Constructions of masculinities by men working in the Gender Justice space

M.A. Research

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Abstract

The scholarship from the global north has framed Black Men in Africa in a negative light, particularly due to the colonial conquest, colonisation itself, and colonial research. This misrepresentation of African men is partly attributed to being studied outside their context, the context in which they live and work. This phenomenon of studying African masculinities from afar results in the generalization of findings on a population without the consideration of individual contexts, the individual and social contexts in which African masculinities originate and thrive. Contrary to the global northern scholarship, this thesis aimed to study and understand contextualized constructions of African masculinities within the gender justice space through the participants' narratives. This aim was achieved through answering the following three questions, 1) How do men construct and negotiate their masculinities while working in gender justice spaces? 2) How do male gender justice workers speak of themselves and other men in relation to the work they do? and 3) What motivates men to work in the gender justice space? Six black men working in or have previously worked in a gender justice organisation were recruited to participate in sharing their narratives through semi-structured interviews. Through two broad themes, the thematic narrative analysis highlighted various complexities related to the constructions of masculinities by men working in the gender justice and equality space. The following broad themes and subthemes were identified; The first theme *Social and personal subjectivities* consisted of subtheme (1) Heroes, villains and other characters. The second theme *Motivations for gender justice work* included two sub themes, (1) Taking a stand against injustices and (2) Inspired by curiosity and scholarship. Contrary to the global northern research portraying Black African men as inherently embodying violent masculinities, the findings in this project indicate otherwise. It is worth noting that indeed some hegemonic African masculinities such as militant-type masculinities in Zimbabwe, weaponized masculinities in Sudan and traditional masculinities in South Africa do exhibit violence. However, this study highlights that there has since been a shift by innumerable numbers of African men from these hegemonic masculinities to adopting alternative masculinities, masculinities that are positive and caring. In addition to adopting positive and caring masculinities, the participants also point to men being at the centre of both gender justice and injustice, showing that men can either play the hero or the villain in the story of gender justice.

Keywords: Men, Masculinities, Gender, Gender Justice

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Chapter One: Masculinities and gender justice

1.1 Masculinities in Africa

Masculinities as an independent field of inquiry, independent from gender studies, women's studies and sex role theories is a relatively new development having gained most of its traction and recognition in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990's (Reeser, 2015; Mfecane, 2018; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Researchers Bridges and Kimmel (2011) assert that since inception the study of masculinities has now become a rapidly progressing vibrant and interdisciplinary field of study. An example of this progression is observable in the growing interest South African researchers of gender-based violence and HIV such as Dworkin, Hatcher, Colvin & Peacock (2013), York (2014) and Morrell, Jewkes & Lindegger (2012) have shown in issues of violence and gender equality and inequality, consequently leading to a growing interest in masculinities (York, 2014). Many scholars such as Morrell, Jewkes, Lindegger & Hamlall (2013) and Mfecane (2018) have noted that most scholarship on masculinities in Africa follow a global northern route of research inquiry. This route of inquiry ultimately perpetuates colonial notions of the dangerous black African man. African and particularly black men are represented by northern research as inherently violent, patriarchal and with no capacity for care or the capacity to positively contribute to the society (Langa & Kiguwa, 2013; Shefer, Stevens & Clowes, 2010). Many global northern scholarships present the idea of black men in Africa as being violent and dominant, perpetuating narratives of black, violent and problematic African masculinities (Shefer, Stevens & Clowes, 2010; Jewkes, *et al*., 2015; Langa & Kiguwa, 2013; Morrell, *et al*., 2013). The existing scholarship of global northern research and theories thus offers a limited scope and insight into the experiences of what an African man is and how African men define their masculinities, the notion that this view is limited is further reinforced by researchers such as Rodrigues (2022), Shefer, Ratele, Strebel, Shabalala & Buikema (2007) and Mfecane (2018). Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) adds to this by asserting that the analyses of masculinities need not only prioritize the globalized formulations of gender but should also consider and respect the local and situational formulations of gender. Furthermore, research needs to promote and recognize the importance of men's involvement in the gender justices space seeing that masculinities are becoming even more problematized (Elliott, 2016). To combat problematic theories and generalizations of African masculinities there is a crucial need for men to engage in care work in order to

challenge and resist existing masculinities and to emphasize positive masculinities in order to improve research and the lives of both men and women.

1.2. Gender justice

Gender Justice is a term that is rarely given an exact definition, and this is mainly because what is considered fair and right in the gender space varies across cultures and societies (Goetz, 2007). None the less, for this study I adopt the definition of gender justice offered by Nahla Valji (2007), who defines gender justice as the protection and promotion of social, civil, political and economic rights based on the idea of promoting equality among genders. This definition of gender justice further emphasises that achieving gender justice requires the adoption of gender-sensitive strategies such as the immediate acknowledgment of victimisation and representation for the victimized; this is done to achieve gender equality and to protect and promote the rights of all boys, men, women and girls (Valji, 2007).

This definition is suitable for this study as it promotes the equality of all genders without differentiation and not meant for the benefit of any particular gender. It does not favour any sole gender and exemplifies protection of the gendered spectrum in which this study's participants work with. Most of the participants' gendered work involves working with individuals from different genders and age groups. Apart from Valji's (2007) delineation of gender justice, I believe that the simplest way to understand gender justice is to first understand its functions. I see the function of gender justice as to rectify gender injustices by ensuring that no one is discriminated against or disadvantaged based on their sex or gender, hence the function is reflected in its name. The presence of the gender justice concept entails the existence of a space in which gender justice is actively practiced, a gender justice space. The gender justice space is a space that actively puts in place various gender justice practices that are aimed at ending inequalities within families and societies, inequalities that exist between men and women, while promoting gender equity and equality (UNIFEM, 2010; Global Fund for Women, 2022a). Gender justice is primarily enforced by gender justice organizations such as non-government organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), non-profit organizations (NPOs), research and academic institutions that advocate against violence against men and women, whilst advocating for gender equality, and tackling other gender specific matters related to both men and women.

1.3. Research aims and rationale

Rationale

According to Ratele (2015, p. 152), "work with men and boys is necessary, can be effective, and can have a positive, transformative impact for the lives of women and girls, but also for the lives of men and boys" – South Africa has the 4th highest rate of femicide globally, amounting to approximately 51% of the 30.5 million female population having been victimized by men at one point in their lives (Statistics South Africa, 2018; Mashifane, Ndlovu, Nyalungu & Obadire, 2020). With these facts in mind and through observation of current sociological trends related to gender violence and gender inequality, there is an urgent need for intervention, particularly male intervention, as well as a need for the reimagination of existing violent masculinities.

Additionally, there is a general paucity of literature focusing on masculinities within the gender justice space. This lack of literature adds onto the risk of African men being viewed and analysed through foreign literature that does not take into account their specific African contexts. Literature that portrays African men in a limited scope. Therefore, it is essential to produce knowledge from within Africa to determine the influence that intersecting factors play on facilitating the construction of positive and transformative masculinities. To aid the scholarship and understanding of reimagined masculinities, the following aims and questions will be kept in mind.

Research aim and significance

This study occupies a space within a larger scholarship on masculinities that seeks to reconceptualise, reimaging and reconstruct masculinities within South Africa. More specifically, this study aims to explore and understand the reimagination of progressive masculinities that are constructed by men working within the gender justice space, masculinities that have remained relatively unexplored. Considering the scarcity of men working within the gender justice space, the literature on their contextual masculinities is virtually non-existent, thus demonstrating the uniqueness of this study.

Research questions

Towards achieving the abovementioned aim, the following questions will be answered.

1. How do men construct and negotiate their masculinities while working in gender justice spaces?
2. How do male gender justice workers speak of themselves and other men in relation to the work they do?
3. What motivates men to work in the gender justice space?

1.4. Structure of the thesis

Through this project, I collected narratives from men that work or previously worked in the gender justice space in order study and understand contextualized constructions of African masculinities within the gender justice space. This was done through evaluating how they position themselves in the work they do and how they speak about other men. The men were recruited through email and interviewed with the aim of eliciting narratives that speaks to how these men through their work construct their masculinities and disrupt or challenge dominant discourses of men and masculinities in South Africa. Through this study I focus on the experiences of black men within the gender justice space and their reconstruction of masculinities.

In Chapter one, I contextualize the main concepts of this study which are Men, Masculinities and Gender Justice. In Chapter Two I present literature on gender, gender injustices, the need for and the functions of a Gender Justice Space. Following this I also discuss briefly the presence, proportion and importance of men working in the gender justice space. In the same chapter I also outlined the concept of masculinities as a social construction and I discuss the intersection between masculinity, gender and coloniality. Lastly, I explore and review the existing constructions of masculinities in Africa and in South Africa, followed by reviewing other masculinities that may portray Black African men in a negative light. In Chapter Three I discuss narrative framework as a theoretical framework for the study. Chapter Four outlines the methodology, the aim of the study and methods taken to meet this aim. I employed narrative methods for data collection and analysis. In Chapter Five I present and discuss the two broad themes namely, *Social and personal subjectivities* and *Motivations for gender justice work*. Through analysis I have found that many men are becoming more open to adopting alternative, caring and positive masculinities and that most of their perceptions of man are based on their interactions with women. Additionally, many African men are also

aware of their position as men and the role they can play in combating gender issues and in helping other men adopt the aforementioned alternative, caring and positive masculinities. I conclude the thesis in Chapter six where I provide a summary of the findings, I discuss the limitations and end of by providing recommendations and suggestions for future research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1. Gender (In)Justice and the Gender Justice Space

The scramble for Africa in the 1900's, pioneered by colonialist 'authority' from the global north was characterized by the partitioning and conquering of Africa, resulting in the enforcement of global northern cultures, perspectives and routes of enquiry in Africa (Michalopoulos & Papaioannou, 2016; Morrell, Jewkes, Lindegger & Hamlall, 2013). The advent of colonialism not only brough on global capitalism and enslavement in Africa but also resulted in the disruption of existing gender roles and indigenous values, as well as the launch of European-based hegemonic masculinities (Connell, 2016; Lugones, 2010). These are specific types of masculinities that generally legitimize the men's dominant position while actively justifying risk-taking, physical prowess and the subordination of the female population (Messerschmidt, 2019). This are also types of masculinities that were adopted and popularized by in South Africa by white Afrikaner colonialists (Morrell, Jewkes & Lindegger, 2012). Academic scholarship on the hegemonic masculinities present in South Africa has consistently focused on explaining the relations between men and the power men had over women (Morrell, Jewkes & Lindegger, 2012). Majority of the research on the existing hegemonic masculinities in South Africa portrays the hegemonic masculinities as characterised by male dominance and actively subjugating the female population, such research may give us some insight into the existing high levels of GBV and the gender justice space in South Africa.

South Africa's history is ridden with extreme instances of violence, particularly after our initial colonisation in 1652, colonial powers established themselves in South Africa through violence and by colonizing gender norms and women, part of this colonial effort was characterized by the sexual exploitation of women (Connell, 2014; Morrell, Jewkes & Lindegger, 2012). All throughout colonialism and even after the quelling of colonialism women in South Africa are afraid of being the next victim of gender-based violence, they are afraid of being targets and victims within their own communities and in their own homes (Khumalo, 2019). This is, in part a result of several cases of GBV and femicide prevalent in the country. A result of cases of murder such as those of Karabo Mokoena (24) and Uyinene Mrwetyana (19). Karabo Mokoena was brutally killed and burnt by her boyfriend in 2018, reportedly as part of a sacrifice ritual to ensure the prosperity of his business. This tragedy sparked a national outrage of women and resulted in the labelling of men with the hashtag

#MenAreTrash (Matebese, 2023; Farber, 2022). Another tragedy is that of Uyinene Mrwetyana a nineteen-year old UCT student who was raped and murdered by a post office worker in 2019. The tragic murder of Uyinene Mrwetyana sparked another national outrage directed at men, accompanied by another hashtag movement named #AmINext? (Masemola, 2019; Lyster, 2019). Gender-based violence and femicide in South Africa have become severe and common occurrences over the years and were exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, this is especially true as gender-based violence on a global scale is known to worsen particularly during times of conflict and emergencies (Van Schalkwyk, 2016; Dekel & Abraham, 2021; Beza, 2015). Dekel and Abraham (2021) have even named this GBV phenomenon in South Africa as the shadow pandemic, a pandemic occurring within another pandemic. The Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown in South Africa seem to have created an encouraging environment for increased GBV and femicide. This is a result of forcing a vulnerable female population to isolate in the same confined spaces as their victimizers (Odeku, 2021; Dekel & Abrahams, 2021).

