⁸⁸ Nkosi, The Team, 25.

²⁸⁹ Brown, Sorrell & Raffaelli, p. 590.

traditions of polygamy to justify male promiscuity as historical and thus natural or innate and therefore understandable and permissible.²⁹⁰ A respondent in a study by Lindegger and Maxwell said ‘we cannot only eat one kind of food’.²⁹¹ This implies that as a man one *should* desire more than one woman and therefore having multiple sexual partners is acceptable for men. The Team leader commented, ‘A man, in fact, a *real* man, that’s what they say, is *supposed* to have more than one wife’.²⁹²

Such perceptions may encourage men to have multiple sexual partners; demonstrate their ability to sleep with women; and demonstrate their ability to father children, in order to prove their masculinity, and feel comfortable with themselves as men. Behaviour trends involving multiple sexual partners fuel the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Studies in Sub-Saharan Africa have found that men engage in concurrent multiple partnering more often than women.²⁹³ The pattern of concurrent partnering has been found particularly effective in terms of spreading HIV.²⁹⁴

Interestingly though, while many boys recognise these traits as being a part of dominant masculinity patterns, many of the respondents expressed the view that remaining faithful to their future wife is important to them. These attitudes need to be encouraged so as to remain unyielding into adulthood.

Learning From Men to Become Men

Relevant to understanding how notions of masculinity impact on young boys is Paechter’s utilisation ‘communities of practice’, which relates to how children learn and construct gendered performances while learning how to participate and become full members of a community. Children are novices to our gendered communities and ‘are seen as developing

²⁹⁰ Shefer et al., ‘Masculinities in South Africa’, p. 79.

²⁹¹ Lindegger & Maxwell, ‘Teenage Masculinity’, p. 102.

²⁹² Phumi, The Team Leader.

²⁹³ Eaton, Flisher & Aar, ‘Unsafe sexual behaviour in South African youth’, p. 151; Lucia O’Sullivan, Abigail Harrison, Aliza Monroe-Wize, Robert Morrell & Susie Hoffman, ‘Saying what I cannot say: Secret Sexual Lives of Youth in Rural South Africa’, Paper presented at The International Association for the Study of Sexuality, Culture and Society Fourth Biennial Conference: Sex and Secrecy, Johannesburg, South Africa, 2003, Volume 3, p. 6.

²⁹⁴ Helen Epstein, *The Invisible Cure*, (London, 2007).

their expertise in these practices through “legitimate peripheral participation” in the practice’.²⁹⁵

Thus, boys can be seen (broadly) as apprentice men, learning, through observation of the men they encounter and peripheral participation in their activities, what it means to be a man in the local communities of practice in which they live.²⁹⁶

Paechter explains that as children grow up they become increasingly aware of the ‘right’ way of doing things, and thus move towards becoming full members of their community.²⁹⁷

Owing to the associations attached to male and female bodies, boys and girls will be regarded as legitimate peripheral participants in a practice of masculinity or femininity and will be expected to conform, at least in part, while children, to the behavioural norms of that community.²⁹⁸

Indeed, children participate in adult communities where constructions are legitimated or punished ... in order to sustain gender power differentials, society requires children to behave in particular ways and rewards or punishes them for conformity to, or deviance from, the norm.²⁹⁹

Hegemonic notions of masculinity impact on young boys, as they are perceived as the traits needed to reach ‘real’ man status. They will be internalised by many male adolescents and carried with them through to adulthood. Again, the impact of gender polarisation is evident.

Thus, those groups of men who define and dominate hegemonic masculinities position those who do not conform to these models as not just subordinate but as marginally masculine; their legitimate membership of communities of hegemonic masculinity practice is called into question. This is particularly the case among adolescents, whose claims to legitimate participation in adult communities of masculinity practice are somewhat precarious, and who consequently need to draw clear boundaries between their own and feminine practices. In young children, these distinctions are also very strongly drawn.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁵ Carrie Paechter, ‘Learning Masculinities and Femininities: Power/Knowledge and Legitimate Peripheral Participation’, *Women’s Studies International Forum*, 26, 6, 2003, p. 542.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 543.

²⁹⁹ Ampofo & Boateng, ‘Multiple meanings of manhood among boys in Ghana’, p. 55.

³⁰⁰ Paechter, ‘Learning Masculinities and Femininities’, p. 549.

Thus the pressures, influences and forces that impact on boys' childhoods, and the ways in which adult men around them behave, are extremely relevant in terms of understanding later behaviour patterns.

Masculinity and Sex

Many of the respondents mentioned being ridiculed for not having a girlfriend as one of the challenges they face:

I think for boys it is hard because if you grow up as a boy you need to go to mountain to take cows back to home, some boys laugh at you when you don't have a girlfriend.³⁰¹

In discussing this issue with the respondents, it became clear that having a girlfriend, or having sex with a girl, is associated with being a man. The boys felt their peers perceive abstinence or not having a girlfriend as childish.

Some boys, they think so, that part of being a boy is getting to have sex with a girl, or to be having a girlfriend, it is part of growing up.³⁰²

This was corroborated by the men within The Team:

So do you think that boys feel having sex is part of being a man?

Yeah, yeah! Yesterday, he [one of the learners in the workshop] said to my class he likes sex and he's a charmer and he's proud about that. Then he said when he made sex with a girl he looked like a man. Boys they think when you do sex you become a man.³⁰³

The interviews with the respondents made it clear that, for many boys, their success with females greatly defines their identity, and affects their relationships with their peers. This has been found in other research.³⁰⁴

³⁰¹ Sizwe, School B, 13.

³⁰² Jabu, School C, 16.

³⁰³ S'phiwe, The Team, 20.

³⁰⁴ Pattman, 'Researching and working with boys and young men in southern Africa in the context of HIV/AIDS: A radical approach', p. 42; Charles Nzioka, 'Perspectives of adolescent boys on the risks of unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections: Kenya', *Reproductive Health Matters*, 9, 17, 2001, p. 110.

The Power of Peer Pressure

Many of the respondents found it difficult coping with peer pressure and often discussed the power friends have to influence one's behaviour. Peer influence has been identified as one of the principal reasons adolescents engage in sex for the first time.³⁰⁵

When his friend has told him, [to have sex] he wants to do it because he wants to do everything that his friend does.³⁰⁶

They are saying it makes you an irresponsible man, they make you think that. They make your mind, like they change your mind, they change it. Like you've been raised like a way that you must respect girls and have sex when you're married. They change it. Friends change your mind if you don't have those friends who are good.³⁰⁷

It makes some boys, many boys, to have girlfriends because their friends told them to, because this friend already has a girlfriend and he wants him to have one too.³⁰⁸

Respondents reported peer pressure extending to other activities, such as drinking and partying, which can be detrimental when considering that unprotected sex is more likely under the influence of alcohol.

Some of the boys maybe goes to the party, thinks maybe as we are going to the party with my friends and my friend maybe he is drunk, maybe I'm not a drinker, and he can make me to getting involved in alcohol as maybe we are in the party and enjoying many things, cos maybe there is no one at the party who is not drinking, all of them in the party is drinking the alcohol.³⁰⁹

Because those boys who don't go to school they got lots of money, they stole, they are thieves, and they like parties very much, always go to parties, they always ask us, come with us, go to the party with us, and some of my friends they go with them.³¹⁰

Buchbinder posits that 'The supervision by males of other males under patriarchy generates a paradoxical condition of existence for men' in that they are in competition with one another; but at the same time, while women may *confirm* a man's masculinity; it is other men who *confer* masculinity upon him. He suggests that it is this conflictive relationship that can cause anxiety for a man as he 'must compete with others and yet seek their

³⁰⁵ Dahlbäck et al., 'I Am Happy that God Made Me a Boy', p. 57.

³⁰⁶ Thulani, School C, 14.

³⁰⁷ Sandile, School A, 12.

³⁰⁸ Thulani, School C, 14.

³⁰⁹ Jabu, School C, 16.

³¹⁰ Kwanele, School 2, 14.

companionship if he wishes to be part of that group called “(real) men”.³¹¹ Studies have shown that this pressure to attain the affirmation and acceptance of one’s peers can be a major difficulty for many male adolescents and that deviating from group norms is considered extremely challenging.³¹²

For how long can you abstain?

For some time, you know, but not a lot. Other people will laugh at you. People might even suspect you do not function properly.

Which people?

Your friends, I mean. It cannot be that it's only you who does not have sex. AIDS is there, but you also have to do these things.³¹³

The battle these boys face is apparent. Their thought processes and choices are challenged and they are forced to decide whether to remain steadfast or to succumb. This becomes even more difficult when their manhood is questioned and they are pushed to regard themselves as ‘unresponsible’ men.

For some of the respondents, the only way to deal with their situation, without succumbing to peer pressure, was to isolate themselves or to find new friends.

You must try to don’t stay with those friends that make you so change, you must be like, well you must be like me, I don’t have friends in school...I stay alone a lot, that’s what makes me who I am.³¹⁴

When he wants me to do things, things that I don’t like to do, I will tell him I will go find another friend who is like me.³¹⁵

Although it is acknowledged that there are numerous behaviour patterns that contribute to the spread of HIV,³¹⁶ adolescents engaging in unprotected sex is a key issue in the fight

³¹¹ David Buchbinder, *Masculinities and Identities*, (Victoria, 1994), p. 35.

³¹² Dahlbäck et al., ‘I am Happy that God Made Me a Boy’, p. 56; O’Sullivan et al., ‘Gender dynamics in the primary sexual relationships of young rural South African women and men’, p. 104.

³¹³ Nzioka, ‘Perspectives of Adolescent Boys on the Risks of Unwanted Pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted Infections: Kenya’, p. 111.

³¹⁴ Lucas, School A, 12.

³¹⁵ Jabu, School C, 16.

³¹⁶ There are various issues that affect the spread of HIV in South Africa, for example: violence, misinformation or inadequate knowledge regarding HIV; myths regarding HIV; lack of accessibility to clinics; poor health, nutrition and compromised immune systems associated with poverty; stigma, as well as many other complex issues. While these are acknowledged, they do not constitute the focus of this study.

against HIV/AIDS. Thus exploration of the pressures that are placed on adolescents and what factors affect their decision-making processes is necessary.

Surveillance

The tendency of boys to monitor each other's actions and behaviour can make peer pressure even more powerful.

Do the boys also say you must have sex with your girlfriend?

Yes, when you get a girlfriend on Monday you stay with her Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday you have to have sex with her.

What if you don't?

If you don't, oh they tease you, they call you sometimes, they pronounce it in Zulu, it's a vulgar word. They follow you... they will count days, if they see that it's been a whole week now then they expect you to have sex with her and if you don't they'll tease you.³¹⁷

Lindegger and Maxwell discovered amongst their respondents a phenomenon they refer to as a 'culture of deception', whereby boys felt such strong pressure to maintain a public image of hegemonic masculinity that they exaggerated the number of girlfriends they had or the amount of sex they engaged in. The fear that their deception may be discovered, or that they did not match up to the standard of masculinity they were enforcing, motivated them to police their peers. Other studies have reported similar findings.³¹⁸ Lindegger and Maxwell found their respondents to be highly suspicious of one another, investigating their friends' claims by contacting girls whom boys identified as their girlfriends. They described this as 'an interesting manifestation of the way in which boys mercilessly police identities related to hegemonic standards'.³¹⁹ This supports Connell's argument that while most men do not embody hegemonic masculinity, they support it, are regulated by it and use it to judge the behaviour of other men and boys.³²⁰ Buchbinder similarly argues that men may feel they are constantly being watched by other men and that under such a condition of surveillance, many men will strive for 'hypermasculinity' or 'excessive masculinity'.³²¹

³¹⁷ Sibusiso, School B, 16.

³¹⁸ Mfecane et al., 'The Practice of Masculinity in Soweto Shebeens: Implications for safe sex', p. 102; Bhana, 'Violence and the Gendered Negotiation of Masculinity among Young Black School Boys in South Africa', p. 217.

³¹⁹ Lindegger & Maxwell, 'Teenage Masculinity', p. 106.

³²⁰ Wetherell & Edley, 'Negotiating Hegemonic Masculinity', p. 351; Connell, *Masculinities*, p. 79.

³²¹ Buchbinder, *Masculinities and Identities*, p. 36.

Bourdieu states that 'manliness must be validated by other men' and that certain masculine behaviour patterns are borne out of the fear of losing respect or admiration from one's peers.³²² The tendency for males to scrutinize one another heightens the power of peer pressure, making it even more difficult for boys to cope with. The focus of sex within this peer pressure is detrimental to HIV prevention efforts.

Insults

The ill treatment the respondents suffered if they were perceived to not have a girlfriend or to not be engaging in sex, usually manifested itself in the form of taunts, insults, isolation or exclusion. The respondents reported being called stupid, a coward, a fool and the Zulu word *isishimane*, which can refer to a man with no girlfriend.

Yes, many boys think it's good to have a girlfriend cos when you don't have a girlfriend they say you are stupid...they say you are not a man; they call you all things they want to call you.³²³

If you tell a girl that you are abstaining what will she say?

They'll think you are a coward. Other boys also think you are a coward.³²⁴

When you talk about abstaining?

They laugh, they think that you're scared, that you're afraid of girls.³²⁵

A boy wants to sleep with his girlfriend because other friends will look at him like he's a fool if he tells them that he isn't sleeping with his girlfriend.³²⁶

But he [his father] always ask me about girlfriends, I tell him that I don't have a girlfriend, but he says at your stage I must have a girlfriend, I just tell him no, you know me Dad, I'm a Christian. My dad is not a Christian. He call me that, I don't know in English but they say *isishimane*, you not like me, my father was a player, even now he is a player, a charmer.³²⁷

Some of the respondents appeared to have succeeded in deviating from the group thus far,³²⁸ and many maintained they did not care what others thought of them.

³²² Pierre Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination*, pp. 52 - 53.