According to The World Health Organization (2021), up to 27% of women globally between the ages of 15 and 49 have at some point in their lives been a victim of interpersonal/relationship violence by their male partner. Victims of interpersonal violence seldom report being victims and rarely actively seek help. Most women do not report their victimization, and men are even less likely than women to report being victims (Douglas & Hines, 2012; Gracia, 2004). When victims eventually seek assistance, they usually do so at shelters or other safe spaces for protection and for access to resources, which helps by removing themselves from the space in which their abuser resides (Gierman, Liska, & Reimer, 2013). In a recent South African study by Dekel and Abrahams (2021) with sixteen female victims of GBV differing in geographic location, age, demographic and racial profiles, the women claimed that they all feared for their lives and required the safety of a shelter during the lockdown. This study shows the extent of the GBV problem, it's the non-discriminatory nature and the need for safe shelter. South Africa is also plagued by other gender issues such as rape of women and children, a high drop-out rate of young girls due to pregnancy, a high rate of illiteracy amongst women, xenophobic attacks on men and women, as well as women occupying lower levels in the labour market (Commission for Gender Equality, 2021).

The gender justice space plays its part in attempting to resolve or at least alleviate some of these gender related issues by providing shelter and funding to accommodate all victims of GBV (McLean & Wathen, 2022; Peterman & O'Donnell, 2020). Gender justice initiatives

attempt to provide the necessary resources for recovery, provide avenues for achieving legal justice (Saferspaces, 2022b), advocates for gender justice, gender equality, and for human rights (Sonke Gender Justice, 2021; The Justice Desk, 2021). The gender justice space consists of academic organisations such as the Centre for Sexualities, AIDS and Gender, and the African Gender Institute that produce and publish research on community justice, gender justice, sexualities, human rights, class, race, gender, religion and identity (Centre for Sexualities, AIDS and Gender, 2020; African Gender Institute, 2022). The gender justice space is also a network of transformative campaigns such as 16 days of Activism (UN Women, 2023), One Man Can that aims to prevent and eliminate violence against women (Sonke Gender Justice, 2023), and social movements such as the #MenAreTrash, the #metoo movement and the #Sex4Grades movement.

The phrase ‘men are trash’ has now become part of everyday vocabulary and conversation in South Africa (Rupiah, 2017). Although not entirely accurate, the denial of this narrative is not necessarily helpful, it may limit dialogue regarding the involvement of men in gender issues. The engagement on this narrative provides men with the opportunity and platform to analyse their positioning within society and reflect on the direct and indirect role they may play in the onset and perpetuation of GBV. In the advancement of the ‘men are trash’ movement men may come to recognize the existing hegemonic masculinities in South Africa and how they can contribute in the formation of non-violent masculinities. After the tragic incident of Karabo Mokoena, the movement #MenAreTrash appeared online and opened a way for a national dialogue and debate on issues of masculinity, gender and violence against women in South Africa (D’Avanzato, Bogen, Kuo & Orchowski, 2022). The movement can be conceptually defined as a tool used to open dialogue between men and women and for enlisting men in the fight against GBV (D’Avanzato, Bogen, Kuo & Orchowski, 2022). The term ‘men are trash’ serves to disrupt harmful power dynamics and as a way to show solidarity against existing harmful masculinities. The term also helps in warding off victim blaming, it is a way of criticising failures of sympathy and empathy, criticizing entitlement, forcefulness, patriarchy and misogyny (Shahvisi, 2019). Although not all men are patriarchal and misogynistic, most men actually do benefit from the subjugation of women in some way (Matebese, 2023; Rupiah, 2017). The #MenAreTrash movement exists not to condemn all men but to show this connection between all men and women, as well as the silence of men and their unbothered attitude regarding GBV. The #MeToo movement started as a way to bring into light a concealed rape culture and the experiences of sexual assault of young women of colour (Askanius &

Hartley, 2019). The movement later adapted and began challenging gender inequalities and power structures across America and globally (Askanius & Hartley, 2019). The movement also tries to show the lack of resources and support for survivors of sexual violence (Global Fund for Women, 2022). Another example of gender justice initiatives is the #sex4Grades movement. The #Sex4Grades movement exists in Ghana, Nigeria and Kenya. The movement started as a way to bring attention to the sexist behaviours of professionals in academic institutions that demand sex, blackmail and abuse female students in exchange for good grades (Global Fund for Women, 2022b; GitHub, 2022). The gender justice space provides a space for these movements to exist, flourish, raise awareness and validate the personal and societal gendered experiences that men and women go through.

Although the post-apartheid legislation advocates for gender equality in South Africa, the adverse effects of colonial gender segregation still linger in many areas of society including in education and in the workplace (Akala, 2018), hence women still find themselves occupying majority of the lower portion of the labour market. Additionally, the patriarchal invention of the women's 'second shift' of childbearing, caring for the family, the household and the children generally leads to women shouldering more domestic weight than men (Gheaus, 2017; Hochschild & Machung, 1989). Gheaus (2017, p. 4) claims that "women seem to owe their situation to voluntary choices". Although highly contentious, Gheaus (2017) also seems to assert that some of the inequalities women face are a result of their choices and therefore implies that they can also make different choices that may make them less inclined to suffer inequalities. Gheaus's (2017) claims show women's experiences of inequality are not a clear cut phenomenon, it is a complex and intersectional problem that requires a great deal of unpacking and critical analysis. However, domestic affairs, the consequences of apartheid and gender inequality on women are not at the forefront of this research.

Given the realities of women and girls in South Africa it is not surprising that most gender justice and anti-violence initiatives in South Africa are for women, with little attention given to boys and men. Boys and men in South Africa are also prone to injustice, abuse, rape and GBV. MatrixMen (2022) asserts that up to 44% of boys would have experienced some form of sexual abuse by the age of eighteen. But these experiences remain hidden by both the victim and the perpetrator. Crimes such as rape, sexual assault and other gendered related violence against men in many countries such as South Africa are often seen as taboo (Peel, 2004; Jina, *et al*., 2020), therefore these crimes often go unreported. In addition to taboo, the

victimization of men goes unreported due to other varying social and cultural issues such as fear, shame, and stigma (Jina, *et al*., 2020; Peel, 2004). This lack of reporting then creates a sense of secrecy, a sense of secrecy consequently also creates a lack of reporting. This cycle leads to a the lack of or inaccurate statistics and subsequently leading to a lack of resources for boys and men that have been victimized to rely on (Peel, 2004; Jina, *et al*., 2020). In fact, up until 2007, the rape of an adult male was not legally defined as a crime, therefore men could not legally open a case against other men or women as being a victim of rape (Jina, *et al*., 2020; Dekel & Abraham, 2021). Before 2007 men were only seen as perpetrators and never as victims (Jina, *et al*., 2020; Dekel & Abraham, 2021). However, times have changed and male victimhood has become ever so more recognised.

2.1.1. Men in Gender justice spaces

Literature regarding men within the gender justice space is scarce, particularly is South Africa. Preliminary data collection was necessary to collect information regarding the presence of men in the gender justice space. As determined through telephonic conversation with multiple gender organisations in Cape Town and Gauteng, there are significantly fewer men than women working in shelters and gender justice organisations. For those that already work in this space, majority point to working in the gender justice space to alleviate gender inequality as one of the forces that drive them in their daily work. Gender inequality is the unequal allocation of access to the enjoyment of social, legal and cultural rights as well as the enforcement of stereotyped social and cultural roles to empower one gender group at the detriment of another (Cornell, 2013; European Institute for Gender Equality, 2022). Gender inequality is characterized by the idea that men have more privilege, more power, opportunities and entitlement over women (CEDAW, 2017; Kolb, 2008). To tackle and overcome matters of gender inequality, Askanius and Hartley (2019) believe that men need to change by recognizing that achieving gender equality and equity is also part of their responsibility. They need to actively help in the redistribution of power, and in reconstructing masculinities and traditional gender roles (Askanius & Hartley, 2019). The involvement of men working within the gender equality and feminist movements in South Africa advocating for gender equality was claimed to be effective by Mbuyiselo Botha (Bhana & Botha, 2010). There are several good reasons and benefits for both men and women if men actively involve themselves in transformation activities geared towards gender equality. The mere idea of having men involved in such a space can be seen as a method of gender intervention in itself. Kimmel (2010) and Messer

(1997) argue that male involvement in gender equality work has a 'humanizing' effect on men, they assert that by participating in gender equality and rejecting hegemonic masculinities men will expand their emotional repertoire and expand their ability for intimacy with other men, women and children. Additionally, male engagement can lead to reduced male to male violence, reduced intimate partner violence, longer life expectancy, better familial relationships, and increased psychological and physical health (Connell, 2003; Kimmel, 2010; Hearn, 2001; Messner, 1997).

York (2014) asserts that there has been a general growing interest in the gender justice space to transform gender roles, create gender equitable and respectful relationships, promote non-violence and health seeking behaviours, and to nurture self-reflection and new behaviours by men. Some men see this engagement as care work that is meant for women and not for men, these men therefore feel incapable of doing this work (Elliott, 2016; Jordan, 2020). However, some men are open to encouragement and change, they are willing to change and engage in care work towards gender equality and caring masculinities; caring and care work are not biologically determined but are social constructs (Elliott, 2016; Jordan, 2020). Mbuyiselo Botha asserted that men within the feminist movement in South Africa are making an effort, they are starting to question and reject toxic masculinities as well as cultural practices that oppress women (Bhana & Botha, 2010). This is a good start to male engagement. The epitome of male engagement in Gender Justice can be seen in Sweden where men publicly and actively engage in gender-conscious behaviours and activities to promote gender equality, they are not afraid of openly representing and labelling themselves as being feminist (Askanius & Hartley, 2019; Gill, 2016). As a prime example Sweden is also known for having a Minister for Gender Equality dedicated to issues of gender equality, anti-discrimination, human rights, power, influence, work, education and physical integrity (Government Offices of Sweden, 2022). Many men globally however tend to actively deny and ignore anything that is labelled as feminist, this can be observed in countries such as Iceland and Denmark (Axelsdóttir, & Einarsdóttir, 2017; Holmgren & Hearn, 2009). According to Holmgren and Hearn (2009), men tend to choose how they position and present themselves in issues of gender equality. Men's positioning and motivations for getting involved in the gender justice space are twofold, some men are pro-gender equality with the intention to help men gain rights (father's rights, men's rights), while other men are pro-gender equality at the sole benefit of women (Holmgren & Hearn, 2009). I however argue for the existence of more altruistic motives that involve selflessness, gender equality for the sake of humanity than for personal gain or gratification.

Without the presence and direct involvement of men, the chances of gender justice taking an effective step forward are greatly diminished (Jamal, 2014; Bhana & Botha, 2010). Without the involvement of 'caring' men, hegemonic masculinities which are at the pinnacle of gender order tend to create and enforce patriarchal relations in society. The simplest and most understood expression of hegemonic masculinities is the subjugation of women and other men (Elliott, 2016).

So far, the involvement of men in the gender justice space and in the transformation of distorted and hegemonic masculinities in Africa has assisted in the development of a number of gender specific policies, policies such as the Southern African development community protocol for gender and development (SADC, 2021; York, 2014). Male involvement has also assisted in the development of the Maputo protocol 'The African Charter on Human Rights and People's Rights' to promote human rights, to eliminate discrimination, to achieve gender equality and to empower women (York, 2014; African Union, 2003). Within South Africa exist multiple gender justice organizations that actively promote gender justice in different ways. Some of the interventions within the organizations include but are not limited to offering safe shelter, rape counselling and provide advocacy work. Some of the organisations advocating for gender justice in Cape Town are organizations such as Rape Crisis Cape Town Trust, The Saartjie Baartman Centre for Women and Children organization, Sonke Gender Justice, The Justice Desk, The Sisters Incorporated group, and Philisa Abafazi Bethu. The Rape Crisis Cape Town Trust helps survivors of rape with their recovery, by making change in the community and through challenging the criminal justice system to achieve legal justice (Saferspaces, 2022b). The Saartjie Baartman Centre for Women and Children organization is a women and children's centre that offers shelter and multidisciplinary intervention for women and children that have survived abuse (Saferspaces, 2022c). Sonke Gender Justice is a Cape Town and Johannesburg-based non-profit organization that tackles issues of domestic violence, sexual violence, patriarchy, and they advocate for gender justice, gender equity and gender equality all throughout Africa (Sonke Gender Justice, 2021). The Justice Desk is an organisation that advocates for human rights, children rights and against GBV in Africa (The Justice Desk, 2021). The Sisters Incorporated group is an organization that supports, protects, and empowers women and children that have survived violence and abuse (Sisters Incorporated, 2017). Philisa Abafazi Bethu is a Cape Town-based organisation that advocates for the rights of women that have survived intimate partner violence and domestic violence (Saferspaces, 2022a). On the academic and research front are academic and research units such as the Centre for Sexualities,

AIDS and Gender (CSA&G) from the University of Pretoria. The CSA&G is an academic and research centre that uses an intersectional approach in tackling various human rights issues and towards achieving social justice (Centre for Sexualities, AIDS and Gender, 2020). The CSA&G focuses on issues such as social and community justice, gender-based justice, and the intersectionality of class, gender, identity and race (Centre for Sexualities, AIDS and Gender, 2020). Although these organisations all focus on different aspects of gender justice and equality, most of them predominantly focus only on helping women and children.

In preparation for this study, I established contact with some of the abovementioned Gender Justice organizations, obtaining confirmation that most of them focus on helping only women and children. I also obtained information about their staff ratio confirming the shortage of men in their organizations. Rape Crisis Cape Town Trust mentioned that they have a total of thirteen female employees and no male employees at all. The Saartjie Baartman Centre for Women and Children has approximately thirty-five total employees and eight of them being male, that is roughly 22% male workers in this organisation. The HR department of Sonke Gender Justice proclaim that they have only five male employees in relation to a total of thirty-five total employees, this shows that 14% of their employees are male. The Sisters Incorporated group have fourteen employees, with no male employees at all. The Justice Desk have a total of eleven employees with three male employees, 27% of their employees are male. Philisa Abafazi Bethu declared that they have a total of eighteen employees with a total of six male employees, approximately 33% of their employees are male. According to the Centre for Sexualities, AIDS and Gender's (2020) website, their team has approximately fourteen employees, five of those employees are male. The Centre for Sexualities, AIDS and Gender's (2020) website shows that 35% of their employees are male. Although lacking, their small numbers at least show some effort. Their small numbers may help in explaining the scarcity of literature on men working in the gender justice space. As discussed above, the number of men working in the gender justice space is significantly small compared to that of women. However, it seems to be on the rise.

2.2. Masculinities as constructions

In different societies and cultures, people hold different beliefs regarding what are acceptable behaviours for men and women and what are acceptable attributes for men and women (Wright, 2014). Hence masculinity will differ from culture to culture and from one

society to another. The concept of a hierarchical gender order between one masculinity and one femininity is unrealistic and too rigid to understand the nuances that exist surrounding men's gender, emotions and experiences (Seidler, 2006). Masculinity is a social construct regarding gender norms that prescribes certain characteristics and behaviours to boys and men (Everitt-Penhale & Ratele, 2015; Wright, 2014; Reeser, 2011; Morrell, 1998; Uchendu, 2008), it plays a significant role in what it means to be a man (Wright, 2014) but does not describe what a man is. It is important to recognize and acknowledge the separation and differences between what a man is and what masculinity is. The definition of what a man is, is free from any associations with masculinity. Men are only linked to masculinity through social and cultural experiences and not "by virtue of their anatomy" (Jordan, 2020, p. 24). Therefore, being a man does not inherently assume that one is masculine and being masculine does not inherently mean that you are a man. As a social construct, masculinities are constructed through cultural and social processes by individuals based on how they understand their world (Bridges & Kimmel, 2011; Galbin, 2014; Burr, 2015; Andrews, 2012). Ideas and constructions of what it means to be masculine change over time and according to varying social and cultural processes and experiences, some masculinities are even seen as more admirable than others (Wright, 2014). Sometimes there is also a discrepancy between the type of masculinity one has and the type that is most admirable in their community (Wright, 2014), the location, period of time, tradition or culture will determine the masculinity that is most valuable (Elliott, 2016). People who embody caring and progressive masculinities in rural communities may be seen as not masculine enough while those that embody rural and traditional masculinities in progressive communities may be seen as too rough or too masculine (Wright, 2014). Other factors that may play a role in the type of masculinities South African men embody are race, class, religion, ethnicity, and (dis)ability (Uchendu, 2008; Wright, 2014). Boys and men are not passive players in the construction of their masculinity, their agency and decisions also play a role in their constructions (Messner, 1990), this means that men knowingly and actively engage in acts that inform their masculinity construction. However, this construction is also not a fully conscious process, unconscious factors such as fears, motivations and anxieties also play a role in the construction of masculinities (Messner, 1990).

It is best to refer to masculinities in plural seeing that constructions of masculinities come in diverse and different forms (Bridges & Kimmel, 2011; Ratele, 2013; Jordan, 2020). In addition to the factors mentioned above, the constructions of masculinities are also influenced by other factors such as geography, politics and history (Morrell, 1998; Everitt-

Penhale & Ratele, 2015). Similar to femininity and sexuality, masculinity is not a biologically intrinsic construct but a social construct (Ratele, 2013; Silberschmidt, 2005), hence masculinities are unfixed fragile constructions that change throughout varying historical contexts (Silberschmidt, 2005; Ratele, 2013). Masculinities also exist as constructed ideologies regarding scripted behaviour within gendered relationships between men, women, and other people (Silberschmidt, 2005). These ideologies seemingly coincide with the African ideology of Ubuntu. Ubuntu is an African concept that means that a person is a person because of others (Murove, 2012; York, 2014), meaning that you cannot become who you are in isolation. In some instances, Ubuntu has even been described in York (2014) as a highly effective method for promoting gender equality and the transformation of masculinities. Some ideologies of masculinities tend to perpetuate the need to subordinate women and portray superior behaviour such as sexual aggression in order to identify as a man (Silberschmidt, 2005); which is contrary to the concept of Ubuntu (Oelofsen, 2018). As unfixed constructions, many masculinities also compete and/or contradict each other (Cornell 1995; Silberschmidt, 2005). Michael Kimmel (cited in Mfecane, 2018) defines masculinity as a set of social constructions, practices, and performances that characterize a man as being a man; this definition also insinuates that masculinity is all social and consists of no "inner essence" (Mfecane, 2018, p. 292); suggesting that masculinity is social rather than biological. These constructions, practices, and performances include but are not limited to men's consumption patterns, dress codes, sexuality, health, sports, independence and other social factors (Nye, 2005; Mfecane, 2018). The theory of African Personhood however theorizes masculinity a bit differently, believing that all people have an 'essence', meaning that their constructions of masculinities are also internal constructions and not solely attributed as a social construction (White, 2013; Mfecane, 2018). From an African perspective, a persons' masculinity is believed to be greater than just their everyday performances and behaviours (Mfecane, 2018), such as those indicated above by Michael Kimmel in Mfecane (2018). In addition to being constructed internally and socially, African masculinities seem to also be influenced by supernatural elements such as ancestors and spirits that are beyond the human realm (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2012; Mfecane, 2018). However interesting these supernatural elements may be, they are not part of this project.

2.3. Coloniality, gender and masculinities.

Human beings are social creatures, and as social creatures they are constantly forming new social relationships and social constructions, constructions such as those of gender and

masculinities. As mentioned earlier, masculinities are social constructions formed by humans based on their daily social interactions (Galbin, 2014; Burr, 2015; Andrews, 2012), influenced by various factors such as gender, culture, identity, race, power and their lived experiences. Within the South African context, these social constructions can also be influenced by factors such as the political, colonial and apartheid history of the country (Morrell, 1998; Everitt-Penhale & Ratele, 2015). Colonialism and colonial constructions of black men in Africa have historically portrayed black men as being bizarre, barbaric, and evil beings (Boonzaier, 2017). These colonial constructions of black men in Africa are preconceived notions by the colonizers that are further perpetuated by the study of black men outside their context and under a discourse of dominance and violence (Jewkes, *et al*., 2015; Langa & Kiguwa, 2013; Morrell, *et al*., 2013; Ammann & Staudacher, 2021). These preconceived notions take for granted the subjectivities of what it means to be a man in Africa (Hasso, 2018; Mfecane, 2018). This labelling as bizarre, barbaric, evil and othering emerged and served as a tool of colonialism to violently assert power, to dominate and to exploit black men in Africa (Lugones, 2010; Brown & Ismail, 2019). Similar to gendered identity, masculinities developing within a colonial context are likely influenced by various colonial elements. Without a proper understanding of the history of gender, coloniality, unequal dialogue and power relations, current gender justice interventions and practices will only result in surface level results (Alasuutari, 2011), this means that gender justice intervention may only be limited to alleviating the aftermath of gender injustice by addressing the consequences of an issue rather than the cause of gender justice issue itself. Hence it becomes necessary to consider the violent and colonial South African history of dominance and subjugation to understand and interpret masculinities in a post-colonial context; to understand masculinities in a space that actively denounces violence and domination and actively protects and promotes the rights of boys, men, women and girls (Valji, 2007).

2.4. Masculinities in Africa

It has been a common occurrence over the past two decades that a significant number of scholarships on masculinities are preceded by the claim that men have not been studied enough (Smith, 2020). Some scholarships even emphasize the shortage and scarcity of studies that analyse African masculinities (Ouzgane & Morrell, 2005). One reason for this emphasis may be the majority of African masculinities being studied from a Global Northern perspective (Morrell, *et al*., 2013; Mfecane, 2018). To a certain degree this may be true. However, the

absence of previous African scholarship and presence of Global Northern scholarships cannot be the only justifications for future scholarships. By now there has been significant strides made within studies of African masculinities (Smith, 2020). The existing pool of scholarship on African masculinities now needs more studies with emphasis on their contexts; without the lingering narratives of negative associations such as being problematic. As much as the masculinities being investigated are existing in the gender justice space within the South African context, they also exist within a broader African context. To understand these masculinities, I believe it is crucial to understand their broader context prior to narrowing down to their distinct location. This may help in showing the diversity and complexities of existing masculinities in Africa and that men in Africa cannot be lumped into and understood as one category as presumed by the colonizers.

2.4.1. African Masculinities

Masculinities in Africa are distinct, plentiful and actively co-exist (Decoteau, 2013; Ammann & Staudacher, 2021; Uchendu, 2008). Since the conceptualization of Connell's (1995) hierarchy of masculinities in 1995, scholars began to actively classify men within categories of hegemonic, marginalized, complicitous and subordinated masculinity (Smith, 2020). Many men in countries like Nigeria, South Africa and other countries in sub-Saharan Africa seem to portray features of various versions of hegemonic masculinities (Smith, 2020). Hegemonic masculinity is defined as an "ascendant gender position within discursive and material social relations that achieves cultural dominance over femininities and other masculinities" (Ratele, 2016, p. 332). Hegemonic masculinities in Africa openly perpetuate dominance over femininity, marginalization and subordination of other masculinities, and is actively homophobic (Morrell, *et al.*, 2013; Mfecane, 2016; Carrigan, Connell & Lee, 1985). Hegemonic masculinity is not a particular of fixed type of masculinity but a masculinity that is most dominant in a particular area at any given time (Elliott, 2016). Many versions of hegemonic masculinities are characterized by the men's capability to be a father, to be a husband and to provide for his family (Smith, 2020). The concept of hegemonic masculinity however is highly contentious (Ratele, 2016). Hegemonic masculinities often actively foreground homophobia and heterosexuality, although not all men personify hegemonic masculinities, most men benefit from its social benefits (Hence the #MenAretrash movement) (Donaldson, 1993). Hegemonic masculinities reward men for openly displaying their homophobia and for being aggressive through reduced social anxiety and through social

support and approval (Donaldson, 1993). Although rewarding, hegemonic masculinities can lead to gender role strain and to consequences such as poor familial relationships, poor physical and psychological health, lack of self-care and high-risk behaviours (Elliott, 2016; Hoffmann & Addis, 2023).