³²³ Thulani, School C, 14.

³²⁴ Lindelani, School B, 15.

³²⁵ Mzizi, School C, 15.

³²⁶ Nkosi, The Team, 25.

³²⁷ S'phiwe, The Team, 20.

³²⁸ I acknowledge that this may have been the impression they wished to give me, but I feel strongly that the majority of the respondents were sincere. The fact that some of them were not engaging in sex was

No I don't find it difficult (being teased), I don't give a damn about it cos my mom gives me everything, she takes care of me, I must do what she likes.³²⁹

It must be acknowledged however, that not all boys may have this strength of will, or experience environments that enable such behaviour. Boys who do exert such strength should not have to suffer the exclusion and abuse they are forced to endure for choosing their own paths.

The other boys tease him, they use these words, you don't have a girlfriend, you are a fool. I have a girlfriend, we have a girlfriend, don't come with us, don't go with us, you're a fool.³³⁰

You don't know how to do sex, you just a fool man, and he calls his friends and they leave you alone cos you're not their type.³³¹

The insults aimed at the respondents need to be understood within the wider context of their conceptions of masculinity. As discussed, their conception of manhood encapsulates characteristics such as strength, commanding respect and being in control. These conceptions of masculinity cause the insults to be particularly powerful, as being cowardly, stupid or foolish contradicts being strong, respected and in control. The respondents made it clear that the hegemonic form of masculinity that dominates in their schools includes ideals of heterosexuality and sexual prowess. The insults reserved for boys who do not have a girlfriend, or choose not to engage in sex, lie directly in opposition to these notions of masculinity. The insults encapsulate everything that within their, and wider, conceptions of masculinity, men should *not* be. Hence, such insults have the capacity to motivate boys to enact their masculinity in ways that embody hegemonic notions of manhood.

The insult *isishimane* has been highlighted in other literature as an insult used to describe a man's lack of success with women.³³² It seems to essentially relate to cowardliness but it is

demonstrated through the detail in which they described the teasing and ridicule they experienced due to their abstinence.

³²⁹ Sizwe, School B, 13.

³³⁰ Lucas, School A, 12.

³³¹ Dumisani, School A, 16.

³³² Varga, 'Sexual decision-making and negotiation in the midst of AIDS: youth in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa', pp. 55 – 56; Hunter, 'Masculinities, multiple-sexual-partners, and AIDS: the making and unmaking of *Isoka* in KwaZulu-Natal', p. 131; Hunter, 'Cultural Politics and Masculinities: Multiple-Partners in

significant that a specific word exists to describe such a man, especially as it is often used to describe a man with *only one* girlfriend. This accentuates the importance of attracting multiple partners and how integral it is to male identity.

The *isishumane* is afraid of girls. A man in Ithanga who has only one girlfriend, they say he is *isishumane*. He is scared of the women.³³³

He is saying he has no girlfriend, or maybe just one. He is saying he is too frightened to look for more girlfriends. It is as much an insult for a man to be *isishumane* as for a woman to be *idikazi*.³³⁴

The most common insult reserved for boys who did not demonstrate their masculinity through sex was to be classified as gay. For the respondents, being labelled in this way was perceived as demeaning and extremely negative.

They go around your back gossiping 'you see that boy that certain boy at school, I know that boy is gay', and you ask them 'why you saying that boy is gay?', and they reply 'cause he hasn't had sex'. You ask, 'Is there a problem if I abstain until I get married and don't have sex?', and they say 'No, no, you not cool, you're gay'. That's the problem and it's difficult. Other guys when you haven't had sex until the age of 16, like the way they look at you, that eye, you say, ok they think I'm gay.³³⁵

If you aren't having sex they will call you unworthy and gay.³³⁶

Other research has led to similar findings.³³⁷ Such results support the proposition made by Pleck that the dichotomy between heterosexual and homosexual is used as a symbol within rankings of masculinity. Within this dichotomy, any failure to embody the expected norms of a heterosexual male becomes immediately associated with homosexuality.³³⁸ Ratele et al. suggest that their male respondents' strong attitudes against homosexual men 'reflects the continued and entrenched binarism of masculine and feminine and the imperative to prescribe all human identity and practise within such an understanding'.³³⁹ Ratele et al. felt

Historical Perspective in KwaZulu-Natal', p. 213; Leclerc-Madlala, 'Masculinity and AIDS in Kwa-Zulu Natal: A Treatise', p. 2.

³³³ Jonny Steinberg, *Three Letter Plague*, (Jeppestown, 2008), p. 248.

³³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 27. *Idikazi* is described as a woman who steals other women's husbands.

³³⁵ Mandla, School A, 16.

³³⁶ Dumisani, School A, 16.

³³⁷ Brown, Sorrell & Raffaelli, p. 590; Debbie Epstein & Richard Johnson, *Schooling Sexualities*, (Buckingham, 1998), p. 181.

³³⁸ Carrigan, Connell & Lee, 'Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity', p. 587.

³³⁹ Ratele et al., "'Moffies, jocks and cool guys'", p. 116.

that because their respondents perceive gay men to behave in similar ways to women, they are motivated to present themselves in opposition to homosexuality, in the same way they strive to present themselves in opposition to femininity. By doing so they demonstrate their own masculinity and their associated heterosexuality. This idea is substantiated by other authors.³⁴⁰

Binary Thinking

It is clear that for boys who believe a man should be strong, in control and respected, these insults can be a severe blow to their self-esteem and indeed their identity as males. For many boys, their identity as a male may be one of the most stable forces in their unstable lives. The questioning of this could be detrimental to their self-image and sense of self-worth, which could compromise their ability to withstand peer pressure; or motivate them to conform to hegemonic notions of masculinity. Many believe that a coward is not strong; a fool is not in control; and being stupid does not command respect. The binarism inherent in the opposition of masculinity and femininity causes these insults to be very powerful. Binary thinking encourages us to believe that one is either male or female, with these two categories directly opposed to one another; one is either heterosexual or gay; one is either a 'real man', or stupid, foolish and cowardly. For these boys, associations with manliness are positive and associations with womanliness are negative. Selikow discusses this in her thesis and concludes that:

Binaries play an important role in the maintenance of power by presenting the oppositional categories as fixed, thereby repressing alternative possibilities. As well, oppositional terms are associated with a cluster of symbolic attributes and oppositional concepts are hierarchical and privilege one set of values. These discursively constructed binaries are incorporated into youth's daily vocabulary and become part of common-sense and seem natural to youth who use them for guiding behaviour and shaping identities.³⁴¹

Pattman similarly asserts that heterosexual relations entered into on the basis of radical polarisation of gender are likely to be particularly unsafe with respect to HIV/AIDS due to

³⁴⁰ Epstein & Johnson, *Schooling Sexualities*, p. 198; Bhana, 'Violence and the Gendered Negotiation of Masculinity Among Young Black School Boys in South Africa', pp. 217 – 218.

³⁴¹ Terry-Anne Selikow, *Youth Sexuality and HIV/AIDS in a South African urban township: A critical realist approach*, PhD Thesis, University of Alberta, (Ann Arbor, 2005), p. 285.

the limited opportunity for honest communication or equality.³⁴² We are taught to think that behaviour is either masculine or feminine and, as Paechter, Ampofo and Boateng suggest, boys are punished if they deviate from the norm by being marginalised and treated as illegitimate participants in the masculine community of practice.³⁴³ Consequently, demonstrating any kind of feminine behaviour is damaging to a man's image and reputation. If boys feel they must either be a 'real' man or be relegated to the category of gay or effeminate, they may be propelled to assume a certain image that will establish their placement in the 'real' man category as legitimate. Thus a boy may want to delay sexual debut in order to avoid HIV infection more effectively, but through the fear that such an action could bring his masculinity into question and be met with ridicule, he may choose behaviour patterns that will instead qualify him as a 'real' man. If our thinking was less polarised and we were able to perceive gender as a continuum, rather than two separate and opposing categories, this would perhaps allow men to display a *range* of behaviour traits, which society currently defines as either 'masculine' or 'feminine', without being ridiculed or labelled. If we are able to adjust the way we think about gender it might become more socially acceptable for men to behave in less 'masculine' ways, freeing them from the fear of marginalisation or criticism.

Therefore the potential damage of binary thinking is evident and explains why 'boys are so invested in particular kinds of identity, even those, indeed especially those, which are so often taken for granted as essential features of masculinity'.³⁴⁴ By encouraging notions of hegemonic masculinity we give credence to the insults paid to boys choosing not to engage in sex. If such notions did not exist, the insults would not strike right to the very core of boys' identities and the peer pressure may be less powerful. The power that language has in our lives needs to be acknowledged and explored, in order for its potentially harmful effects to be reduced and challenged:

³⁴² Pattman, 'Making pupils the resources and promoting gender equality in HIV/AIDS education', p. 106.

³⁴³ Paechter, 'Learning Masculinities and Femininities', p. 549; Ampofo & Boateng, 'Multiple meanings of manhood among boys in Ghana', p. 55.

³⁴⁴ Rob Pattman, 'Researching and working with boys and young men in southern Africa in the context of HIV/AIDS: A radical approach', p. 41.

The repeated unquestioning exposure to various figures of speech is a subtle way of sustaining tacit agreement with the dominant modes of thought and, as such, language plays a role in reproducing the status quo.³⁴⁵

For these boys, because of their understandings of masculinity, these insults imply that they are failures and this may cause some boys to *view* themselves as failures. It is clear that a motivating factor in sexual engagement may be to avoid such experiences. By allowing these notions of hegemonic masculinity to exist and persist, we encourage boys to demonstrate their masculinity through sex, and therefore encourage sexual risk-taking.

Differences in Peer Pressure amongst Girls and Boys

The Team discussed how peer pressure can manifest itself differently amongst boys and girls. In their experiences with learners during their workshops The Team has perceived that girls often feel pressure to have a boyfriend, while boys experience pressure to have sex.

It's not exactly the same, because I think the pressure is in the guys more especially, because it doesn't end with, 'do you have a girlfriend only?' We find that with the girls what is special or important is having a boyfriend. With the girls, it's like, 'do you have a boyfriend, who's your boyfriend? Is he popular and stuff?' It normally ends there, maybe it can go to the sex point, but with guys, 'OK you have a girlfriend, you've shown us your girlfriend, have you had it?' So I think it goes more especially with boys. Its like, 'Have you had sex? No, you haven't? Why not?'³⁴⁶

Other studies have had similar findings:³⁴⁷ 'Boys, more than girls, are often under pressure to initiate and become sexually active even while they often still lack adequate knowledge of sexual matters'.³⁴⁸

It also became clear that the respondents thought boys from their schools feel more respected the more girlfriends they have.

Yes, they say, oh man you will be alone until you die, because me I have a lot of girlfriends. When it's cold I go pick up maybe Nomzamo; yesterday I slept with Mandisa and it was very good. So many boys say hmm I wish to be him.³⁴⁹

³⁴⁵ Selikow, *Youth Sexuality and HIV/AIDS in a South African urban township*, pp. 285 - 286.

³⁴⁶ Thandi, The Team, 22.

³⁴⁷ Catherine Campbell and Catherine MacPhail, 'Condoms are Good, But I hate Those Things', in Catherine Campbell *Letting Them Die: Why HIV/AIDS Intervention Programmes Fail*, (Bloomington, 2003).

³⁴⁸ Dahlbäck et al., 'I am Happy that God Made Me a Boy', p. 56.

³⁴⁹ Sibusiso, School B, 16.

While boys can often be encouraged to engage in sexual experimentation as part of growing up, girls are often encouraged to value their virginity.³⁵⁰ The Team discussed how in their experience they had found this to be true and Vusi explained that because girls value their virginity, men strive to take it away.

Vusi: One other thing, do girls value virginity?

Phumi: Very much.

Thandi: Yeah.

Vusi: Girls value virginity, so in order for a guy to feel his ego he has to take what the girl values most.

Phumi: Yeah, it's true

Vusi: I mean in a guys' conversation like I told you, you'd ask a guy, 'How many virgins have you had?', and he'll say, 'Seven'. And he will say it out of ego.

It was described that if a boy does not sleep with his girlfriend he would be seen as a fool because having sex with a girl is equated to possessing her, which is what is expected of men. Failing to sleep with a girlfriend is therefore perceived as a failure of masculinity.

They say that if you have a girl and you didn't sleep with her that girl is not yours and if she leaves you before you slept with her you become a fool so that's why they often want to sleep with the girls, so they want to be respected.³⁵¹

This was substantiated by other studies:

Having a true girlfriend necessitated sexual intercourse. According to one man, 'if someone is in love with a woman and breaks up with her before they have sex, that affair is as if it never even existed'.³⁵²

Men may often treat sex as sport or recreation:³⁵³ and because of this boys and men tend to 'construe girls as sexual objects as part of "trophyism" for the enhancement of masculinity'.³⁵⁴ This could lead boys to criticise peers who are sensitive towards their

³⁵⁰ Ampofo & Boateng, 'Multiple meanings of manhood among boys in Ghana', p. 57; Nzioka, 'Perspectives of adolescent boys on the risks of unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections: Kenya', p. 110; Rivers & Aggleton, *Men and the HIV Epidemic*, <http://www.undp.org/hiv/publications/gender/mene.htm>.

³⁵¹ Vusi, The Team, 22.

³⁵² Varga, 'Sexual decision-making and negotiation in the midst of AIDS: youth in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa', p. 55.

³⁵³ Scholastika Ipinge, Kathe Hofnie & Steve Friedman, *The Relationships between Gender Roles and HIV Infection in Namibia*, (Windhoek, 2004), p. 18.

³⁵⁴ Lindegger & Maxwell, 'Teenage Masculinity', p. 96.

girlfriend's desire to abstain, which in turn may encourage boys to pressure girls into having sex.