In many African countries the media has televised violence to the extent at which aggression and violence have become synonymous with masculinity (Silberschmidt, 2005). In East Africa many men adopt violent and aggressive masculinities, which are also exacerbated by poverty, lack of education and unemployment (Silberschmidt, 2005). Bhana, Janak, Pillay and Ramrathan (2021) further assert that boys who are reared within contexts that are of chronic poverty, high unemployment and with absent parents often adopt masculinities that are dominant and violent. In the country of Sudan, and in the Southern countries of Africa such as South Africa and Zimbabwe (particularly during liberation struggles such as Apartheid), masculinity was "not just as social construct", "it was a political weapon" (Wright, 2014, p. 7). War-ridden countries like Sudan often produce these violent combatant masculinities particularly because that is the masculinity most beneficial for survival during war (Wright, 2014). These dominant and weaponized masculinities often look very different in peaceful times than they do during times of war and conflict. During peaceful times (in Sudan), weaponized masculinities are placed aside, and the hegemonic type of masculinity is characterised by a man who can raid cattle and is able to provide a bride price to marry a woman, those that do not marry are not considered to be a man (Wright, 2014). This goes to show the adaptability of men into adopting or constructing different masculinities depending on their contexts or experiences. As masculinity is a social construction, it can change to suit the surrounding community.

The impacts and effects of colonialism on African masculinities are also evident in Zimbabwe, formerly known as Southern Rhodesia (Ngoshi, 2013; Uchendu, 2008). Pre-colonial ideas of masculinity in Zimbabwe (Southern Rhodesia) were characterized by a man's ability to 'perform', the ability for proper articulation and the ability to win verbal arguments (Uchendu, 2008). Men in Zimbabwe that were lacking in verbal skills would be excluded from male gatherings (Uchendu, 2008). The arrival of colonialism in Zimbabwe resulted in the formation of masculinities that were reactionary to and subordinate to the British patriarchal masculinity (Uchendu, 2008). The existing pre-colonial masculinities in Zimbabwe were then undermined to upgrade and glorify colonial masculinities (Ngoshi, 2013; Uchendu, 2008);

masculinities that were anti-Ubuntu. Zimbabwean men thus constructed and adopted militant-type masculinities in response to the violent nature of the British patriarchal masculinity (Ngoshi, 2013; Uchendu, 2008). On the polar opposite of the continent, in Morocco, men's masculinities are also violent but are of a different origin, Moroccan masculinities are dominated by the Islamic religious culture (Ouzgane, 2008; Uchendu, 2008). Moroccans' masculinities are foregrounded by the Islamic principal of men being the leaders in society and women being subordinates, characterised by aggression, competitiveness and the avoidance of any sort of femininity (Uchendu, 2008).

As illustrated above, masculinities in Africa are abundant and a detailed list would be a great but separate undertaking from this project. This brief synopsis of some Northern, Eastern, Western and Southern African masculinities should be able to convey a picture of the possible existing quantity of diverse masculinities in Africa. As evidenced in the literature by Uchendu (2008), Wright (2014), Ngoshi (2013), Ouzgane (2008), Decoteau (2013), Ammann, Staudacher (2021) and Silberschmidt (2005), masculinities in Africa are plentiful and differ according to their context and geographic location. Although they differ in their context and geographic locations, most hegemonic masculinities do share common traits of violence and aggression. These traits also warrant the need to study masculinities within their contexts as this may open the way into identifying the circumstances that lead to violence and aggression across the continent.

2.4.2. South African Masculinities

South Africa is a multicultural and a multi-traditional society, therefore making use of a single universal definition of masculinity is not only difficult but also inaccurate. Albeit the term hegemonic masculinity is one of the most recognized in South Africa (Morrell, *et al*., 2013), it is not the only masculinity recognized in South Africa. As hegemonic masculinity is context-specific, the South African hegemonic masculinity is also not the same hegemonic masculinity that is utilized and recognized in all African communities and African research; except for the above mentioned common violent and aggressive traits. To better explain masculinities in South Africa, Morrell *et al*., (2013) divided hegemonic masculinity into three, namely Black masculinity, African masculinity and White masculinity. Morrell *et al*., (2013) proposed an African masculinity that is a rural masculinity influenced by traditional institutions such as chiefships and customary laws, a Black masculinity that emerged as a result of the

black men moving away from their cultural African townships into the developing urban societies. Black masculinity emerged as a consequence of colonization, apartheid and accelerated urbanization (Morrell, 1998). Unlike African masculinity (the hegemonic term used before emergence of Black masculinity), Black masculinity was no longer tied to chiefships, customary laws, traditional institutions and the countryside (Morrell, 1998). However, Black masculinity, similar to African masculinity remained a direct opposition for White masculinity (Morrell, 1998). Although racial oppression still existed after the transition from African to Black masculinities, this transition signified the opportunity for black men to construct a form of masculinity where modern economic and social influences played a much more significant role than before. This means that unlike African masculinities that emerged from harsh conditions such as apartheid and colonisation, black masculinities started to emerge under better social and economic conditions. This also meant black masculinities are in much more interaction with the opposition, White masculinities; a type of masculinity that also emerged under prosperous social and economic conditions. Lastly, a White masculinity that is a representation of the white South African men characterized by economic and political dominance (Morrell, *et al*., 2013).

In addition to the hegemonic masculinities mentioned above by Morell *et al*., (2013), Reardon and Govender (2011) and Ratele (2013) show us that Southern Africa is also home to other masculinities such as the traditional masculinity, a masculinity that is characterized by the subjugation of women, the dominance over women, is rough, violent and disapproves of homosexuality. Additionally, this masculinity asserts that 'real men' do not cry, essentially meaning that 'real men' do not feel or express pain (Mayekiso & Mawere, 2022). Men that portray a traditional black South African masculinity are often labelled as old fashioned. However, traditional masculinity differs from those that embody the hegemonic masculinity in one distinct way, they do not actively oppress other masculinities (Anjela, 2017). The men that embody traditional masculinity often practice and enforce the tenants of traditional masculinity in many different ways. This is because of cultural differences (Everitt-Penhale & Ratele, 2015). An example of traditional masculinity in South Africa influenced by cultural aspects is a traditional Afrikaans masculinity that is characterized by the domination of Black and Coloured people, drinking beer, homophobia, braai'ing and eating meat (Anjela, 2017). Another example is of a traditional Black masculinity that is characterized by aspects of homophobia and patriarchy, another example is of a traditional Coloured masculinity that is characterized by acts of gangsterism, violence, rape and poverty (Anjela, 2017). Hoffmeester

(2017) asserts that another masculinity in South Africa that is embedded within the South African culture is toxic masculinity. Hoffmeester (2017) defines toxic masculinity as any masculinity that is characterized by violence, repression of emotions and aggression; actively exerting these tenets onto men, women and other genders.

2.5. Conclusion

So much has changed regarding the expressions of masculinities in Africa, especially through moving towards more modern masculinities and away from violent masculinities that may have originated during colonial times (Uchendu, 2008). These former colonial masculinities shifted away from the concept of ubuntu; undermining indigenous value systems, distorting masculine identities and fragmenting communities (York, 2014). Many South African men are starting to forgo these old notions of masculinities and are developing more progressive and positive forms of masculinities (Pasura, & Christou, 2018; Decoteau, 2013). Many African men are beginning to understand and adopt new discourses of African masculinities. To adequately understand these new discourses of African masculinities, masculinities need to be studied within the context they exist in (Ammann & Staudacher, 2021). Bridges and Kimmel (2011) asserted that even within a particular time period, context or society, masculinity can mean different things between different people. This means that two men existing in the same society and context at the same time can construct opposing ideas of masculinity. Even so, generally men in Africa are starting to believe that traditional, colonial or hegemonic ideas of masculinity are no longer appropriate (Ratele, 2013). In Morroco, where formally existed aggressive hegemonic Islamic masculinities (Uchendu, 2008), there is now a new masculinity that is shifting away from violence over women as a sign of masculinity and virility (Dialmy, 2021). Men that are violent in Morocco are beginning to be seen as 'second-degree man' that are undesirable within the community (Dialmy, 2021). The naming of violent men as second-degree is seen as an insult and these men are also labelled as 'false-man' (Dialmy, 2021).

Ammann and Staudacher (2021) emphasize that some newly emerging constructions of masculinities in Africa are related or based on ideals such as love, compassion and egalitarianism; these are some basic principles of Ubuntu. By formulating caring masculinities

which are practice based, men can reject hegemonic masculinities and domination by practicing actual care work and incorporating values such as care, interdependence, positive emotions, relationality into masculine identities (Elliott, 2016). Hoffmann and Addis (2023) add to this sentiment by advocating for the formulation of positive masculinities characterized by traits such as respect for women, generative fatherhood, male courage, heroism, daring, risk-taking, self-reliance, care and humour. Additionally, Hoffmann and Addis (2023) and Jordan (2020) assert that positive masculinities also involve teaching boys and men about 'noble masculinities' and that caring practices area central to being a good man while attempting to lead them away from masculinities that can be harmful. Positive masculinities and caring masculinities are only a few of the progressives theories of masculinities that can be beneficial for men and women in society. Similarly, Jordan (2020) emphasises the need for and importance of caring masculinity. In addition to a caring masculinity that renders care for others, Jordan (2020) asserts that a caring masculinity should also be open to receiving care. These emerging masculinities are contrary to the simplistic and stereotypical view of African masculinities as problematic and violent (Shefer, Stevens & Clowes, 2010). Masculinities in Africa are fluid and therefore need to be studied away from this problematic discourse, must be contextually grounded and studied within the social classes they exist in (Shefer *et al*., 2010; Pasura & Christou, 2018; Ammann & Staudacher, 2021; Morrell, 1998). Studies show that masculinities in African cities such as Johannesburg are being challenged, redefined and (re)negotiated by African men (Ammann & Staudacher, 2021; Decoteau, 2013). This shows evidence of men intentionally resisting old notions of masculinities, practicing agency and actively working towards gender equity and equality (Jewkes *et al*., 2015; Askanius & Hartley, 2019). Scholars such as Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) and Morrell (1998) have emphasised that the creating of these new progressive notions of masculinities greatly disrupts the dominance of violent hegemonic masculinities in the global South. With male involvement we can change masculinities from asserting ideas such as 'being a man requires one to be in charge' to more positive connotations such as 'being a man is being a team player' (Hoffmann & Addis, 2023).

Although colonialism played a significant role in promoting violent masculinities and the global north having played a significant role in the study of masculinities in Africa. It seems as though men in Africa have recognized the need for more progressive African masculinities as well as the importance of their involvement in gender justice issues. There exists various hegemonic masculinities around Africa, and some are falling away into much more socially

conscious masculinities. In addition to positive masculinities, the gender justice space comes in to tackle gender injustices that may or may not have been caused by existing hegemonic and perhaps violent masculinities. Although progressive masculinities represent a positive change, and the gender justice space also promotes positive change. The interaction of progressive masculinities within the gender justice space may lead to a powerful gender justice combination. Conclusively, these realisations lead to the study of masculinities within the gender justice space.

Chapter Three: Unraveling the stories: A narrative Theoretical Framework

3.1. What are narratives?

Michael Murray (2003) defined narratives as cohesive accounts of events that have occurred or are expected to occur in the future. Before Murray, Donald Polkinghorne (1998) defined narratives as any written or spoken representation, and Ian Parker (2005) subsequently defined narratives as the performance of ones' story and identity. It is clear that there is no singular definition or interpretation of narratives. From an amalgamation of the provided definitions, narratives can be defined as co-constructions between the narrator and the audience within a particular context (Riessman, 2008). These narratives are characterized by the fact that they have likely been told to a different audience before, under different contexts and in different ways, although the current context they are being told is important in their construction, narratives can also have been constructed through repetition within previous telling's (Taylor, 2005). Disregarding the context in which the story was previously told helped in maintaining focus on the current story without letting the previous context influence the story itself.

3.2. Why people narrate.

Denzin (1989), Murray (2003) and Mishler (2006) refer to narratives as stories. People narrate or tell stories of their experiences for a variety of reasons, people can provide narratives in response to a question or questions they have been asked, in this instance they may provide the content without temporal characteristics, or they may provide a response with a beginning, the required content and an ending (Bloshinsky & Menon, 2020; Askham, 1982). Some people tell stories in order to frame or position themselves in a certain light; particularly in a positive light (Deppermann, 2013; Polkinghorne, 1995). Regardless of their reasons, the sharing of narratives is more than just telling the story, it is more than just selecting random events and presenting them, it is a bigger process where peoples narratives become a function of a bigger aim, a bigger narrative (Bruner, 2009). This act of story telling can be a process that helps the narrator make sense or meaning of their story or conversation whilst narrating; it can provide them or the audience insight into their unique human experiences and foster reflection (Bloshinsky & Menon, 2020; Polkinghorne, 1995). This process allows the narrators the opportunity of choosing how they decide to present and represent themselves while they are telling their life stories (Bloshinsky & Menon, 2020; Polkinghorne, 1995; Polkinghorne, 1988).

Although individual stories are constantly changing, this iterative and reflective process is essential in their meaning making and developments of new perspectives and new points of view (Aadnanes & Gulbrandsen, 2018; Miller, 1999; Pio, 2004). Denzin (1989) asserted in earlier years that this narrative process usually has an internal sequence or logic that makes sense only to the narrator or has some sense of meaning relevant to the narrator; helping them in their meaning making and perspective development processes.

In addition to developing perspectives and meaning making, telling ones' story is considered by Parker (2005), Taylor (2006) and Murray (2003) to be important in the construction of ones' identity. According to Bloshinsky and Menon (2020), human being are inherently story tellers and their story telling can be a process in which they make sense of themselves and the world around them. Parker (2005), Bloshinsky and Menon (2020) assert that all narratives point to or include identity formation or the corroboration of an already existing identity, without referring to or restricting any particular identity. This means that all sorts of gender identities such as straight and queer can equally be formed and presented through narratives. Parker asserts that the act of narrating in the performance of ones' identity through story-telling, further asserting that storyteller can choose to present an existing identity or form and present a new identity (Parker, 2005). In this particular study, focus was placed on the narratives relating to the construction of a gendered identity such as masculinity.

3.3. The narrative framework.

Narrative framework is not only focused on the story being told but also on how the story is told, who is telling the story, the content of the story, the context of the story, what is emphasized in the story and who the audience is (Riessman, 2008; Parker, 2005). For the purpose of this study priority was placed on the context of the story, the content of the story, the narrator and how the story was told, particularly how the participants positioned themselves in their stories. Narrative framework focuses on the construction and narration "of a personal life story, a selective and subjective reconstruction of the personal past that serves to define the self" (McLean, Shucard & Syed, 2017, p. 94), which is the data of most importance for this study. A narrative approach works best for this dissertation as it provides the framework most suitable in analysing the personal histories and narratives provided and collected during interviews. This approach allowed for the participants in this study to tell their own truth, for

their voice to be placed first and allowed flexibility for contradictory and inconsistent stories. In the stories provided by the participants, they narrated events, behaviours and justifications in relation to both their work and behaviours. In other words this means that the participants voluntarily offered stories justifying certain decisions, behaviours and why they do the work they do. They freely narrated and justified why they responded in a particular way within certain situations in their personal time and in their work, by justifying they were able to also create or identify meaning in their life events, their work, their behaviours and the choices they made in their lives. The detailed narratives of their histories helped in providing a sequence showing what events and choices facilitated certain constructions and decisions. This framework served as a lens at which seemingly random, independent and disconnected parts of their stories and histories were seen as part of the bigger picture (Pio, 2004). The seemingly and disconnected random parts of their stories provided a picture on the participants motivations to work in the gender justice space and the contexts that ultimately led to their constructions and perceptions of what a man is.

People tend to conceive and position their gendered selves in alignment with hegemonic discourses to legitimize their actions in society (Deppermann, 2013). Although most people chose to align with the hegemonic discourse, the participants were selected as men with the potential to choose contradictory discourses; which indeed on a spectrum between hegemonic and alternative their narratives leaned and positioned them closer to alternative masculinities (Deppermann, 2013). Positioning is intimately tied to narratives, therefore it is within narratives that people intentionally or unintentionally position themselves (Deppermann, 2013). As narrative framework pays attention to how language and power dynamics are evident in social reality (Burr, 1995), it allowed me to pay attention to the tools the men use to speak of themselves, how they position themselves in relation to other men and women and how they speak about other men. Despite its proficient functionalism, the frameworks reliable but labored analysis of data inevitable resulted in the selection of a fairly modest sample size. Although the participants data reached saturation, their small sample size unavoidably leads to a lack of generalizability and scalability of their narratives. Additionally, to remain adept at producing deep and complex interpretations of the participants narratives, the framework requires tremendous amounts of time. In addition to being time consuming, the framework is inherently open to subjectivity and open to researcher bias. Nonetheless, the framework provided a fair and satisfactory analysis of the participants narratives.

3.4. Intersectionality

Within the narrative theoretical approach, I applied an intersectional theory to identify and explore the interconnections between masculinities and other social systems and categories. Narratives are inherently shaped by the broader social, cultural and power structures in which they exist in (Squire, 2008; Riessman, 2008; Murray, 2008), showing that a variety of intersecting factors have an influence on narratives. Intersectionality is a concept coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 which allows exploring and understanding how multiple forms of oppression can converge on any individual. Intersectionality is used as a tool or as a critical framework to study interconnections and interdependencies within social groups and systems such as race, class, gender, religion, and to challenge the social inequalities within these groups (Atewologun, 2018; Grzanka, Flores, VanDaalen & Velez, 2020; Hopkins & Noble, 2009; Moolman, 2012). Intersectionality offers analytical tools to investigate the differences social groups of class, gender and race (Bilge, 2009). Intersectionality helps in disassembling the concept of masculinity by exploring the ways in which it is constructed within various social relations and groups such as race, class, gender, age, ethnicity, ability and sexual orientation (Bilge, 2009; Jordan, 2020). Participants are multidimensional, in addition to gendered groups and masculinities, they simultaneously occupy other categories such as race, class, culture and the gender justice space. Through intersectionality, I analysed data with the attempt to understand what the impact is of belonging to certain social categories on masculinities. The men working in the gender justice space may belong to various social categories and it is imperative to understand the consequences of belonging to certain social categories on their narratives and on their understanding of what a man is. This contextualised intersectional approach enables me to explore the gender justice space, its situated constructions of masculinities and other pertinent systems and categories. In order to apply an intersectional approach it was important that I gathered from the participants data relating to their age, their organisation, nationality, preferred language, racial group and their marital status. Within South Africa, intersectionality is able to also identify and analyse complex systems of domination (colonialism), dynamics of power within the gender justice space, power dynamics within different social groups and offer alternative perspectives (Al-Faham *et al*., 2019), alternative perspectives of more progressive and positive masculinities. This narrative intersectional approach helped in bringing forward stories in which men become the subjects of their positive masculinities rather than objects of violent narratives of masculinities that are imposed on them.

Chapter Four: Methodology

In the following sections I present the research aim, discuss the qualitative narrative approach, the participants details, the method used in data collection, the research procedure, the method used in data analysis and the chapter ends with a discussion of the ethical considerations.

4.1. Research aim

This study explores the constructions of masculinities by men who work in the gender justice space with the aim to understand progressive contextualized constructions of African masculinities within the gender justice space. Towards this aim, I will answer the following questions.

4. How do men construct and negotiate their masculinities while working in gender justice spaces?
5. How do male gender justice workers speak of themselves and other men in relation to the work they do?
6. What motivates men to work in the gender justice space?

4.2. Qualitative narrative study

This dissertation follows a qualitative narrative approach. A qualitative narrative approach is designed to focus primarily on the participants and their experiences. The aim of qualitative research is to explore and understand people's experiences, actions, decisions, behaviours and how they make sense of their experiences (Creswell, 1998; Babbie & Mouton, 2008). This is in line with the dissertations aim to study subjective narratives within the gender justice space. Qualitative research places emphasis on studying experiences particularly within their social, cultural and historical context (Yardley & Bishop, 2008). With this approach, the narrator's subjective viewpoint is the golden goose considered most important together with the context responsible for shaping their subjectivity.

Narrative approach was chosen to explore and understanding people's constructions and experiences of constructing their masculinities in the gender justice space; as well as how

they make sense of their lived experiences (Creswell, 1998). Rather than collecting and giving a statistical account of masculinities, this research design allowed for flexibility and subjectivity by providing qualitative tools such as narrative interviewing, a narrative theoretical framework and a narrative data analysis method to best understand the narratives collected on masculinities. This approach allowed for joint subjectivities that are recreated by me as researcher and participants through conversation during the narrative interview (Wertz, Charmaz, McMullen, Josselson, Anderson & McSpadden, 2011; Squire, 2005; Hunter, 2010; Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005). The aim is not to create generalisable truths, but to create non-generalisable subjective truths (Hunter, 2010).

Despite the narrative approach being the best suited for this research. It also has challenges of its own. Hunter (2010), Liamputtong and Ezzy (2005), and Clandinin and Connolly (2001) assert that narrative approach presents with issues of validity because they are dependent on context, are narrated from the teller's memory and are influenced by history, biography and the society. This however works as an advantage rather than a disadvantage because this dissertation's uniqueness lies in the social constructions of contextual masculinities. There is no absolute 'valid' truth but rather subjective realities. Another challenge of this narrative approach may be the researcher as the audience as well as the positioning the narrator decides to adopt.

The provision of a narrative by the teller is essentially a performance formed with a certain audience in mind, with the narrator providing narratives that present themselves in a way they want to be seen (Bamberg, 1997; Makama, 2016). This is also advantageous in this research as one of the aims was to understand how men in the gender justice spaces speak of their subjectivities, how they position themselves in the gender justice space and in relation to other men. People tend to "position themselves in relation to one another in ways that traditionally have been defined as roles" (Bamberg, 1997, p. 336). In this case, roles would be the roles and characters they feel they play within the gender justice space. Be it the hero, the helper, the advocate or any other latent or self-proclaimed role.

4.3. Participants

Initially, the proposed number of participants and inclusion criteria was 10 men over the age of 18 who currently or have previously worked in the gender justice space for at least

12 months. The Gender justice organizations included but not limited to non-government organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), non-profit organizations (NPOs) and academic institutions. The proposed sample size was reflective of the qualitative nature of this study in contrast to quantitative research. The 12-month work period was essential as it ensured that the participants have had a good amount of experience in the gender justice space. Although the minimum proposed participant size was 10 participants with the intention to cut-off upon reaching data saturation. The acquired participant size was 6 (see table 1 below). Most men were not willing to participate, those that were able to give feedback regarding their participation either promised to participate and stopped responding to communication while others cited a busy schedule. The 7th participant was a police officer who pulled out of participating in the last minute citing concerns over anonymity and fear of losing their job. Although this research is not intending to generalise the results or prove statistical significance of any sort. The sample size could be a limitation to proving the truthfulness of the men's experiences in the gender justice space. A sample size of 6 is too small for research, however, the quality of their narratives outweigh their quantity.

Over 30 gender justice organizations around Gauteng, Western Cape, Free State and Limpopo were contacted to invite men working in these organisations to participate in the study. Despite the high quantity of petitioned organisations, only 7 participants agreed to be interviewed and 6 completed their interviews: 4 from Gauteng, 1 from the Western Cape and 1 from the Free State. Men from the Gauteng area were more willing to participate than men from Cape Town, this is despite identifying fewer gender justice organizations in Gauteng as opposed to Cape Town. The one Cape Town individual who was willing to participate is only temporarily in Cape Town as a scholar.

A purposive sampling method was used through sending an advert (see appendix E) to identified key gender justice organisations. Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls and Ormston (2003) and Squire (2013) defined purposive sampling as a participant recruitment method that involves purposely selecting participants opportunistically and from a known network that have experienced the phenomenon being studied. This method of attracting participants involved advertising to and accepting volunteering male workers that fit the criteria and are readily available to participate (Stangor, 2015). When there was a lack of participants, a snowball sampling method was adopted and the current participants were allowed to suggest other potential participants they may know.