While The Team members perceive that girls do not pressure their female peers to have sex with the same intensity or fervour that boys pressure their male peers with, many girls do receive pressure to have sex from boys. If a girl feels that having a boyfriend is an important part of her identity and a way to demonstrate her femininity, she may feel compelled to sleep with her boyfriend if he makes it clear that he will abandon her if she does not have sex with him. Any behaviour pattern which renders the power balance of a relationship unequal is dangerous in terms of the spread of HIV/AIDS, especially if it involves pressure to engage in sex. A respondent from a study by Varga reported:

I don't refuse because I know that he is the only one for me. I don't want to lose him, so I must satisfy him.³⁵⁵

However, in recent times, with the advent of feminism and female sexual liberation, it would seem that the pressure on girls to be seen as engaged in sexual relationships may be increasing:

Sometimes you go around with your friends at school and you hear them talking about weekend issues, that they went somewhere with some boys, in such a way that you admire them and you want to go too.³⁵⁶

This is detrimental in terms of HIV and therefore more research into the pressures placed on girls would be valuable.

Demonstration of Sexual Knowledge and Involvement

The respondents explained that, as males, their involvement in sex is expected to be explicit. They reported that such involvement is usually demonstrated through conversations regarding sex, one's sexual exploits and sexual desire toward females. Siedler explains that 'It is part of the traditional inheritance that men can never take their

³⁵⁵ Varga, 'Sexual decision-making and negotiation in the midst of AIDS: youth in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa', p. 56.

³⁵⁶ Katharine Wood, Joyce Maepa & Rachel Jewkes, 'Adolescent sex and contraceptive experiences: perspectives of teenagers and clinic nurses in the Northern Province', *Health Systems Trust Research Report*, 1998, p. 9, <http://www.hst.org.za/publications/399>.

masculinity for granted. It is always something that needs to be proved or defended'.³⁵⁷ The respondents explained that if they did not engage in these conversations, they may be belittled and demeaned as they could be perceived as unmanly or childish.

At age thirteen, you should know something about girls, you should be able to comment.³⁵⁸

Other boys can say you are nothing; you are not having enough feelings about sex and girls, they are saying many things to make the boy to feel bad about what he is telling them about [a topic other than sex and girls].³⁵⁹

Exhibiting passion towards activities that do not include girls could also be ridiculed:

My friend used to go to play soccer, in the morning he used to go to school, come back from school and go to the soccer, and on the weekend he played soccer and people would say hey this boy is crazy cos he doesn't have a girlfriend, his girlfriend is the soccer, he doesn't like to stay with us cos they say like that and he has low self-esteem so he stays at home.³⁶⁰

This type of exclusion, or alternatively self isolation, underscores how challenging it must be to face and resist this kind of peer pressure.

The respondents explained how boys lacking sexual knowledge were labelled as 'stupid'; perceived by their peers as being mentally deficient or senseless; regarded as unmanly; and therefore excluded and ridiculed. A lack of sexual knowledge was equated with a lack of knowledge in general, communicating the message that sexual knowledge is the kind that matters; the only kind that qualifies you as a man, or an adult. The Team described how the boys they work with experience similar pressure to demonstrate sexual knowledge and experience.

They say when you don't sleep with a girl you are stupid, you don't know anything, cos its nice, you don't know something nice, you have to do it so that you'll know, so you can feel that excitement.³⁶¹

³⁵⁷ Siedler, *Unreasonable men: Masculinity and Social Theory*, p. 116.

³⁵⁸ Lindelani, School B, 15.

³⁵⁹ Jabu, School C, 16.

³⁶⁰ S'phiwe, The Team, 20.

³⁶¹ Thulani, School C, 14.

They say like you didn't do it so you don't know anything, so you just useless. You have to do it first - *then* we can talk. So if you never ever had sex before, you don't know anything, you are missing out.³⁶²

These findings are consistent with other studies.³⁶³ For example the respondents from the Dahlbäck et al. study explained that sharing stories of sexual experiences with one's male peers is integral to social inclusion, acceptance and recognition of manliness. Dahlbäck et al. conclude that 'sexual activities and experimentation play a major role in identity-building to become a man'.³⁶⁴

Lindegger and Maxwell found that it was so important to their respondents to conform to the rigid behaviour patterns expected of them, they would give the impression of conformity at all costs by reporting 'multiple girlfriends and considerable sexual experience'.³⁶⁵ These expectations can place pressure on boys to become proficient lovers in a quest to be viewed as an authority on sex by their peers.³⁶⁶

One needs sexual practice to know his sexual ability. We want to taste what friends have tasted, 'practice makes perfect'... you watch, think and practice.³⁶⁷

The Team expressed the opinion that many boys are motivated to have sex in order to gain confidence about their sexual prowess and therefore impress peers with their sexual knowledge.

Others it's peer pressure from friends, they say how is it, how does it taste, did you do this, do you know this thing? So you want to go practise with a girl.³⁶⁸

Respondents also expressed their fear that female peers may regard them as inadequate if they were perceived as sexually inexperienced. While much traditional masculine behaviour

³⁶² Themba, The Team, 21.

³⁶³ Selikow, *Youth Sexuality and HIV/AIDS in a South African urban township*, p. 270; Mfecane et al., 'The Practice of Masculinity in Soweto Shebeens: Implications for safe sex', p. 102.

³⁶⁴ Dahlbäck et al., p. 56.

³⁶⁵ Lindegger & Maxwell, 'Teenage Masculinity', p. 106.

³⁶⁶ O'Sullivan et al., 'Gender dynamics in the primary sexual relationships of young rural South African women and men', p. 104.

³⁶⁷ Dahlbäck et al., p. 56.

³⁶⁸ Nkosi, The Team, 25.

is encouraged by male peers, it is also expected and reinforced by females.³⁶⁹ Females are also socialised into judging whether males meet hegemonic standards, and many wish to be involved with a 'real' man, who is desired by other females and admired by other males.

The boys who are having sex they think they're better cos even girls if they know that boy is having sex, he know how to have sex, they come and talk with that boy. If the boy hasn't had sex they look at him like he is nothing. Because of those girls, that boy will think, I'm not going with the flow, I'm like stupid to them, something like that.³⁷⁰

If you have a girlfriend and she wants to sleep with you, and you say no, what will she say?

She'll say you aren't a man, you are a coward. We don't stay with people who are not a man, we don't talk to people who can't have sex.³⁷¹

One respondent explained that if a girl asked how many sexual partners he has had, he would exaggerate the number in order to portray the image that he is a sexual expert.

You gotta increase the number, so that she will think you are a pro in this. If you say you have only slept with one girl, that girl will say, 'Ok no, he will do something annoying, like maybe not nice, I won't enjoy, I will just be bored until it's done'.³⁷²

This pressure to portray sexual knowledge may also inhibit boys from seeking information about sex, as they may feel embarrassed to reveal their 'ignorance',³⁷³ uncertainty and vulnerability. Expectations which predict that boys ought to know about sex can often mean they are 'rarely provided with the information, counsel or guidance on issues of sexuality that they need'.³⁷⁴ Safe spaces need to be created for young men to reveal and explore their own vulnerabilities, ignorance, fears and questions around sexual relationships.³⁷⁵

³⁶⁹ Lindegger & Maxwell, 'Teenage Masculinity', p. 108; Walker, 'Negotiating the Boundaries of Masculinity in Post-Apartheid South Africa', p. 176.

³⁷⁰ S'phiwe, The Team, 20.

³⁷¹ Dumisani, School A, 16.

³⁷² Mandla, School A, 16.

³⁷³ Walker, Reid & Cornell, *Waiting to Happen*, p. 24; Lindegger & Maxwell, 'Teenage Masculinity', p. 105; Epstein & Johnson, *Schooling Sexualities*, p. 183.

³⁷⁴ Ampofo & Boateng, 'Multiple meanings of manhood among boys in Ghana', p. 57.

³⁷⁵ Shannon Walsh & Claudia Mitchell, "'I'm too young to die": HIV, masculinity, danger and desire in urban South Africa', *Gender and Development*, 14, 1, 2006, p. 64.

Early Sexual Debut

It became clear that for the respondents and their peers, the onset of puberty was perceived as a sign that a male should be having sex. The respondents reported that they were expected by their peers to be engaging in sex by the age of twelve or thirteen.

They say you are old, [Grade Eight] you are in high school. You don't have a girlfriend; they say boys must have a girlfriend. Sometimes they say you are a coward.³⁷⁶

What age do boys usually start having sex? Do boys laugh at his friend if he hasn't had sex by the time he's sixteen?

Even twelve, there are people who have. Whenever you start having wet dreams that's when the problem starts.³⁷⁷

Yes, even in my age they say it's strange. (Aged fourteen)³⁷⁸

This is not uncommon: Thandi from The Team described a discussion she had with a Grade Eight³⁷⁹ class where she asked how many of them had had sex. Three quarters of the class raised their hands. These learners asked the remaining quarter of the class, while laughing at them, 'You haven't? Where you coming from?'

Other studies have had similar findings, in that male respondents felt the physical transformation associated with puberty signified they should be engaging in sex.³⁸⁰ Lindegger and Maxwell found this created a considerable, but unquestioned, pressure on early adolescent males to conform to this hegemonic standard of 'compulsory and compulsive heterosexual performance'.³⁸¹ They felt that this led boys to conform to expected behaviour patterns rather than deviate, or admit ignorance and confusion regarding the cause and implications of puberty.

³⁷⁶ Sizwe, School B, 13.

³⁷⁷ Lucas, School A, 12.

³⁷⁸ Thulani, School C, 14.

³⁷⁹ A class of Grade Eight students would normally be around thirteen years old. However, it is difficult to generalise about this as students may have been held back, or may have started school at a later age. This is an issue in itself, in that one may often find sixteen year olds mixing in the same class as thirteen year olds.

³⁸⁰ le Grange, 'Taking the bull by the horns: working with young men on HIV/AIDS in South Africa', p. 104.

³⁸¹ Lindegger & Maxwell, 'Teenage Masculinity', p. 105.

What does it mean to have wet dreams? Things are happening to me, I'm thinking what do they mean? If this is happening to me, what does it mean to me?³⁸²

Lindegger and Maxwell suggest that if opportunities for honest discussion regarding puberty were encouraged, in which males were permitted to feel comfortable about their confusion, explanations regarding the onset of puberty could be provided. Such an environment would allow for it to be made clear that the onset of puberty does not mean one needs to be engaging in sex. In this way, sexual debut may be more successfully delayed.³⁸³

Research has shown that sexual activity begins during adolescence for many young people,³⁸⁴ often around the age of fifteen but sometimes even younger.³⁸⁵ According to a study by the Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa, published in 2003, more than seventy percent of South African teenagers are sexually active by the age of fourteen.³⁸⁶ Adolescents of this age have a more limited capacity for responsible decision making compared with adults for a number of reasons, including inadequate knowledge; fear; uncertainty; greater vulnerability; the unlikelihood of serious and monogamous relationships; and a limited appreciation of the consequences of their actions.³⁸⁷ All of these factors could affect the possibility of condom use, or correct condom use; HIV/STD testing; and honest communication with partners.³⁸⁸ Behaviour patterns beginning so early in childhood may be difficult to modify. Research has shown that earlier sexual debut is

³⁸² Mandla, School A, 16.

³⁸³ Lindegger & Maxwell, 'Teenage Masculinity', p. 109.

³⁸⁴ Weiss, Whelan & Rao Gupta, 'Gender, sexuality and HIV: making a difference in the lives of young women in developing countries', p. 233; Harrison, 'Young people and HIV/AIDS in South Africa: Prevalence of infection, risk factors and social context', p. 269; Pattman, 'Researching and working with boys and young men in southern Africa in the context of HIV/AIDS: A radical approach', p. 39; *2008 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic*, UNAIDS, p. 105.

³⁸⁵ Nzioka, 'Perspectives of Adolescent Boys on the Risks of Unwanted Pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted Infections: Kenya', pp. 108 & 110; le Grange, 'Taking the bull by the horns: working with young men on HIV/AIDS in South Africa', 109; Tillotson & Maharaj, 'Barriers to HIV/AIDS protective behaviour among African adolescent males in township secondary schools in Durban, South Africa', p. 87; Pettifor et al., 'Young people's sexual health in South Africa: HIV prevalence and sexual behaviours from a nationally representative household survey', p. 1528; Harrison, 'Young people and HIV/AIDS in South Africa: Prevalence of infection, risk factors and social context', pp. 269 – 270; Eaton, Flisher & Aar, 'Unsafe sexual behaviour in South African youth', p. 151.

³⁸⁶ le Grange, 'Taking the bull by the horns: working with young men on HIV/AIDS in South Africa', p. 107.

³⁸⁷ It is acknowledged that many adolescents can be very mature for their age, and may possibly be more informed and responsible than some adults, but it can be assumed that generally a 14 year old is less prepared for a sexual relationship than an 18 year old, for example.

³⁸⁸ Harrison, 'Young people and HIV/AIDS in South Africa: Prevalence of infection, risk factors and social context', p. 270.

associated with a greater number of sexual partners later in life; as well as an increased risk of infection, as the period of exposure to infection is extended.³⁸⁹

Attitudes towards sex and patterns of sexual interaction are learned during adolescence and this process of sexual socialization has a profound effect throughout life. Therefore, interventions designed to modify behaviour in adolescents may not only reduce the exposure to risk during adolescence itself, but may also be protective in later life.³⁹⁰

Thus it can be seen that the equation of puberty with sexual debut can be detrimental and a greater focus of HIV awareness and education in pre-adolescent children may be needed. In Uganda, 'an increase in age at first sex is now commonly cited as a contributing factor in the decline in HIV infection'.³⁹¹ Hence further research into methods that encourage children to delay the age of sexual debut would be beneficial.

Why boys 'need' to have sex

The respondents reported various justifications, circulated by their peers, for why boys ought to have sex. These serve to offer boys more reasons to have sex and make it even more difficult for boys who are trying to abstain. All of the justifications they described have negative repercussions in terms of HIV spread and are therefore potentially damaging.