Table 1

Participants table

Name*	Age	Preferred Language	Organisation	Racial group	Marital Status	Nationality	Nature of employment
Zack	36	English	Organisation engaging in research, community engagement and advocacy with a focus on the intersectionality of class, gender, identity and race as well as social, community and gender-based justice.	Black	Single	Zimbabwean	Researcher
Game Changer	46	English	Organisation attempting to prevent GBV by promoting positive masculinities, offering basic counselling and male mentorship.	Black	Single	South African	Volunteering Community Activism
Drake	45	English	A transdisciplinary African-centred organisation focusing on collaborative community engagement human development, activism and knowledge production.	Black	Married	South African	Junior Researcher

John	24	English	Organisation providing detoxification facilities, chaperones and assists in the process of legal action against GBV.	Black	Single	South African	Volunteer
Siya	32	English	Non-profit organisation that provides support services and counselling for abused men, women, young people and the elderly.	Black	Married	South African	Program Co-ordinator
Mshengu	30	English	Organisation providing social support to people of all ages and providing social work students the opportunity for community engagement.	Black	Single	South African	Head of Community upliftment

* Pseudonyms

4.4. Data collection

With the approval of the UCT Ethics Committee, I hoped to collect data face-to-face. However, due to recruitment challenges I opted for the use of online platforms to conduct interviews with participants in Gauteng. Data collection was collected through semi-structured narrative interviews (see appendix A). Semi-structured narrative interviews were chosen and used for this research as they allowed for a dialogical conversation between the interviewer and participants and allowed for greater equality in leading the conversation (Riessman, 2008; Taylor & Littleton, 2006), these interviews further created an opportunity for the participants to present themselves as they wished to.

To facilitate the narratives interviewing process, I asked questions or made statements such as:

- Tell me of a situation at work where being a men proved to be a disadvantage.
- In your work, how have you found other men respond to your work?
- Outside your work, tell me how you engage with issues of gender equality and gender based violence?

The participants were able to tell stories about situations and experiences that they deemed relevant in their gender work and in the construction of their identities, rather than answering brief structured questions (Riessman, 2008). The interview process allowed the conversation to flow without guidance, helping to reduce anxiety and making the participants feel comfortable enough to speak about their experiences (Riessman, 2008). Free-flowing and open-ended questions helped the participants in maintaining a sense of power and agency over what they decided to share (Parker, 2005). Narrative interviewing allowed the participants to organize and express what they felt is important to share while as the researcher I focused on capturing the meaning behind their narratives (Parker, 2005). Whilst narrating, the participants could speak out on discourses regarding masculinities and how they may have resisted or even altered them (Morison & Macleod, 2013). The narratives I collected provided rich and thick descriptions and details. However, it is important to note that the participants provided multiple detailed, subjective, and sometimes competing stories (Parker, 2005), as they are the experiential experts, and their information is seen as their truth but not a universal truth (Anderson & Doherty, 2008; Wertz *et al*., 2011).

4.5. Procedure

Participants were identified through gender justice organizations in Gauteng, Western Cape, Limpopo and the Free State. The organisations were asked to distribute the advert among their workers. Potential participants were able to contact me as the principal researcher through the contact details provided on the advert.

Upon contact with participants that meet the inclusion criteria, which was being male and currently or have previously worked in the gender justice space for at least 12 months, they were given an information sheet (see appendix B) about the study and an opportunity to ask questions before they signed the consent forms (see appendix C). Interviews were mainly conducted during working hours, as this was the most convenient for the participants. With permission from the participants, the interviews were recorded and transcribed through the Teams recording feature and through a voice memo app on my cell phone. The interviews ranged from 23 to 58 minutes. Recordings were deleted from the recording cell phone after transferring them to a research folder on a password and biometrically-protected laptop.

4.6. Data analysis

According to Riessman (2008), there are four types of narrative analysis methods. There is a structural narrative analysis which focuses on analysing how the story is told and how form and language are used (Riessman, 2008). There is a dialogical narrative analysis that focuses on analysing how the narratives are interactively constructed and performed (Riessman, 2008). There is a visual narrative analysis that focuses on analysing visual images in addition to oral or written data (Riessman, 2008). Lastly, there is thematic narrative analysis that focuses on analysing the content on the narratives, paying attention to what was said rather than how and to whom (Riessman, 2008). These approaches often tend to overlap. Considering that this projects aim was to focus on content rather than the visual, performative and structural elements of the narrative, thematic narrative analysis was the most suitable. This approach focused on analysing data within a particular social context and focused on analysing the content of the stories provided (Morison, 2011; Morison & Macleod, 2013). The assertion by Taylor and Littleton (2006) is that the meanings in narratives are not stable, they are constructed, resisted, modified and actively (re)negotiated in talk. Therefore, it was important to analyse with the understanding that there is more than one truth. There are multiple

subjective contradictions, complexities and inconsistencies in the real lives and the stories that are told by the participants (Makama, 2021; Taylor & Littleton, 2006; Morison & Macleod, 2013), this implies that since narratives are subjective constructions, there is more than one construction of masculinity (Hyvärinen, Korhonen & Mykkänen, 2006). Another assumption is that people are active participants in constructions of their identities as these identities exist within a larger social and cultural context (Taylor & Littleton, 2006). This shows that masculinities do not exist in isolation and therefore the context they exist in is as important as the construct itself.

My focus in analysis was analysing masculine identities to identify progressive masculinities in the gender justice space. This was done with the aim to uncover hidden and potentially progressive narratives regarding masculinities (Morison, 2011). Through analysing the collected data, experiences and stories provided by the participants I was able to better understand the intersection between the narratives they provide and the gender justice space. The stories they provided were personal and therefore were inherently subjective. This analysis of subjective narratives purposely challenges the valorisation of objective data by the colonial research enterprise (Makama, 2021). These subjective stories are representative of the inner reality of human experience which a person makes use of "to shape and construct an identity"; within a particular social context (Boonzaier & Schalkwyk, 2011, p. 270). A narrative approach not only analyses the story, conversations and experiences but also how the participants construct their subjectivity, how they position themselves in the stories and how they convey meaning (Boonzaier & Schalkwyk, 2011). This approach recognizes that there are positions that speakers tend to take in the stories they provide, positions and roles such as taking up and portraying prevalent dominant discourses of masculinities or identifying with more progressive masculinities (Taylor, 2007; Taylor & Littleton, 2006; Morison, 2011; Makama, 2021).

In preparation of and complementary to thematic narrative analysis, transcriptions served as a preparation step for data analysis (Riessman, 2008), analysis required an extensive reading of the participant's transcripts as well as frequent revisits to their recordings to identify dominant narratives. Analysis entailed sifting through the data and pulling out relevant quotes and phrases that were representative of the participant's dominant narratives. This included trying to avoid over-simplifying the participant's narratives as well as identifying opposing or contradicting narratives. Although some of the participants make it clear that they are about to tell a story by using entrance talk such as 'let me tell you a story' or using exit talk such as 'that

is how it ended' (Fraser, 2004; Riessman, 1993), others do not use these phrases, and this requires a careful and critical look at the data to identify the story. Reading through the transcripts required a fair bit of skepticism, reflection and the questioning of my assumptions to avoid my biases influence on my understanding of the text (Atkinson, Bauer & Gaskell, 2000). Not all participants allowed the recording of their video. Therefore, only voice recordings were used as the only source of data. All data analysed was compared to identify differences and similarities from an intersectionality perspective.

4.7. Ethical concerns

The carrying out of this project was subject to ethical approval by the UCT department of Psychology and the Ethics Committee. Ethical approval was granted on the 12th July 2022 with the reference number PSY2022-025 (see Appendix E). When we engage with people as researchers, to talk to them, gather their narratives, interpret and publish those as findings, we are inevitable engaged in an ethical dilemma (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2008). All qualitative and quantitative research must abide by the basic ethical principles of informed consent, privacy, confidentiality, anonymity, harm to participants and debriefing (Willig, 2008), these principles ensure the protection of both the participants and the researcher. For more protection I maintained reflexive awareness of gender, power, race and other potential factors that may affect the participants participation and well-being (McCormick, 2012; Wilson & MacLean, 2011).

Informed consent

Each participant was offered an information sheet (see appendix B) where details of the study were outlined. The information sheet outlined the aim of the study, participant expectations for participation, risks associated with participation, benefits to participation and if there will be any compensation. Participants were informed that they are free to withdraw their consent at any time without any consequences. The consent form was written in English, included the aim of the study and whether there is any compensation or risk due to their participation. Once participants were comfortable with the study details outlined in the information sheet they were asked to read and sign the informed consent form.

Privacy, confidentiality and anonymity

All the participant's information was kept private within a password-protected and biometrically protected laptop, additionally their data was kept on an external drive in a password protected folder. Their interview information as well as their identity was kept strictly confidential. All other participant information such as the signed consent forms, the interview recordings and transcripts was be stored with their chosen pseudonyms to ensure anonymity. The participants information is only available to me as the principal researcher, and kept safe in a password-protected laptop. For their privacy, albeit online interviews were conducted in a secure space such as their homes or office where no one else was present. Online platforms generally open up new and much more convenient ways to connect with potential participants. However, it inevitably also presents new ethical challenges regarding online safety, privacy and confidentiality. To counteract these ethical issues, the interviews were not conducted on institutional devices by either the participants or I as the interviewer. This prevents hacking as those devices can be accessed by the institution. Interviews were conducted on a personal computer that was connected to a personal internet connection. The link to the interview was only sent to the participant 5 to 10 minutes before the interview to restrict unwanted access to the meeting. The interviews were conducted on Microsoft Teams, which is able to encrypt the voice and video data recorded, by default. This means that the video and voice data is only accessible to the researcher and the participant. After the interview, the recording was deleted from the online platform and stored on a password-protected personal computer.

Harm to participants

The study presented minimum to no obvious physical or psychological harm to the participants. The topic of this thesis is not particularly sensitive or distressing in nature. However, the sensitivity of the topic is subjective to the participant. Hence, I constantly checked on the participant during the interview to identify if they were still comfortable during the interview. The participants were under no obligation to answer all the questions asked should they not feel comfortable. They were free to withdraw at any time if they felt pressured, uncomfortable or distressed.

Debriefing and additional information

As mentioned above, the topic being researched is personal in nature and may have been sensitive to some of the participants, an informal debriefing session was provided to all participants at the end of each interview by the principal researcher. The session included a conversation and reflection by both I and the participants on what they thought about the interview, the content of the interview, as well as any changes they would recommend. This created an informal space for the participants to ask any follow-up questions regarding the researcher or the research. This session included assuring the participants that they can contact me should they have any follow-up questions about the research. The participants were provided with contact details of NPOs, NGOs, and a qualified psychologist in case they experience any problems afterwards and feel the need to see a psychologist; at their own cost (see appendix D).

Reflexivity

Qualitative research methodology recognizes and acknowledges the role of the researcher within the research process. Although the perspectives of the participants are of most importance in this research, I cannot ignore the presence of my own viewpoint. As a qualitative narrative researcher, it is not only important how I report the narratives collected but how I listen to them, adding a level of subjectivity to the final report. One critique of qualitative research methodology is that it is too subjective (Ratner, 2002). "Subjectivity is inherent in the thought process of any researcher and can affect data collection, analysis, and interpretation" (Darawsheh, 2014, p. 561). Therefore, it is important that as a researcher I practice reflexivity by recognizing and bringing forth my positioning within this particular study. "Reflexivity refers to the continuous process of self-reflection that researchers engage in to generate awareness about their actions, feelings, and perceptions" (Darawsheh, 2014, p. 561), as well as thoughts and ideas. This involved going through a process of reflecting on how my background, values, ideas, beliefs, thoughts, life experiences (personal reflexivity), and how research experience, skills, qualifications, and research interests (epistemological reflexivity) may impact this study.

On listening to the participants narratives, I also intentionally tried to stay away from assuming I know what they were saying because this work is new to me. The participants and I are of the same gender, they may have felt inclined to give me more information under the

assumption that I will understand them better than a female will. This worked in my advantage, some participants provided stories that were not related to the questions asked but this provided valuable narratives to analyse. Although this is a reflection, literature claims other ways in which my gender may have affected the participants responses. It seems that the way a man responds to a male interviewer would differ to the way they would respond should the interviewer be a woman. Men tend to answer to male interviews in a way they feel the male interviewer wants them to (UKEssays, 2018), creating a social desirability bias.

On the epistemological front, I was concerned about the fact that I only have a brief and tenuous engagement with qualitative research that involves participants. This brief engagement in qualitative studies was within an honour's module. My knowledge and skills in research were limited to a rushed qualitative desktop study as an honour's degree requirement. I am no expert, I have no experience in this particular area of this research, and this was my first interaction with participants. I initially had a slight concern that the participants may see that I am a Masters student at UCT and assume that I am an expert. However, most of the participants were also postgraduates and we had no issues with assumptions of power and expertise. With that being said, my position as a student may have played a role in the participants willingness or unwillingness to participate. My position may have made it difficult for them to trust me with their personal and confidential information as I am a novice in research. I am also not particularly an excellent writer, and my writing may have failed to elicit the required interest and trust for participants to want to willingly participate. Additionally, most of the participants work in a space where they need to quickly respond to emergency situations, and this may make it hard for them to make time in their schedule for participation. My research interests are mainly aimed at providing a voice for the subordinated, particularly those that have suffered trauma. Hence my proposal initially included a section of GBV. Therefore I constantly needed to remind myself during the research and interviews not to constantly look for narratives around GBV of pain or trauma.

Chapter Five: Analysis and discussion

This chapter presents themes from the participants narratives that speak to following research objectives; a) how male gender justice workers speak of themselves and other men in relation to the gender justice work/gender justice space, b) the perceptions of masculinities by men working in the gender justice space, and c) factors that motivate men to work in the gender justice space.

Although narratives typically adopt a sequential order when told, this analysis did not seek to maintain this temporal ordering but rather focused on the contents of the narrative and the meaning making embedded within the narratives. Using thematic narrative analysis through a narrative theoretical framework, the following broad themes and subthemes were identified; The first theme *Social and personal subjectivities* consisted of four subthemes, namely (1) Heroes, villains and other characters, (2) Men as victims and critical onlookers of GBV, (3) Academic and community identities in gender justice spaces and (4) Opinions of and experiences with other men. The second theme *Motivations for gender justice work* included two sub themes, (1) Taking a stand against injustices and (2) Inspired by curiosity and scholarship.

5.1. Social and personal subjectivities

This theme analyses the narratives on how the participants speak of themselves and how they position other men they have interacted with personally or in their work within the gender justice space. In this theme I firstly look at how the participants, who are either academic or community activists, engaged in gender justice work relate to and locate themselves in the justice scholarship. More specifically I look at how they choose to identify themselves within their work, how they position other men in the work they do, and how men outside the gender justice space respond to the idea on male gender justice workers. Secondly, I look at the participants positioning of men as victims and critical onlookers. Third, I look at how the participants position and identify themselves in the gender justice space through academic or through community intervention. Lastly I look at the interactions between male gender justice workers and other men.

5.1.1. Heroes, villains and other characters

The most common narrative about black men in South Africa is one of villainy, and this is something that the participants in this study seemed to be aware of. This narrative and labelling is by no means a new phenomenon, it stems as far back as colonialism where black men in Africa were labelled evil and barbaric as a means of colonisation (Lugones, 2010; Brown & Ismail, 2019). The participants awareness of this narrative is evident in how they talk about themselves and other men in relation to gender justice. The men in this study positioned themselves between various and sometimes conflicting identities such as that of the beloved heroes in the gender justice project and sometimes as the villains, particularly the low visibility or the accidental villains; villains who do not intentionally intend to play the role of a villain but become the villain due to their ignorance or unwillingness to assist (Beth, 2019; Klapp, 1956). In most stories the hero would essentially be the protagonist, the one who engages in battle in the name of good ideals such as gender justice (Jefferson, 2013). Participants mostly associated themselves with this role, sharing that their work is part of the bigger project that aims to address the pandemic against women and children. The villain on the other hand is essentially the evil counterpart to the hero, the antagonist with inherent depravity and malice towards women, children and society in general (Klapp, 1956; Klapp, 2017). The participants in this study who acknowledge their villainy placed themselves and other men in one of both of the following categories of villains, the high visibility villain who actively and directly plays out their villainy role or the low visibility villain who plays their villainy role with the intention to stay out of the spotlight (Klapp, 1956; Klapp, 2017). In addition to protagonist heroes and antagonistic villain roles, sometimes the participants spoke of other men who are neither hero nor villain as passive characters, characters that are essentially bystanders.

Although the general trend was identifying and positioning men in a dichotomous role of either hero or villain, some of the participants conversely identified and acknowledged men as passive characters and sometimes men as also being victims of gender-based violence, acknowledging the potential for men to be victims. The extracts bellow speak to the abovementioned categorisation and positioning of men.

The extracts below from Siya and John placed men at the centre of gender injustice, forthrightly positioning them as villains.

Siya: Majority of them you might find that they were incarcerated because of issues of sexual violence.

While making use of restrictive language without being specific about men and their violent sexual exploits, Siya highlights that most men who are incarcerated are incarcerated for sexual violence, he directly positions them as villains and perpetrators of sexual violence. John on the other hand also positions men as the villain and additionally speaks to the circumstances that enable men to be villains, John suggests that some men abuse the power they have over people who are dependent on them.

John: Or maybe the financial background. It's problematic, so they depend on this guy…Maybe most of them are actually exposed to men that are violent...they are being abused a lot and then maybe she's afraid, to voice out, to tell people, to tell friends, to tell us to or campus police or whoever is relevant to report this guy because…they are afraid that this guy might retaliate in a very aggressive way.

The above views shared by Siya and John are consistent with broader narratives on men, women and GBV. They too highlight that most victims of gender injustice are women (Zinyemba & Hlongwana, 2022). Men, as portrayed to be the villains by Siya, John, Zinyemba and Hlongwana (2022) tend to adopt the role of low visibility villainy, denying responsibility for their antagonistic behaviour and blame external factors such as poverty, culture and the government for their behaviour. These types of villains inflict harm and attempt by all means to void themselves of all accountabilities and avoid positioning themselves as willing villains (Zinyemba & Hlongwana, 2022). They essentially define themselves as villains of circumstance. More notably, Siya and Johns narratives show how some men tend to perpetuate their villainy due their awareness of women's vulnerability and fear to report their victimisation, they exploit this fear and vulnerability through their physical and financial powers to victimize women.

In the extract above, Siya asserts that men are usually the ones 'incarcerated because of issues of sexual violence', these men can be exemplified or referred to as high visibility villains. John on the other hand speaks on how some men leverage cohabitation and financial support to abuse women, due to fear of retaliation the women are unable to report to the authorities, this type of male-female violence is recorded to be statistically higher than in other

relationships such as marriage (Kenney & McLanahan, 2006). These men can be positioned as low visibility villains because they make sure that they are not assigned blame or responsibility of any sort by the public or by figures of authority. Siya and Johns assertions of men as perpetrators of sexual violence builds onto the painful fact that men are almost always the first suspects of sexual violence, and the fact that the rape of men is considered taboo and was not even considered illegal until 2007, therefore before 2007 men could not be considered as victims (Jina, *et al*., 2020; Dekel & Abraham, 2021). This lack of recognizing men as victims and only as the villains means that the 44% of young boys that have experienced some form of sexual abuse before they were 18 years old suffer in silence because according to MatrixMen (2022) male rape is still considered taboo in South Africa, men are afraid to report rape.

> *Drake: The perpetrators most of the times are males… Irrespective of whether you are a perpetrator or you are not a perpetrator. There's no one that is innocent in the space of sexual offenses or on issues of femicide or domestic violence cases… We become bystanders because it's not. It's not my story. I can't be part of it. But you are part of it*

In the extract above, like John and Siya, Drake also highlights men's involvement in the gender spaces as perpetrators of violence. Drake however further asserts that even those men who have not committed any violence, are guilty if they do not take a stand against violence, in this way he positions all men as villains, including himself. His assertion aligns with Klapp's (1956) categorisation of villains, asserting that some men within the high visibility category are a type of villain known as oppressor or authoritarian villains that oppress, bully and unjustly exert their power over the weak. In addition to high visibility villains, he positions other men as background characters who are also villains in their own way.

Background characters exist within the low visibility category where they are positioned as Shirker villains, these are villains that evade important obligations or duties by all means possible, Klapp (1956) and Loveridge (2013) refer to this type of villainy as the deserters, cowards and quitters. Drake asserts that no man should remain inactive against GBV and should rather be part of the solution, echoing Hoffmann and Addis's (2023) argument that being a man is being a team player. Drake's believes also resonate with Askanius and Hartley's (2019) assertions that men need to make effort by changing and by recognizing that achieving gender justice and equality is partly their responsibility. This is also similar to Connell (2003), Kimmel (2010), Hearn (2001) and Messner (1997) who assert that male involvement in gender

justice can lead to the reduction of IPV. Drake narrates that the passive nature of men and their preference to be background characters adds onto the increasing statistics on GBV. He asserts that as a man if you are not a protagonist against GBV, you are as guilty as the actual villain. Jamal (2014), Bhana and Botha (2010) assert that indeed without the presence and direct involvement of men like Drake suggests, the effectiveness of gender justice measures is greatly diminished. The benefits of men's involvement was echoed by other participants such as Siya. Below, Siya suggests that men's involvement is not only beneficial to society at large but also for men too.

> *Siya: It's quite fulfilling to see men unlearning those negative behaviors and coming forward and coming back to the society and trying to ensure that they play their part in terms of promoting those behaviors that are positive as a way of preventing, you know, other guys from, you know, finding themselves, perpetuating the issues that perhaps they perpetuated that made them to be incarcerated.*

Siya speaks of men as having a sort of obligation to other men in society to promote and spread positive behaviours. Interestingly, when Siya narrates about the men's obligations, he makes use of suggestive words such as 'trying' rather than forceful words such as 'must' in defining their obligation, making it seem as though their obligation is more choice rather than a predetermined and static role they are forced to play. He shows that these men are not bound by predetermined sex roles that are based on their biological sex as emphasised by Wright (2014) and Stern (2003), men and their masculinities change over time depending on their experiences. In Siya's assertion the context and experiences of previously incarcerated men have led them to choose promoting positive masculinities over violence, this is the antithesis of low visibility villains who would rather ignore the problem or reoffend in secrecy (Klapp, 1956; Loveridge, 2013). These former villains choose to help other men from becoming repeat offenders. Siya positions men as villains solely because of their behaviours in society and optimistically speaks of them as potential heroes. He appears hopeful of men and their potential for change, as seen in the excerpt below, he asserts that upon atonement through imprisonment men can assume the hero identity and forgo their villainism.

> *Siya: Those would be released and then they'll join the organization. They will be part of, you know, our men's program.*

Although Siya initially positioned men as the primary perpetrators of gender-based violence, he does not speak of them as rigid characters incapable of change. In the extract above he further speaks of them in a way that shows his confidence in their willingness to join programs after leaving jail, to learn and to change their behaviour. He describes these men as dynamic characters that have the ability to learn and change their behaviour after an educative experience through engagement with community organizations and men's programs. This assertion aligns with Scott and Wolfe's (2000) work that found that violent men are capable of changing their violent ways, 8 out of the 9 male participants in their study were able to overcome their violent tendencies and behaviours through taking responsibility of their violent behaviour.

Although Siya does shine some positive light on men going against global northern scholarships that perpetuates the notion of black African men as being incapable of care and positively contributing to the society (Langa & Kiguwa, 2013; Shefer, Stevens & Clowes, 2010). His initial portrayal of men being the majority incarcerated for sexual violent crimes does seem to slightly align with global northern scholarship, a limited view scholarship that prejudicially positions black men in Africa as inherently violent and problematic (Jewkes, *et al*., 2015; Langa & Kiguwa, 2013; Shefer, Stevens & Clowes, 2010), like this scholarship, Siya prejudicially positioned black men as black African villains.