Men cannot control their sexual urges

It became clear that for the respondents and their peers, many believe men cannot refuse sex. The Team reported that amongst the learners they work with, it seemed boys considered it virtually impossible to have a girlfriend and to *not* have sex with her. They perceived that controlling one's urges in such situations were beyond male capabilities, but

³⁸⁹ Abdool Karim, 'Heterosexual transmission of HIV – the importance of a gendered perspective in HIV prevention', p. 255; Ann P. McCauley & Cynthia Salter, *Meeting the needs of young adults*, Population Reports Series J, No 41, John Hopkins School of Public Health, Population Information Programme, 1995, http://www.infoforhealth.org/pr/j41/j41chap2_1.shtml; Harrison, 'Young people and HIV/AIDS in South Africa: Prevalence of infection, risk factors and social context', pp. 269 & 270; White et al., 'Links between premarital sexual behaviour and extramarital intercourse: a multi-site analysis', pp. 2323 - 2324; Harrison et al., 'Early sexual debut among young men in rural South Africa: heightened vulnerability to sexual risk?', p. 260.

³⁹⁰ White et al., 'Links between premarital sexual behaviour and extramarital intercourse: a multi-site analysis', p. 2324.

³⁹¹ Harrison, 'Young people and HIV/AIDS in South Africa: Prevalence of infection, risk factors and social context', p. 273.

furthermore that not sleeping with one's girlfriend effectively defeated the object of having a girlfriend.

It's like when you are having a girlfriend, you have to have sex, because they were like saying to me, 'No Thandi, I can't just have a girlfriend, that I'm going to look, what am I going to do? I can't control my feelings', one said that to me today, I said to him, 'We not animals, we are humans we can control our feelings'. So it's like they say we can't control, we *have to*, everybody is doing it, why not us? Even our brothers, my big brother comes with his girlfriend at home, so I have to do it as well to show that I am a man, it's like I have to show that I'm man enough, I can do it.³⁹²

Vusi explained that while a girl may find it less problematic to tell someone she is not ready to have sex;³⁹³ a man is expected to be 'ever-ready'. Owing to this, he described how difficult it is, as a male, to remain a virgin because 'people think there must be something wrong with you'.

I've got a friend in the poetry society I was in, he once did a poem whereby he was telling a story where he meets this girl and there's this line that the girls hit the boys with when they don't wanna have sex, 'I'm not ready', when the guy is this close to having sex with a girl and the girl says, 'I'm not doing it', and so I think to the guys it became a song, in the way that when he wrote that poem he said, 'If I was a girl I'd say I'm not ready but I'm a guy, I'm ever-ready'. So he's putting the guy factor before him and hiding behind it, and saying because I'm a guy I'm ever-ready, just because I'm a guy. They like stuffing it into the guy factor, if you're a guy you have to be ever-ready, and if you're a guy and you're a virgin it means you're gay, or you're something.³⁹⁴

This attitude was echoed by O'Sullivan et al.:

Expectations of men as being ever-ready, ever-ardent, and interested in sexual access to any woman as opportunities arise imply that they would be unlikely to refuse a woman's initiation of sexual activity, even unsafe sexual activity, an important implication in studies of vulnerability to HIV infection.³⁹⁵

The male Team members agreed that, in their opinion, it seems easier for women to control their sexual urges than it is for men. Other literature confirms that many people feel men

³⁹² Thandi, The Team, 22.

³⁹³ This does not imply that a woman will never suffer negative consequences for refusing sex, but rather that her character would not be judged or criticised too harshly by female peers, family members and at times even her sexual partner, for saying that she is not ready to have sex. Instead this might be viewed as a 'normal', or even expected female reaction.

³⁹⁴ Vusi, The Team, 22.

³⁹⁵ O'Sullivan et al., 'Gender dynamics in the primary sexual relationships of young rural South African women and men', p. 101.

cannot control their sexual urges.³⁹⁶ This belief can be problematic as men might use it as a reason to have sex when they do not have a condom; as a justification for being unfaithful; as a motivation for early sexual debut; and to rationalise rape.

There's this thing that's going on these days, you know when a girl changes her mind when she's just about to have sex, and then she decides no, and the guy has already told himself in his mind OK I've got her right where I want her, and then the girl just then decides no. You know that a guy can actually rape the girl, out of impatience. I don't wanna lie, when you put a girl and a guy it's a very big difference when it comes to controlling your hormones.³⁹⁷

Other studies have reported similar consequences for women who refuse to have sex.³⁹⁸ The belief that men cannot control their sexual urges is thus extremely damaging, especially as it allows men to relinquish responsibility for their sexual behaviour: 'Men are thus largely seen as incapable of controlling their sexual behaviour and absolved from the necessity of having to do so'.³⁹⁹

Adding to this is the belief that men need to have sex with more than one woman.⁴⁰⁰ Selikow's respondents explained:

³⁹⁶ Rivers & Aggleton, *Men and the HIV Epidemic*, <http://www.undp.org/hiv/publications/gender/mene.htm>; Mumbengegwi, *Analyzing how notions of masculinity influence the vulnerability of men to HIV/AIDS. A study of Zimbabwean Shona men living in Cape Town*, Chapter 4.2.6; Shefer et al., 'Masculinities in South Africa', p. 77; Harrison et al., 'Understanding Young Women's Risk for HIV/AIDS: Adolescent Sexuality and Vulnerability in Rural KwaZulu-Natal', p. 74; Catherine MacPhail, 'Challenging dominant norms of masculinity for HIV prevention', *African Journal of AIDS Research*, 2, 2, 2003, p. 145; Machacha, 'Power Sharing, Decision Making, Gender and HIV/AIDS', p. 87; Selikow, *Youth Sexuality and HIV/AIDS in a South African urban township*, p. 7; Eaton, Flisher & Aar, 'Unsafe sexual behaviour in South African youth', p. 161; Mfecane et al., 'The Practice of Masculinity in Soweto Shebeens: Implications for safe sex', p. 103; Walsh & Mitchell, "'I'm too young to die": HIV, masculinity, danger and desire in urban South Africa', p. 63.

³⁹⁷ Vusi, The Team, 22.

³⁹⁸ Walker, Reid & Cornell, *Waiting to Happen*, p. 32; O'Sullivan et al., 'Gender dynamics in the primary sexual relationships of young rural South African women and men', p. 106; Rivers & Aggleton, *Men and the HIV Epidemic*, <http://www.undp.org/hiv/publications/gender/mene.htm>; le Grange, 'Taking the bull by the horns: working with young men on HIV/AIDS in South Africa', p. 110; Mfecane et al., 'The Practice of Masculinity in Soweto Shebeens: Implications for safe sex', p. 97; Harrison et al., 'Understanding Young Women's Risk for HIV/AIDS: Adolescent Sexuality and Vulnerability in Rural KwaZulu-Natal', p. 75; MacPhail, 'Challenging dominant norms of masculinity for HIV prevention', p. 145; Varga, 'Sexual decision-making and negotiation in the midst of AIDS: youth in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa', p. 56; Pranitha Maharaj, 'Promoting Male Involvement in Reproductive Health', *Agenda*, 44, 2000, p. 41; Dahlbäck et al., 'I am Happy that God Made Me a Boy', p. 58.

³⁹⁹ Diana Gibson, Ann Dinan & George McCall, 'Gender and Violence in a Cape Town Township', in Diana Gibson & Anita Hardon (Eds.), *Rethinking Masculinities, Violence and AIDS*, (Amsterdam, 2005), p. 154.

⁴⁰⁰ Eaton, Flisher & Aar, 'Unsafe sexual behaviour in South African youth', p. 161; Sathiparsad, 'Masculinities in the era of HIV/AIDS: the perspectives of rural male Zulu youth', p. 188.

I wouldn't say that I've been loyal to her. Like I said, it's a struggle...you can't eat cabbage every day...It's in African society. Even though we might be urbanized, however, our thinking is still very traditional, urban yet traditional...it is still in our streak, in our psyche...no one is an angel.⁴⁰¹

This belief is extremely dangerous in terms of HIV spread and once again frees men from taking responsibility for their actions. The damage is amplified when men believe that not only is it difficult to control one's sexual urges but that, as a man, one should not attempt to control these urges but rather capitalise on them, because it is *these* urges that *mean* you are a man.

Men need sex

The attitudes surrounding men's control of their sexual urges often lead to discussions around the idea that men *need* sex.

Abstaining, for them it's very difficult. They say men cannot survive without sex. You need sex.⁴⁰²

This perception that men need sex is not uncommon and is reported in other literature and studies.⁴⁰³ For many boys, while experiencing puberty, sexual desires may be quite overwhelming. The idea that men are biologically programmed to need sex is unhelpful to any boy or man attempting to abstain.⁴⁰⁴

The respondents explained they are told by their peers that if they do not have sex, sperm will accumulate in their body, travel to their brain and cause them to lose their mind.

When other boys have had sex and you haven't, they'll say ahh you'll go crazy the sperm will go up to your brain, that forces you to be like: OK, OK I'm a boy, I'm sixteen years old, I haven't had sex, my friend has had sex, then I'm gonna go crazy...

⁴⁰¹ Selikow, *Youth Sexuality and HIV/AIDS in a South African urban township*, pp. 137-138.

⁴⁰² Lindelani, School B, 15.

⁴⁰³ Chrysostom Rweyemamu, 'Sexual Behaviour in Tanzania', in Martin Foreman (Ed.), *AIDS and Men*, (London, 1999), pp. 69-70; Walker, Reid & Cornell, *Waiting to Happen*, pp. 29 & 32; O'Sullivan et al., 'Gender dynamics in the primary sexual relationships of young rural South African women and men', p. 104; Ratele et al., "'Moffies, jocks and cool guys'", pp. 114 & 117; Sathiparsad, 'Masculinities in the era of HIV/AIDS: the perspectives of rural male Zulu youth', p. 187; MacPhail, 'Challenging dominant norms of masculinity for HIV prevention', p. 145; Tillotson & Maharaj, 'Barriers to HIV/AIDS protective behaviour among African adolescent males in township secondary schools in Durban, South Africa', p. 90.

⁴⁰⁴ O'Sullivan et al., 'Gender dynamics in the primary sexual relationships of young rural South African women and men', p. 106.

no let me do sex, and then you end up getting STIs, HIV and even dying, those are the worst things and those are the dangerous things.⁴⁰⁵

They can say you are a fool, they can say in your mind it can be affected by the sperm that grow and then affect your mind.⁴⁰⁶

The men in The Team reported similar reactions to their abstinence:

They say, 'How do you cope bra? You don't have a girlfriend?! You will become mad because your sperm will run into your brain'.

These are not uncommon opinions.⁴⁰⁷ Such beliefs can create even more fear and confusion surrounding sexual matters and make abstinence an even more daunting task.⁴⁰⁸

Culture and Tradition

Zulu culture and history also emerged as a justification for the behaviour of men.

Yeah it has an effect because when it comes to religion or tradition, people go with an attitude of saying I'm doing this because my great grandfather did it, I'm doing this because my great grandmother did it, some even skip, they say I'm doing this cos Shaka did it, so we do it because someone else did it...it's actually a tug of war between histories, between history and the nowadays...like there are some people who do things that were done by our forefathers, but there are some people who don't do it and do it in a different way.⁴⁰⁹

The attitude that history and tradition justify behaviour is reported in other literature.⁴¹⁰

They say it is their culture to have more than one girl. They say, "My Grandfather had six wives, I want to be like him"⁴¹¹.

⁴⁰⁵ Mandla, School A, 16.

⁴⁰⁶ Jabu, School C, 16.

⁴⁰⁷ le Grange, 'Taking the bull by the horns: working with young men on HIV/AIDS in South Africa', p. 104; Tillotson & Maharaj, 'Barriers to HIV/AIDS protective behaviour among African adolescent males in township secondary schools in Durban, South Africa', p. 90; Eaton, Flisher & Aar, 'Unsafe sexual behaviour in South African youth', p. 158; Harrison et al., 'Understanding Young Women's Risk for HIV/AIDS: Adolescent Sexuality and Vulnerability in Rural KwaZulu-Natal', pp. 75 – 76; Dahlbäck et al., 'I am Happy that God Made Me a Boy', p. 56.

⁴⁰⁸ HIV prevention programmes may benefit from increased discussion surrounding masturbation and the benefit it provides for sexual release. The taboo surrounding masturbation and its discussion hampers open and honest conversations regarding sexual health and sexual needs for both men and women.

⁴⁰⁹ Vusi, The Team, 22.

⁴¹⁰ Shefer et al., 'Masculinities in South Africa', p. 79.

⁴¹¹ Walker, Reid & Cornell, Waiting to Happen, p. 30.

Many people feel such traditions should not change: “You know it’s just a generation thing, so who are we now to change that thing?”⁴¹² This can create much confusion. In The Team interviews many of the facilitators expressed uncertainty: they felt on the one hand that certain aspects of progress were important, but also feared that the abandonment of tradition could have negative repercussions. The question of which traditions to preserve and which to discard seemed very confusing for The Team members. Uncertainties regarding such matters make the development of intervention programmes difficult and consensus over education strategies problematic. In order for progress to be made interrogation of such attitudes and practices needs to take place.

Confusion

Many adolescents feel pressure from authorities such as their parents, teachers, or their church, to abstain from sexual activity, but this is counteracted by the powerful pressure they receive from their peers and other sources, such as the media, to engage in sex.⁴¹³ This can create a dangerous combination where the prowess associated with sexual conquest may encourage boys to engage in sex but the shame associated with parents or an adult discovering this behaviour may discourage boys from seeking accurate information or protection, regarding issues such as condom use or HIV testing.⁴¹⁴ The respondents expressed how confusing it can be to process such mixed messages.

Many different people will say different things about having sex, some people will say, ‘Ah, you are abstaining - that’s a good thing. Keep it up’. Other people will say, ‘You are a fool, you don’t know what you’re doing, you don’t know why you are saving your virginity’. And they will keep on pressuring you.⁴¹⁵

This sentiment was expressed in other studies:

For us boys, it's even more tricky. If you do not have sex, everybody calls you a eunuch. If you have [sex], you are bad. It's a catch-twenty-two.⁴¹⁶

⁴¹² *Ibid.*

⁴¹³ Mfecane et al., ‘The Practice of Masculinity in Soweto Shebeens: Implications for safe sex’, p. 102.

⁴¹⁴ Nzioka, ‘Perspectives of adolescent boys on the risks of unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections: Kenya’, p. 115.

⁴¹⁵ Mandla, School A, 16.

⁴¹⁶ Nzioka, ‘Perspectives of adolescent boys on the risks of unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections: Kenya’, p. 111.

It can be very difficult for adolescents to choose which authority's message to adhere to. As such, ways in which to minimise the effects of negative peer pressure are needed, as well as ways in which to counteract the pressure boys place on each other to embody hegemonic forms of masculinity.

Added Stress

When considering the various difficulties many of these boys are faced with every day, such as schoolwork, difficulties at home or financial stresses, the extra strain of possible exclusion or self-isolation, due to deviating from the norm, must be difficult to cope with. Children experiencing this type of stress must find it challenging to resist peer pressure.

Maybe things that make people stressed, maybe failing at school, maybe your friends embarrass you in front of many people. Maybe as me, I don't have any parents, I will think many things, maybe that I'll end up as a street kid, or I have to go find work, going to stay somewhere where I can't get help or money, to be forgotten about.⁴¹⁷

Resistance of peer pressure can be especially difficult when boys *with* girlfriends are perceived as receiving less negative treatment:

Yes they don't say nothing to them when they have girlfriend.⁴¹⁸

Pattman proposes that while we are socialised to behave in certain ways, our gender identities are not fixed; but are constructed from the cultural resources available to us and then performed depending on our context and interactions with others. It can be argued that what motivates us to choose certain identities are the social rewards attached to choosing the right identity at the right time.⁴¹⁹ Many boys may embody forms of hegemonic masculinity due to the social rewards that accompany doing so. This may be especially tempting for boys who endure many other hardships.

The respondents do not only live in financially disadvantaged and challenging circumstances: they are painfully aware of these circumstances and are often actively involved in attempting to improve them.

⁴¹⁷ Jabu, School C, 16.

⁴¹⁸ Kwanele, School B, 14.

⁴¹⁹ Tony Jefferson, 'From "Little Fairy Boy" to "The Compleat Destroyer": Subjectivity and Transformation in the Biography of Mike Tyson', in Máirtín Mac An Ghail (Ed.), *Understanding Masculinities*, (Philadelphia, 1996), p. 160.

She [his mother] doesn't work; the money she supports us with is the money she gets from the president, the grant. Sometimes it's difficult because I have to look after my younger brother when my mother, sometimes she works in Durban. So I have to take care of my younger brother.⁴²⁰

Many of the respondents had lost a parent and many were being raised by single mothers:

No I don't know where my dad is, but I remember him when I was five years old, my mother says he just ran away, he didn't say anything.⁴²¹

A few of the boys were being supported by their elder siblings, who were struggling to care for their families:

No, my mom passed away in 2006. I live with my sisters; they are twenty-one years and twenty-two years. They try [to look after us] but they don't have enough money. They don't have work. They are not married, they have two children each, between and five and six years, I try to help to look after them. I have one brother who is fourteen. We all live together.⁴²²

Some respondents described peers who receive little guidance from their parents:

Yes there's some mothers who don't tell them, they just look at them, don't say anything.⁴²³

Many of the respondents and their peers' lives are characterised by uncertainty and instability. Their lives are already very challenging without the added strain of having their male identity attacked and undermined; or facing exclusion and ridicule when they might already feel very alone. The strain and stress these worries may cause young boys must make withstanding peer pressure even more difficult. The temptation to succumb is exacerbated when the boys are told by their friends that drinking, smoking or having sex helps to relieve stress.

⁴²⁰ Sibusiso, School B, 16.

⁴²¹ Kwanele, School B, 14.

⁴²² *Ibid.*

⁴²³ Sizwe, School B, 13.

Maybe they can tell me she is good, tasted nicely, you can forget whatever, you can forget your stress, maybe when you are stressed many people go and maybe drink alcohol, some go and smoke to relieve stress.⁴²⁴

Boys were also described as preying on their peers' feelings of exclusion by implying that because they do not have a girlfriend, they will be alone forever.

They do tease you that you should have a girlfriend. There is this other boy, I think he is Grade Twelve, he was teasing us, me and Lindelani, saying that we'll be alone 'til we die, we don't have happiness, stuff like that, we don't know much about sex.⁴²⁵

While experiencing this kind of fear and loneliness, it must be acknowledged that the possibility of being excluded or ridiculed might often be too much for some boys to face. Some boys may choose to engage in certain activities in order to feel included; to feel good about themselves; or to escape the painful realities of life.

Condoms

The majority of the adolescent respondents demonstrated accurate knowledge regarding HIV issues. Many respondents were able to recite responsible behaviour practices, which assist in the avoidance of HIV infection, such as using a condom, abstaining, testing, remaining faithful, as well as appropriate procedures when handling blood.

Yes, we learn about HIV in school. They say we must abstain until we are old enough to sleep with a girlfriend. They say we must be faithful with your partner, tell them the truth about yourself, go for test. They say condomise when you have to do sex.⁴²⁶

However, the general attitude toward condoms described during the interviews was disconcerting in terms of HIV spread.

Teachers say it's better to use a condom, but people don't want to listen.⁴²⁷

⁴²⁴ Jabu, School C, 16.

⁴²⁵ Sibusiso, School B, 16.

⁴²⁶ Kwanele, School B, 14.

⁴²⁷ Mzizi, School C, 15.

The risk of contracting HIV is heightened immensely if safe sex is not practised. The combination of multiple partners, concurrent partners, early sexual debut and a negative attitude toward condoms is very dangerous.⁴²⁸

Some of the boys here in school, they don't have one girlfriend. Some of them they have many girlfriends. When you are [a girl] learning at [the primary school], in Grade Seven, you have a boyfriend here [at the high school], but you are not the only one, because the boy will also have girlfriends here in the high school.⁴²⁹

It was not clear that the risk-taking behaviour associated with unsafe sex could be linked with masculinity, except in one response:

You must not use a condom to be a real man, so you can feel it.⁴³⁰

The most commonly cited reasons for not using a condom were that they can break and that they reduce the pleasure of sex.⁴³¹

Others they think using condoms is a good thing, 'cause it protects you. Others think that you cannot trust a condom, 'cause condoms is something that is like a plastic, maybe it's gonna blow.⁴³²

Some use condoms and some don't, because they say that condoms are boring, and you don't have fun.⁴³³

Many of the boys repeated versions of a common expression: that having sex while wearing a condom is like eating a sweet while it is still in its wrapper.

The boys say so, because they say when you are having sex with a girl with the condom, it means you are eating a sweet with the paper on, it's not natural.⁴³⁴

⁴²⁸ For more information regarding the effects of concurrent relationships see Epstein, *The Invisible Cure*.

⁴²⁹ Sizwe, School B, 13.

⁴³⁰ Lindelani, School B, 15.

⁴³¹ An issue often raised by people who have used condoms is that they can be construed as a sign of mistrust, Varga, 'Sexual decision-making and negotiation in the midst of AIDS: youth in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa', p. 48. None of the respondents mentioned this, indicating that they may never have used a condom and thus their attitudes may not reflect actual experiences but fears and myths they have heard. Their attitudes are relevant nonetheless, as these opinions may impact on their decision whether or not to use a condom in the future; and also reflect the attitudes of their peers who are engaging in sex.

⁴³² Mzizi, School C, 15.

⁴³³ Kwanele, School B, 14.

⁴³⁴ Thulani, School C, 14.

Some of the boys they don't even go to take condoms in the clinic. They say, 'Can you eat a banana that is not peeled?'. They say you don't enjoy sex if you are using a condom.⁴³⁵

Various studies have reported similar attitudes.⁴³⁶ The more negative the attitudes that surround condoms the less likely it is that people will use them. Free condoms can often be incorrectly perceived as inferior and thus some men feel that if they cannot afford a bought condom they may as well not use one at all.⁴³⁷

They say condoms blow. They cannot afford to buy the expensive ones, because they don't have the money. They say they do not have to use condoms cos they know they're going to blow.⁴³⁸

It is also important to consider how poverty may affect the level of control many boys feel over their own lives. Youth need to have hope for the future if they are to take responsibility for their actions but this may be very difficult for many adolescents due to the high levels of unemployment in South Africa.⁴³⁹

They also need to be nurtured in their own self-esteem to combat the hopelessness, bleak futures and sense that 'it doesn't matter anyway'.⁴⁴⁰

How can young men be encouraged towards health-enabling strategies geared towards taking care of themselves and their future, if that future is so uncertain.⁴⁴¹

⁴³⁵ Sibusiso, School B, 16.

⁴³⁶ Walker, Reid & Cornell, *Waiting to Happen*, pp. 33- 34; Nzioka, 'Perspectives of Adolescent Boys on the Risks of Unwanted Pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted Infections: Kenya', p. 114; MacPhail, 'Challenging dominant norms of masculinity for HIV prevention', p. 146; Varga, 'Sexual decision-making and negotiation in the midst of AIDS: youth in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa', p. 57; Tillotson & Maharaj, 'Barriers to HIV/AIDS protective behaviour among African adolescent males in township secondary schools in Durban, South Africa', p. 90; Wood, Maepa & Jewkes, 'Adolescent sex and contraceptive experiences: perspectives of teenagers and clinic nurses in the Northern Province', p. 16; Eaton, Flisher & Aar, 'Unsafe sexual behaviour in South African youth', p. 158.

⁴³⁷ Tillotson & Maharaj, 'Barriers to HIV/AIDS protective behaviour among African adolescent males in township secondary schools in Durban, South Africa', p. 93.

⁴³⁸ Lindelani, School B, 15.

⁴³⁹ MacPhail, 'Challenging dominant norms of masculinity for HIV prevention', p. 148; Pattman, 'Researching and working with boys and young men in southern Africa in the context of HIV/AIDS: A radical approach', p. 34; Selikow, *Youth Sexuality and HIV/AIDS in a South African urban township*, pp. 103-105.

⁴⁴⁰ Walsh & Mitchell, "'I'm too young to die": HIV, masculinity, danger and desire in urban South Africa', p. 65.

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

Without a sense of autonomy and control in their lives, many people may feel pessimistic about their ability to protect themselves from HIV/AIDS, attributing the disease to conspiracy theories or the fulfilment of a biblical prophecy, rather than as a result of human behaviour.⁴⁴² This could affect their decisions regarding condom use.

Boys who don't use condoms, they don't care, they say when you get HIV it's the judgement you get from God. They don't think HIV is a disease that spreads from one person to another, it just happens.⁴⁴³

It is suggested that certain males choose not to use condoms due to poverty and sexual deprivation: males without money often find it difficult to attract females, and thus when a sexual opportunity presents itself protection is not a priority.⁴⁴⁴ This is supported by an HSRC finding that while many young people are sexually active, levels of sexual activity are infrequent, which was attributed to a lack of opportunity, mobility and distance.⁴⁴⁵ Males who do not always have the space, time or privacy to have sex may not want to 'waste' sexual opportunities by using a condom, as condoms are perceived as inhibiting the pleasure derived from sex. Alternatively they may not wish to squander an opportunity simply because they do not have a condom at hand.

It is important for both males and females to be educated about condoms but it is especially relevant for males, as it is often males who determine condom use.⁴⁴⁶ The Team co-ordinator confirmed this:

It is mainly the guys, because they lead, kind of like they are the leaders in the relationship, they are the ones you will decide whether they want to use it [a condom] or not.⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴² Tillotson & Maharaj, 'Barriers to HIV/AIDS protective behaviour among African adolescent males in township secondary schools in Durban, South Africa', pp. 94 & 95.

⁴⁴³ Sibusiso, School B, 16.

⁴⁴⁴ Mfecane et al, 'The Practice of Masculinity in Soweto Shebeens: Implications for safe sex', pp. 98 – 99; Foreman, *AIDS and Men*, p. 24.

⁴⁴⁵ Harrison, 'Young people and HIV/AIDS in South Africa: Prevalence of infection, risk factors and social context', p. 272.

⁴⁴⁶ Walker, Reid & Cornell, *Waiting to Happen*, p. 47; Ampofo & Boateng, 'Multiple meanings of manhood among boys in Ghana', p. 58; Nzioka, 'Perspectives of adolescent boys on the risks of unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections: Kenya', p. 108; Rivers and Aggleton, *Men and the HIV Epidemic*, <http://www.undp.org/hiv/publications/gender/mene.htm>; F. Nii-Amoo Dodoo, 'Men Matter: Additive and Interactive Gendered Preferences and Reproductive Behaviour in Kenya', *Demography*, 35, 2, 1998, p. 229; Sathiparsad, 'Masculinities in the era of HIV/AIDS: the perspectives of rural male Zulu youth', p. 182; Peacock & Botha, 'The New Gender Platforms and Fatherhood', p. 283; Shefer et al., 'Masculinities in South Africa', p. 78; Maharaj, 'Promoting Male Involvement in Reproductive Health', p. 42.

⁴⁴⁷ Sam Mchunu, The Team Co-Ordinator.

Misconceptions Regarding Condom Safety

Respondents from Schools B and C were able to recite accurate knowledge regarding condoms.⁴⁴⁸ However, respondents from School A expressed disturbing misconceptions, which were possibly influenced by their discussions with The Team facilitators. The Team is part of a Christian-based organisation and therefore promotes abstinence as their preferred prevention method. During the discussions I witnessed,⁴⁴⁹ learners were actively encouraged to avoid condom use. The justification given for this was that condoms were originally developed to prevent pregnancy and are therefore ineffective in preventing the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases. The Team suggested condoms are dangerous and emphasised that abstinence is the only truly effective HIV prevention method. When discussing condoms during the interviews the respondents from School A repeated information that was similar to the information The Team facilitators had provided.

What do boys at your school think about using condoms?

If you talk to people about using condoms they will say many things: condoms are not a hundred percent safe; why should we use condoms when they are not a hundred percent safe? I've done this research, Hayley, about condoms, and I've found the most interesting thing: that condoms were not made to protect people from sex; or to protect you from diseases that you get from sex. But they were made for unwanted pregnancy and I've done that research and there was one question in my head, so why are they telling us to use the condoms when the condoms weren't made for the STIs, the STDs and HIV? Why are they telling us to use condoms? And I don't think that's in my head only, I think every person has that question.

Do you have an answer?

I don't have an answer.

This does not necessarily imply that the respondents agreed with this idea. They may have repeated it to me assuming it was 'correct' answer I was looking for.⁴⁵⁰ The fact that they were prepared to repeat it to me as the 'correct' answer is worrying nonetheless. It must be acknowledged that The Team facilitators were viewed in that context as HIV experts and

⁴⁴⁸ The respondents from Schools B and C explained that they were taught HIV/AIDS awareness and education during Life Orientation lessons and also during visits from LoveLife, an HIV/AIDS awareness and education organisation. The respondents from School A were the only respondents I spoke to who had attended a workshop conducted by The Team.

⁴⁴⁹ I did not have the opportunity to discuss The Team's specific policy regarding condom use and can only report what occurred within the discussions I witnessed.

⁴⁵⁰ This may have been because I accompanied The Team during the workshop and therefore may have appeared to be a member of The Team. However, I did attempt to make it clear that I was not.

many children would accept what they said as fact, without question. Other misconceptions also arose:

They say condoms has diseases of its own. They say it, the oil gives you diseases.⁴⁵¹

Opinions such as these, which are not uncommon, serve to fuel negative attitudes towards condoms, further hampering the fight against HIV/AIDS.⁴⁵² Encouragingly, one respondent accurately commented that the efficiency of a condom does not depend on the condom but the way in which it is put on.

I think they're safe. I think that if you get HIV when you use a condom it's not that the condom doesn't work, it depends on the time that you put on the condom. It's that maybe something went wrong when you put it on, maybe you rushed and didn't put it on properly.⁴⁵³

The Merits of Educating Children about Condoms

While it is asserted that the consistent use of condoms is only ninety-seven percent effective,⁴⁵⁴ UNAIDS insists that, 'The male latex condom is the single, most efficient, available technology to reduce the sexual transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections'.⁴⁵⁵ The importance of condom use as an HIV prevention method is two-fold in that consistent use of condoms will also protect users against sexually transmitted diseases.⁴⁵⁶ HIV is more likely to be transmitted when either or both partners

⁴⁵¹ Lucas, School A, 12.

⁴⁵² le Grange, 'Taking the bull by the horns: working with young men on HIV/AIDS in South Africa', p. 104; MacPhail, 'Challenging dominant norms of masculinity for HIV prevention', p. 147; Tillotson & Maharaj, 'Barriers to HIV/AIDS protective behaviour among African adolescent males in township secondary schools in Durban, South Africa', p. 93.

⁴⁵³ Dumisani, School A, 16.

⁴⁵⁴ 'In general, the failure rate for perfect use (a condom used correctly at every act of intercourse) is approximately 3%, and for typical use (condoms not used for every act of intercourse) the failure rate is 12%... With regular sexual intercourse over a period of two years, partners who consistently used condoms had a near zero risk of HIV, whilst inconsistent use carried considerable risk averaging 14.21%', 'The Male Latex Condom – Fact Sheets', Fact Sheet 1, p. 4, http://data.unaids.org/Publications/IRC-pub01/JC003-MaleCondom-FactSheets_en.pdf.

⁴⁵⁵ 'Condoms and HIV prevention: Position statement by UNAIDS, UNFPA and WHO', 19 March 2009, http://www.unaids.org/en/KnowledgeCentre/Resources/FeatureStories/archive/2009/20090319_preventionposition.asp.

⁴⁵⁶ 'Currently, condoms that are manufactured in accordance with international standards, and are packaged and stored correctly, will if used consistently and correctly substantially reduce the risk of unwanted pregnancy and/or the transmission of STDs/HIV. Laboratory studies confirm that intact latex condoms form an effective impermeable barrier to spermatozoa and pathogens, including HIV, herpes virus, hepatitis B virus, cytomegalovirus, gonorrhoea, and Chlamydia trachomatis', 'The Male Latex Condom – Fact Sheets', Fact Sheet

have, or have had, an STD.⁴⁵⁷ Neglecting to use condoms increases the risk of contracting STDs and thus the chances of contracting HIV are heightened. Commitment to abstinence is indeed an incredibly effective method of HIV prevention. However, the interviews demonstrated that many adolescents struggle to remain abstinent and so for those who are engaging in sex, condom use is imperative. Studies have also found that prevention programmes that exclusively promote abstinence do not reduce the risk of HIV infection.⁴⁵⁸ Neglecting to encourage condom use; failing to demonstrate the correct use of a condom; and the outright criticism of condom efficiency within HIV education is potentially dangerous and misguided. Benefit may be found from further research into the methods employed by Christian based HIV awareness programmes.

Emerging Alternatives to Hegemonic Masculinity

It is important to note the alternative forms of masculinity that emerged amongst the respondents, which can be associated with reduced HIV risk behaviour. These contested versions of masculinity indicate that change is possible within the gender system.⁴⁵⁹ Important attributes they wished to demonstrate in their adulthood included being respectful, religious, faithful, non-abusive, determined, responsible, honest, helpful and altruistic, as well as becoming someone their community can respect.⁴⁶⁰ Many boys felt that others cannot respect you unless you respect them first.

In order for people to respect me, first I must respect them, so that they can respect me, and do things that won't hurt them, do things that will help them.⁴⁶¹

By abstaining from sexual engagement the respondents did resist many forms of hegemonic masculinity, *but* they did not escape ridicule for doing so. Thus while they were able to

1, p. 4, http://data.unaids.org/Publications/IRC-pub01/JC003-MaleCondom-FactSheets_en.pdf; 'Male methods, especially the latex condom, are a very reliable strategy for preventing pregnancy and diseases. Epidemiological and clinical studies show that consistent and correct condom use during sexual intercourse is an effective strategy for reducing the transmission of viral and bacterial STDs, including HIV', Maharaj, 'Promoting Male Involvement in Reproductive Health', p. 42.

⁴⁵⁷ 'The Male Latex Condom – Fact Sheets', Fact Sheet 1, p. 3, http://data.unaids.org/Publications/IRC-pub01/JC003-MaleCondom-FactSheets_en.pdf.

⁴⁵⁸ *2008 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic*, UNAIDS, p. 103.

⁴⁵⁹ Lindegger & Maxwell, 'Teenage Masculinity', p. 107.

⁴⁶⁰ I acknowledge that this may have been an image they wanted to portray during the interviews, but I believe that the respondents were being genuine in the descriptions of their attitudes and beliefs.

⁴⁶¹ Thulani, School C, 14.

accommodate different forms of masculinity more effectively than some of their peers; they struggled to transform hegemonic forms of masculinity.⁴⁶² The respondents represent alternative masculinities, but essentially they suffer isolation and difficulty by doing so, in lives that are already challenging.⁴⁶³ More needs to be done to support such boys in order for real changes to be made.

Alternate positions do exist even though they are not the most favoured. Boys do have agency. While *yimvu* masculinity is not hegemonic, it does gnaw at the hegemonic status of violent masculinity. Masculinities evolve spatially. Violent masculinity is dominant and not easy to challenge openly, but the existence of *yimvu* masculinity means that not all poor, black Zulu boys choose *tsotsi* culture.⁴⁶⁴

Sibusiso, being particularly strong willed, has attempted to positively influence other boys:

There was this boy Sane whose family I think they are rich, and he'll tell everyone, 'Oh man, yesterday I took Zinhle to Pie City, maybe I took her to KFC', and you could see this other boy that I play soccer with, Sandile, was very interested and he wanted to be just like Sane. One day me and Lindelani, we took him to the library and talk to him. We could see that his mind, he was confused cos he wanted to be like that boy. I think at his house they have a lot of money, cos sometimes he'll just take out maybe R10 and buy the girls some sweets some chips and Sandile wants to be like him, and he was beginning to smoke and drink alcohol but me and Lindelani I think we help him because we took him to the library and talk to him and we saw that his mind was beginning to get back to normal.

Sibusiso also found that rejecting hegemonic masculinity elicited positive responses from some of his female peers:

Some other girls they don't like you because you have money, they like you because they like your attitude, your self control, and you always think about positive things, you don't speak about negative things, negative things like talking about sexual harassment, maybe you do sexual harassment in the school, maybe you smoke.

This is very encouraging as it demonstrates the possibility of positive role models and the power of the peer group for positive change. Other respondents however, found it difficult to challenge their male peers:

⁴⁶² Morrell, 'The Times of Change', pp. 26 – 29.

⁴⁶³ Bhana, 'Violence and the Gendered Negotiation of Masculinity Among Young Black School Boys in South Africa', p. 215.

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 216. *Yimvu* boys are categorised as boys who go to church, and are considered gentle compared with other boys in their school. They are teased, bullied and ostracised from the other boys.

It's me who tells them about HIV. I say, 'Keep continuing like you are you will suffer when you have HIV'. They say you are foolish. They take their own words seriously and not me, they make what I'm saying into a joke.⁴⁶⁵

Yes I try to talk to them, but they say I'm stupid, I must leave them alone in their life, yes is difficult.⁴⁶⁶

Thus certain responses demonstrated the possibility of change and others the difficulties that change elicits. Much more work needs to be done to support the boys and men attempting to resist and possibly challenge destructive forms of hegemonic masculinity. Longitudinal studies to investigate the endurance of such alternate masculinities would also be useful.

The Effect of HIV/AIDS

It is notable that HIV/AIDS is having an impact on hegemonic forms of masculinity in that the fear of HIV/AIDS motivates some boys and men to change their behaviour patterns.

Some boys they want to engage you in sexual things, they think you're doing the wrong thing. Majority of school boys have girlfriends. It's not difficult for me - I don't want to die with a disease.⁴⁶⁷

Lindegger and Maxwell's study found changes in enacted masculinity were 'primarily motivated' by an increased awareness of HIV risk.⁴⁶⁸ Other studies have had similar findings.⁴⁶⁹ However, for changes to be real and lasting they need to come from *within* the gender system, rather than motivated by an outside fear of something like HIV.

The source of the change is derived from *outside* gender relations rather than *inside*, meaning that change in gendered behaviour and gender relations was not primarily the result of interventions at changing the gendered system of relationships and behaviour.⁴⁷⁰

⁴⁶⁵ Bongani, School C, 14.

⁴⁶⁶ Kwanele, School B, 14.

⁴⁶⁷ Andile, School C, 15.

⁴⁶⁸ Lindegger & Maxwell, 'Teenage Masculinity', p. 107.

⁴⁶⁹ Steinberg, *Three Latter Plague*; Hunter, 'Cultural Politics and Masculinities: Multiple-Partners in Historical Perspective in Kwa-Zulu Natal', p. 217; Brown, Sorrell & Raffaelli, p. 593.

⁴⁷⁰ Lindegger & Maxwell, 'Teenage Masculinity', p. 107.

It is hopeful that some of the respondents had very positive ambitions for the future, such as gaining respect by respecting others. Other studies have had similar findings: that while destructive forms of hegemonic masculinities clearly exist, many boys and men are becoming increasingly aware of alternative options and that there is room for change.⁴⁷¹ Such attitudes need to be consolidated and utilised in interventions that encourage changes in gendered behaviour and changes in the way we conceptualise gender. Such interventions may be more effective than those employing fear tactics. However, in order to consolidate this progress and also channel its successes into the fight against HIV/AIDS, gender needs to take a much more central position in HIV/AIDS discourse, rhetoric, policies and interventions.

It is only through support for interventions to address the political dimensions of gender that we will be able to move from a situation in which the institutional architecture of governmental and intergovernmental responses to the HIV epidemic regard gender equity as an additional concern, often embodied in the marginal figure of the gender focal point, rather than as a central foundation for any effective response.⁴⁷²

Progress is also especially difficult when men who are trying to change are ridiculed for doing so by their male peers.⁴⁷³ MacPhail suggests that the men and boys already engaged in questioning and challenging masculine norms should be utilised as role models within intervention programmes so as to create safer spaces for men to begin developing alternative norms for themselves and their communities.⁴⁷⁴

Through speaking with The Team, it became clear that some of the men had been able to avoid peer pressure through their religion: Christianity. S'phiwe, from The Team, described how one of his brothers questions his lifestyle but because of S'phiwe's religion his friends choose to defend him.

⁴⁷¹ Ampofo & Boateng, 'Multiple meanings of manhood among boys in Ghana', p. 71; Rabe, 'Being a father in man's world: the experiences of goldmine workers', p. 257; Walker, 'Negotiating the Boundaries of Masculinity in Post-Apartheid South Africa'; Gibson & Rosenkrantz Lindegaard, 'South African boys with plans for the future', p. 140.

⁴⁷² Greig et al., 'Gender and AIDS: time to act', pp. 36 – 37.

⁴⁷³ Peacock & Levack, 'The Men as Partners Program in South Africa: Reaching men to End Gender-Based Violence and Promote Sexual and Reproductive Health', p. 180; Sideris, "'You have to change and you don't know how!'", p. 133.

⁴⁷⁴ MacPhail, 'Challenging dominant norms of masculinity for HIV prevention', p. 148.

He's [his brother] different from me...he have girlfriends, *girlfriends* not girlfriend...He ask me, when we were together with my friends, he said, 'Eh this boy he doesn't have a girlfriend', and I said, 'Yeah, I don't have', and my friend said, 'Hey this is the pastor man, don't say that'.

This however, can also be seen as a challenge to hegemonic masculinity that comes from within the gender system. For many people religion may offer a set of standards to adhere to which supersede the pressure they receive from their peers to engage in sex. Abstinence may be less problematic for religious people due to the affirmation they receive from their religious peers, and their passionate adherence to a belief system that condemns sex before, and outside of, marriage.⁴⁷⁵ However, for many religious people living in South Africa, especially in rural areas, religion is often intertwined and engages with indigenous religious ceremonies and traditional belief systems.⁴⁷⁶ These traditions may often carry varying levels of patriarchy, which even for religious men may be difficult to reject. Furthermore, as demonstrated by the argument between The Team members, religion is often used as a justification for why men should be dominant and why women should be submissive. Thus religion can be a problematic alternative to hegemonic masculinity.

Enabling Factors

While the respondents acknowledged how difficult it is coping with the constant strain of peer pressure, many claimed they had not fallen victim to it. Instead, they focussed on working hard at school and achieving their dreams.⁴⁷⁷ For many of the respondents it was their family that had given them the strength to withstand these pressures. Through support and encouragement, the respondents' self-esteem was such that it seemed they did not need to prove their masculinity in order to feel worthy as a male. Many of the respondents were self-assured, without needing to fall back on hegemonic masculinity to define their identities. This underscores the importance of parental/family involvement and support and the possible effects of being orphaned or neglected.

Sometimes others are so sad that they don't have anybody, sometimes you find it is only siblings...sometimes there is no one who gives guidance at home, so everybody

⁴⁷⁵ Sideris, "You have to change and you don't know how!", p. 115; Walker, 'Negotiating the Boundaries of Masculinity in Post-Apartheid South Africa', p. 178.

⁴⁷⁶ Walker, 'Negotiating the Boundaries of Masculinity in Post-Apartheid South Africa', p. 178.

⁴⁷⁷ Again, I acknowledge that this may have been the impression the boys wanted to give me.

does whatever he thinks...they don't have a sense of belonging. Mainly most of them, what they want: trust them, believe in them, they say no one trusts me, no one believes in me; they do what they do cos nobody cares anyway.⁴⁷⁸

Every time when we come from school she (aunt) asks about what I'm doing at school during the day, ask us about the homework and things we are facing at school, friends talking badly, and we tell them, and our sister, or our stepfather and they tell us about how to face that challenge, because they don't want me to feel stressed, because then I won't be able to concentrate at school.⁴⁷⁹

While peers may be very influential, it is often parents or family who are responsible for raising a child with a healthy self image and self-esteem, which can equip adolescents to withstand peer pressure. Adolescents without a strong sense of who they are and their ability to achieve their goals may find it much easier to follow the crowd and conform to expected modes of behaviour, than adolescents who have been encouraged by their families to believe in themselves and focus on their future.

If you know what you want to be and you know what you're like you cannot do something because a friend did it. Your friend cannot decide your life, you can decide your life, so my friend cannot influence me to do anything that I don't like.⁴⁸⁰

Friends can make you get involved in many things...you can get involved when you are not strong about yourself and what you want and your future.⁴⁸¹

It's not hard because my mom loves me and I love her. I don't feel like I'm alone with when I'm doing things, my mom is always there for me.⁴⁸²

Parents' influence on some of the respondents' positive attitudes were demonstrated through their focus on their goals for the future:

Mom, she motivates us all the time, before we go to bed, almost every week. She said you must stay out of trouble, respect elders and don't have fear of the things we want to do. If I want to be a lawyer, I must work hard to be a lawyer. Some things they don't come to you, you must go to them.⁴⁸³

⁴⁷⁸ Sam Mchunu, The Team Coordinator.

⁴⁷⁹ Jabu, School C, 16.

⁴⁸⁰ Thulani, School C, 14.

⁴⁸¹ Jabu, School C, 16.

⁴⁸² Sizwe, School B, 13.

⁴⁸³ Sibusiso, School B, 16.

Yes, because he [father] didn't finish school because of some things, he wants me to finish school and go to university and be working. He wants me to be like a role model in the community because there are not many people who have finished school and gone to university.⁴⁸⁴

Peers need not be a source of negative pressure: Sibusiso in particular spoke of the support he receives from his friend Lindelani. Unfortunately, from his descriptions it seemed that such close and supportive relationships are rare and may not be met with positive affirmation from peers. Thus for many boys, such friendships may not be available to them.

I think they see it in other ways, because even when I tell the other guys, 'Guys, Lindelani came to help me at my home', they don't seem to be supportive, my team mates they don't seem to be supportive because they say, 'Oh, it happened' and we carry on playing soccer.

There are of course other important factors, including the potential for schools to have a positive influence on their learners' attitudes towards gender equity. It is important for schools to interrogate their cultures of teaching and learning, to ascertain whether they are places where boys continue to be socialized to oppress women.⁴⁸⁵ Schools are sites where sexual identities are developed, practised and produced, as well as sites for the negotiation of gender identities and inequalities. As such their environments can be an integral support or obstacle in the formation of new approaches to gender.⁴⁸⁶ Especially relevant are Life Orientation lessons, in which HIV/AIDS and sex education takes place. It is important for this curriculum to be taught in such a way that it addresses young people as active authorities, acknowledging and focussing on the issues that affect young people in their real lives, rather than moralising or problematising young people's sexuality.⁴⁸⁷

⁴⁸⁴ Thulani, School C, 14.

⁴⁸⁵ Brown, Sorrell & Raffaelli, p. 594; Debbie Epstein, Robert Morrell, Relebohile Moletsane & Elaine Unterhalter, 'Gender and HIV/AIDS in Africa, south of the Sahara: interventions, activism, identities', *Transformation*, 54, 2004, p. 6; Bhana, 'Violence and the Gendered Negotiation of Masculinity Among Young Black School Boys in South Africa', p. 206; Divia Naidoo et al., "'Masculinity and Schooling', Participants at a workshop on masculinity and schooling report on gender issues for educators', *Agenda*, 35, 1997, p. 81.

⁴⁸⁶ Epstein & Johnson, *Schooling Sexualities*, p. 2. Pattman, 'Making pupils the resources and promoting gender equality in HIV/AIDS education', p. 91; Pattman, 'Researching and working with boys and young men in southern Africa in the context of HIV/AIDS: A radical approach', p. 40.

⁴⁸⁷ Pattman, 'Researching and working with boys and young men in southern Africa in the context of HIV/AIDS: A radical approach', p. 45; Pattman, 'Making pupils the resources and promoting gender equality in HIV/AIDS

Self-Esteem

The issue of self-esteem is one that requires greater focus within HIV/AIDS intervention programmes and strategies.⁴⁸⁸ Higher self-esteem may greatly equip boys to forge their own identities, without the need to rely on demonstrations of hegemonic masculinity in order to feel good about themselves. However, the model of hegemonic masculinity may become a psychic anchor or psychological identity for many boys, serving as a basis for self-perception and self-esteem.⁴⁸⁹ Failing to embody such ideal statuses could cause great damage to boys' confidence, but successfully embodying notions of hegemonic masculinity could carry great risks, such as HIV infection. It therefore seems necessary for boys to be able to create and build their own identities outside of hegemonic masculinity.

Furthermore, research indicates that low self-esteem is often associated with: early onset of sexual activity; a higher number of sexual partners; the propensity to associate sex with emotional affirmation; and a fear of displeasing partners, which can lead to the avoidance of serious conversations regarding testing, condom use or unfaithfulness.⁴⁹⁰ Many of the respondents have received attention and encouragement from their parents, family members or schools, but for many children of this age positive reinforcement, love and attention can be rare.

You know, we young people have nobody who either trusts us or understands us.⁴⁹¹

Healthy and trusting attitudes towards adults are also beneficial in terms of HIV/AIDS education, in that messages coming from adults will be more readily accepted.⁴⁹² Thus positive relationships with one's parents, family and teachers, and the effects of a healthy self-esteem can be seen as a great enabling factor for the emergence of alternatives to hegemonic masculinity.

education', p. 91. These chapters are very useful regarding male/female dynamics within an HIV/AIDS education class.

⁴⁸⁸ Walsh & Mitchell, "'I'm too young to die": HIV, masculinity, danger and desire in urban South Africa', p. 65.

⁴⁸⁹ Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making: Cultural Concepts of Masculinity*, p. 10.

⁴⁹⁰ Eaton, Flisher & Aar, 'Unsafe sexual behaviour in South African youth', p. 159.

⁴⁹¹ Nzioka, 'Perspectives of Adolescent Boys on the Risks of Unwanted Pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted Infections: Kenya', p. 111.

⁴⁹² Ramphele & Richter, 'Migrancy, family dissolution and fatherhood', p. 80.

Constraining Factors

History and Tradition

The interviews made it clear that changing people's perceptions of gender and masculinity will not be simple. One of the reasons for this is the belief that history and tradition dictate behaviour. Many respondents expressed the view that because things have been a certain way for a long time they will be difficult to change.

I think it is now transacted from blood to blood, it's in our blood now, passed down. It can change but it will take time, you know Zulu men, you know how they are, they are very stubborn, they believe in what they believe in and they don't want it to be changed.⁴⁹³

A comment such as this could be interpreted to mean that the respondent believes behaviour patterns are innate, or 'in our blood'. However, the same comment could be interpreted to mean that behaviour patterns are passed down, or learnt, from one generation to the next. Some of The Team members believed that gender norms were something they had learned as children. They explained that they felt 'programmed' to behave and think in certain ways and as such, changing these attitudes would be very difficult. Nonetheless, they remained optimistic that change is possible.

Phumi: You find people saying the women's place is the kitchen, women needs to do washing... should I say it's the way that we were taught? ...I think, that, should I say tradition, is it tradition? Has a lot to do with it, it does play a major role, in this whole thing. It is a learnt culture.

Thandi: So it's like it's something we grow up with, it's *in* us. It's up to our generation to change the generation that's gonna come in the future, so it's up to us, because with us, it's like difficult cos it's there, it's like *in* there, it's something we grew up with.

Phumi: It's like we are programmed.

Thandi: Yeah, like in The Matrix, you know The Matrix? It's like we are programmed, it's in us. Cos really even me, I know I've been taught about gender and all this stuff, but when I'm in the church ...I forget about what I've been taught, because the programme is inside me, what I've been taught, seriously, it's like we're programmed, it just happens automatically, because it's something that is within us.

⁴⁹³ Nkosi, The Team, 25.

Lack of Positive Role Models

Various studies have found that positive role models are very helpful in terms of encouraging alternate and progressive forms of masculinity, but that in many communities positive male role models are scarce.⁴⁹⁴ Some of the respondents, who demonstrated a strong sense of self-worth and can be seen as accommodating alternate forms of masculinity, were able to cite a male role model from within their community. They admired their role models for their generosity, kindness and ability to respect those around them. These are all qualities which the boys should be able to embrace in terms of being human, without needing to think of them as specifically masculine qualities.

Yes, there's a man who works in the Mpophomeni Centre, he teaches young children computers, and to him to grow up like that it's very difficult cos he had no one who looked after him. He likes people very much and he looks after children that have no parents, like street kids. He told me he was a social worker before he became a computer trainer.⁴⁹⁵

The principal of this school, he is very good, he is my role model, cos he is respected in this area. I want to be like him.

Why do people in the area respect him?

Because he respects them, they respect him, if you want people to respect you, you must respect them.⁴⁹⁶

Maybe my neighbour, Mr Madlala, he has a garden, he feeds people who don't have food, he gives them fresh food, spinach, vegetables, he helps the community.⁴⁹⁷

Few respondents mentioned their father as a role model. This is disheartening, as having a father as a positive role model can be very beneficial to a child's development. Encouragingly, some of the respondents mentioned women who were their role models.

⁴⁹⁴ Ampofo & Boateng, 'Multiple meanings of manhood among boys in Ghana', p. 72; MacPhail, 'Challenging dominant norms of masculinity for HIV prevention', p. 147; Selikow, *Youth Sexuality and HIV/AIDS in a South African urban township*, pp. 102-103. Peacock & Botha, 'The New Gender Platforms and Fatherhood', p. 285; Pattman, 'Researching and working with boys and young men in southern Africa in the context of HIV/AIDS: A radical approach', p. 48; Morrell, 'Fathers, Fatherhood and Masculinity in South Africa', p. 15; Philippe Denis & Radikobo Ntsimane, 'Absent fathers: why do men not feature in stories of families affected by HIV/AIDS in KwaZulu-Natal?', in Linda Richter & Robert Morrell (Eds.), *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*, (Cape Town, 2006), p. 245.

⁴⁹⁵ Sibusiso, School B, 16.

⁴⁹⁶ Andile, School C, 15

⁴⁹⁷ Kwanele, School B, 14.

The emergence of influential and empowered women in communities is helpful in terms of encouraging gender equality and eradicating male and female polarisation.

My aunt is my role model. She likes people, and she has taxis. She's a businesswoman. I want to make my own money.⁴⁹⁸

However, it must also be acknowledged that while many of the children being raised by single mothers learn how strong, independent and capable women can be, these women are also products of a gendered society and therefore often equally contribute to the socialisation of boys to conform to hegemonic standards.

My mom wants me to work and take care of her because she is not working.⁴⁹⁹

Many women may encourage their sons to be strong and self-reliant *men* who will care for and provide for their families. It is possible that many mothers wish their sons to grow up differently from their own fathers who have abandoned them. However, this pressure placed on boys can be detrimental, and work needs to be done to encourage mothers to desire children who are strong and responsible *people*, who can embrace gender equality.

Reactive and Defensive Men

Through speaking with The Team, and especially to the male facilitators, it became clear that many men are threatened by the growing empowerment of women. The change in status quo has left them feeling bewildered and insecure, unsure of their place and role in the world and in their families. These feelings allow them little space to accept the empowerment of women and can motivate men to attempt to reassert their power. Some of the male Team members felt confused that what they were taught or experienced as children is now seen as incorrect.

Just because we live in the locations now, it's quite difficult, cause those things we doing way back, but now it's quite difficult as we don't know what to do anymore, as the women are coming to empower now ... we don't know where we are now ... Our fathers were doing the right thing, if it is right, I don't know anymore now, cause I think our fathers as the men, they were sometimes disrespecting women ... but some things like making decisions and do everything like be there for your family, now it's something like, I dunno Hayley, I'm so so [pauses and shakes his head],

⁴⁹⁸ Sizwe, School B, 13.

⁴⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

that's why sometimes I just sit down and keep quiet, cause I don't know what to say, or I'm afraid I'm offending someone, or trying to put my rule on someone else, cause I think me and my wife we will talk about this ... it's new, it's quite challenging... cause it's about me ... how my parents raised me, cause my father was the head, he makes the decisions and everything went well. But if there are some other opinions that can help I can even include them. It's quite difficult, women now are like on top, they can talk, it's good cause now they are free, you can talk everything, you can do everything, it's good but at the very same time, we are stepping back, we are like not there anymore, women don't need us anymore.⁵⁰⁰

Studies have found this confusion to be a common amongst men.⁵⁰¹

You have to change and you don't know how. The government is confusing things. They say let's go back to culture and then they say let's go forth. Meanwhile they are legalising polygamy, [yet] they say women have equal rights.⁵⁰²

This fear, opposition and resistance to change poses a great challenge for work that seeks to promote gender equity. Peacock and Botha suggest that men should view the emancipation of women as part of their own emancipation from oppressive societal expectations of how men 'should' behave.⁵⁰³ Unfortunately however, the way men 'should' behave is often the way men may want to behave, as much of this behaviour directly offers them power and social rewards. Walker found this attitude amongst her respondents:

Men feel threatened...It is that strength, it is that threat of knowing that I can no longer hold onto that same position I held, or my father or my brother held...Change to men is like taking away their privileges. When things change they fear it.⁵⁰⁴

The process of accepting change can also painful as men are 'confronted by the fragile foundations on which their identities are constructed'.⁵⁰⁵ Such disruption can cause great anxiety and fear, while tradition and cultural regulations of rights, duties and authority may be temptingly reassuring and comfortable.⁵⁰⁶ Unfortunately, 'this kind of assertion of

⁵⁰⁰ Themba, *The Team*, 21.

⁵⁰¹ Harrison et al., 'Gender Role and Relationship Norms among Young Adults in South Africa: Measuring the Context of Masculinity and HIV Risk', p. 711; Peacock, 'Urgency and Optimism: Masculinities, Gender Equality and Public Health', p. 152, Margrethe Silberschmidt, 'Disempowerment of Men in Rural and Urban East Africa: Implications for Male Identity and Sexual Behaviour', *World Development*, 29, 4, 2001, p. 666; Sideris, "'You have to change and you don't know how!'", pp. 130 – 131; Walker, 'Negotiating the Boundaries of Masculinity in Post-Apartheid South Africa', pp. 161 & 168.

⁵⁰² Sideris, "'You have to change and you don't know how!'", p. 133.

⁵⁰³ Peacock & Botha, 'The New Gender Platforms and Fatherhood', p. 285.

⁵⁰⁴ Walker, 'Negotiating the Boundaries of Masculinity in Post-Apartheid South Africa', pp. 168 & 169.

⁵⁰⁵ Sideris, "'You have to change and you don't know how!'", p. 112.

⁵⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 113 & 121.

tradition bears the danger of fundamentalism and, for women, holds the peril of their being denied the full entitlement of citizenship'.⁵⁰⁷ As a society, if we continue to reinforce and condone destructive hegemonic notions of masculinity, widespread change seems a distant hope:

It takes a lot of guts for a man to accept that we should be non-violent, that we must think of women as equal. Actually I don't really think we are equal because you can see everywhere you go that the man can beat her, get her to have sex, but to think of a woman as equal, to have safe sex, to not be violent takes hard work. You can teach us in school, but in society, in the bush, in the meetings of men we see, boys see things are not like that.⁵⁰⁸

While in many respects the world has opened up for young South Africans over the last decade, particularly for those in urban areas, strong societal reactions against these changes are evident and can be most pronounced in rural locations.⁵⁰⁹ The need to address this resistance is urgent, as continuing to focus on female empowerment without recognizing the gap in men's acceptance of it may do more harm than good.⁵¹⁰ Mtutu emphasises the danger of neglecting young boys in gender equity development:

Who do these young women have to deal with? They are dealing with young boys – young men who are still 'doing time', who are still in the prison of masculinity and patriarchy. We need to be able to re-define gender roles from an early age, so that when these two meet, when they start falling in love, engaging, they are doing so on an equal level, because when that empowered young girl engages with this young man who cannot engage, all he can do is resort to violence, sexism and so forth. Let's really look at how we re-socialise the young boy from that early age onwards.⁵¹¹

In order for any female empowerment initiatives to be effective, or attempts to bolster gender equity to be successful, these negative responses amongst men have to be acknowledged and strategies developed to counteract them.

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 134.

⁵⁰⁸ Gibson & Rosenkrantz Lindegaard, 'South African boys with plans for the future', p. 143.

⁵⁰⁹ O'Sullivan et al., 'Gender dynamics in the primary sexual relationships of young rural South African women and men', p. 101; Walker & Reid, *Men Behaving Differently*, (Cape Town, 2005).

⁵¹⁰ Wood & Jewkes, 'Violence, Rape and Sexual Coercion', p. 42.

⁵¹¹ Peacock, 'Urgency and Optimism: Masculinities, Gender Equality and Public Health', p. 151.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The respondents' conceptions of masculinity have numerous implications for the HIV epidemic. The belief that men should be strong, respected, in control, the head of the household, a provider, perform tasks deemed appropriate for men, drink alcohol and have multiple sexual partners in order to be considered a 'real' man, encourages behaviour patterns that contribute to the spread of HIV. In order for HIV intervention programmes to be effective these conceptions need to be considered, engaged with and challenged. Their negative effects need to be exposed, as well as their basis in stereotypes and generalisations, which are seldom accurate.

The pattern of peer pressure occurring in the lives of the respondents is of grave concern for a number of reasons. In an area with such high levels of HIV prevalence the active encouragement of young boys to have sex, often without a condom, and with multiple partners, is dangerous. The respondents face various stresses in their young lives, such as financial worries, the loss of a parent or other troubles at home. For many boys, experiencing such difficulties may render peer pressure too challenging to withstand. Greater efforts need to be made to understand the context and experiences of this generation.

This research suggests that adolescent children, and pre-adolescent children, are at an extremely important age for intervention programmes as this is the time they are developing their identities and beliefs around masculinity. Adolescent males may already be 'entrenched in the local construction of hegemonic masculinity', which enhances and maintains many of the behaviours that put them, and their female partners at risk of HIV infection.⁵¹² Thus intervention programmes need to target children before such beliefs and attitudes emerge or become ingrained further.

This study recommends that in order to challenge the negative effects of hegemonic masculinity, men need to be able to develop an identity that is not linked to their gender. For example, a man should not strive to protect his children because he is a man but

⁵¹² Lindegger & Maxwell, 'Teenage Masculinity', p. 98; le Grange, 'Taking the bull by the horns: working with young men on HIV/AIDS in South Africa', p. 107; Pattman, 'Making pupils the resources and promoting gender equality in HIV/AIDS education', pp. 96 – 97; Wood & Jewkes, 'Violence, Rape and Sexual Coercion', p. 45.

because he is a parent; a husband should not wish to remain faithful to his wife because he is a man but rather because he loves and respects his partner. Certain studies suggest that men should draw on particular aspects of masculinity in order to construct a more positive form of gender identity.⁵¹³ This research concludes however, that the negative and positive aspects of masculinity are very difficult to extricate from one another: by encouraging a boy to take responsibility for his actions, simply because he is male, we continue to encourage that boy to think he needs to take responsibility for the females around him. This implies that women cannot take responsibility for themselves and that men have the right to make decisions for them. I would argue that it is short sighted to attempt to isolate positive aspects of masculinity, and that long term successes lie in the eradication of gender polarisation.

This is not simple: 'masculinity is not just an idea in the head, or a personal identity. It is also extended in the world, [and] merged in organized social relations'.⁵¹⁴ Thus 'establishing new forms of culture entails challenging current economic realities as well as deep-rooted norms and values'.⁵¹⁵ Unfortunately, as long as there are tasks in our society that require men to conform to hegemonic standards of masculinity, progress in challenging these forms of masculinity will be slow:

So long as there are battles to be fought, wars to be won, heights to be scaled, hard work to be done, some of us will have to 'act like men'.⁵¹⁶

In order for progress to be made in challenging hegemonic notions of masculinity, there are various wider societal issues that need to be addressed, such as poverty and unemployment.⁵¹⁷ Men need to be able to feel positive about themselves as people and as parents in order to avoid the need to define themselves through the use of masculinity. Without employment and a sense of self achievement it may be very difficult to resist

⁵¹³ Sideris, "You have to change and you don't know how!", p. 135; O'Sullivan et al., 'Gender dynamics in the primary sexual relationships of young rural South African women and men', pp. 109 – 110.; Wilson, 'On being a father and poor in southern Africa today', p. 35; Morrell, 'Fathers, Fatherhood and Masculinity in South Africa', p. 21; Hunter, 'Cultural Politics and Masculinities', p. 219; Lindegger & Maxwell, 'Teenage Masculinity', p. 108.

⁵¹⁴ Connell, *Masculinities*, p. 29.

⁵¹⁵ Sathiparsad, 'Masculinities in the era of HIV/AIDS: the perspectives of rural male Zulu youth', p. 194.

⁵¹⁶ Connell, *Masculinities*, p. 33.

⁵¹⁷ Mehta, Peacock & Bernal, 'Men As Partners: lessons learned from engaging men in clinics and communities', p. 95.

destructive patterns of hegemonic masculine behaviour as a means of attaining a sense of control and pride.

It is encouraging that so many respondents listed positive attributes they wish to embody as adults. Attributes such as responsibility, integrity, and honesty are qualities that societies need to uphold, rather than so-called 'masculine' attributes that force boys into feeling pressurised to have sex, dominate women or dominate each other. Responsibility, integrity and honesty are also attributes that we should all strive to uphold irrespective of our gender. In order for children to conceptualise a positive future for themselves, it is important to cultivate their self-esteem. By doing so, boys may be better equipped to steer away from patterns of dominance and sexual conquest, which could be perceived as readily attainable avenues of receiving respect or achieving 'real man' status. Although it is difficult for boys, and society, to reject negative hegemonic masculine behaviour patterns and instead embrace attributes that are independent from gender, progress will be made if we acknowledge certain masculine ideals as harmful and work towards challenging them.

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University of Cape Town

Appendix A

Consent Form: English

Dear Parent or Guardian

I am conducting research for my Masters degree at the University of Cape Town. I am hoping to speak to young boys about their feelings and attitudes towards growing up to be men. With your consent I will have a conversation with the participant where we will discuss what it is like growing up in South Africa as a boy; what he enjoys and what he finds difficult; what he thinks about his future; and who his role models are. The interview will take about an hour and it will be recorded. In return for the participant's time I hope to be able to give him a small gift to say thank you. By signing this consent form, you are agreeing on behalf of your son or dependent to the following terms:

- I (the participant) agree to participate in this research.
- I have read the above description of the interview process and understand what the interview will involve.
- I am aware that what I say may be used in the researcher's Master's thesis and possibly might be published for use within the University of Cape Town, but that my identity will be concealed and that no one will be able to identify me.
- I am aware that I may withdraw from the research at any point if I become uncomfortable or no longer wish to participate, and that if I prefer, anything I have said will no longer be used.
- I am aware that I am not obliged to say anything I do not want to or answer any questions I do not feel comfortable answering.
- I am allowed to ask the researcher any questions that pertain to the research.

Signature of Guardian: _____

Name of Guardian: _____

Name of participant: _____

Age of participant: _____

Name of researcher: Hayley Thomson

Signature of researcher: _____

Thank you very much for taking the time to read the consent form. I believe that each participant has very important opinions and feelings, which should be heard. I hope to represent them accurately and faithfully. Each participant's contribution is integral and valuable to this project and I appreciate it immensely.

I can be contacted with questions on 072 372 1374 or thomson.hayley@gmail.com.

Consent Form: Zulu

Sawubona Mzali

Ngicela ukukhuluma nabantwana esikoleni ngoba ngifunda eCape Town ngezinto ezahlukene.

Ngokukhuluma ngabantwana ukuthi balulekwa kanjani ngokukhula kwabo futhi nokubaluleka ngegculaza.

Sign: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Name of student: _____

Ngiyabonga.
Hayley Thomson

Appendix B

Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

Topics to be covered

(Introductory questions, such as: what is your name; how old are you; tell me about your family?)

What is a 'real' man like?/What does a 'real' man do?

What are some words that describe a 'real' man?

What does your family think a 'real' man is like?

What does the TV and radio say about a 'real' man?

What do boys at school say a 'real' man is like?

Who are your role models, what do you like about them?

What kind of man do you want to be like when you grow up?

What do you want to do when you grow up?

What is good about being a boy?

What is difficult about being a boy?

Do you think having a girlfriend is part of being a 'real' man? Why?

If you are 16 and you have not had sex does this mean you are a 'real' man?

When should you have sex in order to be a real man?

(Other questions asked to create ease and a flow of conversation: what is your favourite school subject, favourite soccer team, favourite sports?)