> *Drake: It's a space for for us to be rehabilitated, especially in our own mind...to deal with your own demons… And work with your peers and making sure that at least communities that we work in and what we do is also encourage the very same. Men who are in the space of this men's forum, more facilitators to broaden their knowledge around understanding…gender based violence in making sure that at least there is some empowerment…See that men need not to be in the background and comes to issues of gender based violence. And the main thing for me is this by standing of men when comes to issues of gender based violence, because if they don't, they are not in the forefront, then it becomes difficult to really to really say I'm innocent…. Making sure that women and children are free to walk in the streets and are not harassed. Seeing men as the core. You know, players in making sure that they can talk to the other male, you know, partners around issues of of violence.*

Similar to Siya, in the extract above Drake also narrates on the men's potential to learn and to change. Although before he unifies men as being perpetrators in one form or another, going as far as saying men have their own demons that need to be dealt with, he also states that men are capable of rehabilitation and changing their mental states. Siya narrates on the importance of men creating spaces for them to be rehabilitated such as men's forums to share knowledge, educate and empower each other. For a significant portion of history men-only groups have been deemed as politically incorrect and as dangerous groups where sexism, homophobia and misogyny are born (Glover & Misan, 2012). This misconception of "Men in men's groups are men in bad company" has however changed with the growth of literature in a post-modern society (Glover & Misan, 2012, p. 64). Spaces where men gather are now being seen for their true nature as spaces where men gather to socialize and organize their the greater benefit of their society (Glover & Misan, 2012).

Siya puts men in the spotlight as the key to change and fighting against GBV. He then narrates that in order for men to claim innocence, they must be in the forefront advocating against GBV and making sure that women are safe; this narrative is similar to Siya's narrative asserting that men have the obligation in society to promote and spread positive behaviours as well as making sure women are not harassed in the streets. However, literature shows that taking a stand against GBV can provoke severe retaliation from bystanders and perpetrators (Nazareno, Vidu, Merodio, & Valls, 2022). Together with some women, some African men have actively engaged in and contributed to the fight against GBV, resulting in them experiencing some negative social consequences. This phenomenon has now become widespread that it has even been named as Isolating Gender Violence (IGV) (Nazareno, Vidu, Merodio, & Valls, 2022). IGV defined as the attacks and retaliation launched against supporters of GBV victims "so that victims remain isolated" (Vidu, Puigvert, Flecha, & de Aguileta, 2021. P. 178).

Drake makes use of forceful words such as 'need' and 'men as the core' that imply that he sees the men's obligation not as a choice but as a social role that men have to fulfil. Similar to Drakes views of men, The concept of roles sees men as static characters that should forcefully abide by static rules and roles (Baert, 2012). In his narratives Drake positioned women as the victims who need to be helped and men as the former villains turned into heroes. He asserts that men need to 'make sure women and children are free and not harassed',

positioning women as victims in need of saving and the men as their saviours. Within his narratives he makes sure to use the words ‘us’, ‘our’ and ‘we’ to show his own position and the positioning of other men within the gender justice pandemic, he makes use of such words to show that he does not exclude himself or other men as part of the problem or as part of the solution.

> *Siya: Even when we go to open a protection order. Even though even when we go to police police station to open cases. You know, as men, we are not treated well. You know, it's not easy for us to do that... They would always be a bit uncomfortable to engage with you because they would always say you guys are speaking for women. You know, you are promoting, they even have this. I don't know where it come from you know, language where they will say you're promoting the rights of the woman.*

In the extract above, Siya narrates how male police officers mistreat men when they accompany women to the police station to report GBV. In this instance he seems to position himself as a champion of gender justice and the police as barriers to gender justice, or as Klapp (1956) would put them as low visibility villains, within any of the two different low visibility villain types, the deceiver and the shirker. The deceiver type is known to have a false heart and pretends to be what they are not, this appears in Siya’s narrative as police officers who are meant to work in protecting people’s rights but in some cases these men are intolerant of other men promoting women rights as if it is wrong to promote women’s rights, additionally, these police officers accuse him of speaking for women as if they need to be spoken for. This intolerant behaver can also be explained as the shirker villain type which is identified as those who neglect and abscond their responsibilities as police officers (Klapp, 1956). Studies show that police attitudes is one of the barriers preventing women from reporting GBV (Felson, Messner, Hoskin and Deane, 2002; Vetten, 2005). Siya portrays the police as part of the problem, seemingly as antiheroes who straddle on the low visibility side of the villainy spectrum, Siya does not attempt to redeem them like when he spoke of men that have been incarcerated. He seems to hold the view that police officers are unable to recognize the wrong in their actions like those that have been incarcerated before. Siya portrays some ex-offenders as better gender advocates than some police officers and speaks of himself as a gender justice agent who believes in the rehabilitation of all offenders.

With regards to victims of sexual assault, it is said that approximately half of those that report their victimization experience secondary victimisation at the hands of police officials (Patterson, 2011). Most victims end up being told that their stories are unbelievable and that their case is not serious enough to investigate (Campbell, Sefl, Barnes, Ahrens, Wasco, & Zaragoza-Diesfeld, 1999; Patterson, 2011). A large number of GBV victims do not report their abusers because they fear that their pain and victimization will be trivialized by police officials (Wolf, Ly, Horbat & Kernic, 2003).

> *Mr. Game Changer: We try to give those teachings to boys as to. What type of a men they should be, meaning promoting positive masculinity. Mostly so...I was in prison, by the way. I'm an ex-con. We create a safe space where men gather.*

Mr. Game Changer, in addition to Siya's sentiments, asserts that there is a particular way men should be in society, he also narrates on how men should embody and promote positive masculinities, and that embodying positive masculinities can be achieved through creating a community where men can gather and learning from each other. His sentiments however do contradict with Siya who believes that men learn and unlearn their behaviours. Mr. Game Changer on the other hand asserts that there is a way men should be in society and this belief seems to align with sex and social role theories that place men in a particular mould, a mould that inherently positions them as the heroes (Stern, 2003; Eagly & Wood, 2012). This is all evident in Mr. Game Changers life story where he has walked the path of re-education and rehabilitation personally, and moved from villain to hero. Mr. Game Changer is an example of a two pronged approach that includes the usage of external control such as being incarcerated and internal control such as re-education to facilitate rehabilitation (Lewis, Dobash, Dobash, & Cavanagh, 2000). Mr. Game Changer is also a prime example of Scott and Wolfe's (2000) assertion that violent men are capable of change. Lastly, Mr. Game Changer came out of jail and founded a men's forum to tackle issues of GBV and provided men a safe space to congregate and have an open dialogue. Mr. Game Changers work is extremely important because more than 6000 offenders are released from prison each month and there is a lack of programs that facilitate reintegration into society for changed men, therefore they may end up reoffending (Langa & Masuku, 2015; Muntingh, 2008). Their repeated offences add to the statistics and further positions men as even more inhumane and incapable of change.

Drake: I don't want to be somebody doing secondary victimization to my clients … How do I approach them in a in a manner that is appropriate?

Drake's contribution comes back in the extract above, narrating on how as a man he is also very conscious of his gender and aims to be gender sensitive, his gender sensitivity seems to be driven by his desire to prevent secondary victimization. Therefore he is always making sure he evaluates the manner in which he approaches victims of gender based violence. Drake's sensitivity is out of the norm as most men tend to be less sensitive to gender inequalities than women (Mazzuca, Moscatelli, Menegatti & Rubini, 2022). His sensitivity is a contradiction to Zack's idea to completely deemphasis gender and advises that men should become gender neutral. Drake narrates that as a man he makes sure that he treats his clients with care and is always in consideration of how he should act in situations that involve women. He wants to make sure that through his sensitivity he avoids subjecting victims to any form of secondary victimisation.

5.1.2. Men as victims and critical onlookers of GBV

Zack: There were people like there were men who also came in, who also appeared in court as victims of domestic violence...A victim being in most cases, they are women and the statistics, even at our courts state and I mean showed that. But what captured my interest was these group of men who also presented as victims.

John: Because Men hardly cry so. So we are raised in a way that that makes us have high expectations. Uh, not only on ourselves, but, but also on other men. There's a Xhosa saying, it says Indoda ayikhali, which translates to a man a man doesn't cry.

John: I mean, there are men out there. We know that they are. They're struggling. Some of them are really struggling. They're being beaten by their girlfriends…Some of them are being stabbed. And all those but, but they can't speak up. They can't cry. Because of that, because of how they are socialized.

Zack provides a different perspective, his quote above speaks to how although most victims of domestic violence are women, men are also at risk of being victims of domestic violence. Globally, men experience more sexual violence than statistics tend to show (Schulz, 2015). Zack's narratives are similar to Peel (2004), Jina, *et al*. (2020) and MatrixMen's (2022)

assertions who also speak on the taboo nature of male rape victims. Zack also shows us that men are not immune to being victimised. Because the phenomenon is rarely acknowledged or researched, its conceptualization varies widely across literature and also takes on various forms (Schulz, 2015). Unlike, Mr. Game Changer and Siya who identify and position men as the sole villains with the potential to become the protagonists. Zack's conceptualization seems to be more open to and accepting the idea of men also being victims. According to John, the Xhosa cultures conceptualisation of male victimhood is an inconceivable phenomenon. Following his portrayal of men as the villains, John adds to his narratives by asserting that some men may get abused by their partners, but most men hold themselves to unrealistic standards that society has set regarding men and strength. Not only do they hold themselves to unrealistic standards but there are social expectations that when a man is in pain, he does not cry nor show agony (Thobejane, Mogorosi & Luthada, 2018). In the extract above John asserts that although some men do get abused by their partners in several ways, African men, particularly Xhosa men live by the unwritten social expectation of 'Indoda Ayikhali'. Indoda Ayikhali directly translates into 'A man does not cry' and in other words means 'real men don't cry', this term is used by the Xhosa tribe as a way of showing male strength by discouraging the expression of feelings of hurt or pain (Mayekiso & Mawere, 2022; Jeawon, 2018). Men are socialized to be strong and aggressive and not to show pain because they will be ridiculed (Thobejane, Mogorosi & Luthada, 2018). Society generally downplays the concept of men being abused, however, even in instances where their abuse is acknowledged, it is not consider a serious issue and is not given the same degree of attention and support (Thobejane, Mogorosi & Luthada, 2018). This social narrative implies that in order to comply with the expected gender norms and perceptions of masculinity, boys and men can be subjected to violent acts but should stay silent to avoid being stigmatised by other men (Buqa, 2022). Johns narratives, which are contrary to his tribal social fact and in alignment with Zack's narratives positioned men as capable of identifying in the roles of villains, victims, and potential heroes.

> *Zack: not so many men are willing to put themself in this space because they probably avoiding stereotypes. They probably avoiding being labeled.*

In the extract above Zack speaks on victim behaviour, particularly on why men are not willing to take a stand and report their own victimisation but are willing to take a stand for women, he asserts that most men that have been victimised are unable to engage and fight against their own experiences of GBV due to fear of stigmatisation and to avoid being labelled.

This is in addition to experiencing various other social and cultural consequences such as shame, fear, guilt, rejection and victim blaming (Jina, *et al*., 2020; Peel, 2004; Davies, 2002). Other reasons could be that there is also a general lack of resources that boys and men can rely on for support such as medical care and safe homes (Peel, 2004; Jina, *et al*., 2020).

> *Zack: You know when people see us coming to work here, they think we are gay automatically. They think we are gay…what I continue to do is to especially talk to young people…in terms of extra curriculum, gender activities.*

Following this, Zack then talks about and positioned other men as critical onlookers, he narrates how men outside the gender justice space see him and other men working in the gender justice space as being gay. It seems that the notion of males who meet and engage in "noble" causes to fight against GBV are "generally met with hostility from some outside observers" (Glover & Misan, 2012, p. 66). Zack's assertion reflect Siya's narratives regarding police officers asserting that men aiding women are attempting to speak for women. Additionally, his narratives align with Mr John's experiences who describes how men outside the gender justice space see him and other men working in the gender justice space as being feminist, womanly and homosexuals. This is in line with Lupton (2000) and Lorber (2000) who also noted in their articles that men who cross over into a female dominated occupations are often written off as homosexual, effeminate, failures, and even ostracised. These men tend to experience negative societal reactions based on social expectations. Their experiences include their manhood being challenged, their career opportunities being narrowed and general mistrust in them (Shen-Miller & Smiler, 2015). Zack and John were not particularly concerned about their perceived masculinities and their sexuality being brought into question similar to other men in studies by Cross and Bagilhole (2002) and Lupton (2006). One strategy men often use to maintain their position within the hegemonic roles while working as gender justice advocates is to dissociate and distance themselves from the job while they are outside the workplace (Williams & Barker, 1995; Lupton, 2006). Zack however continued to engage with his job even outside of the workplace by engaging and conversing with young people about gender issues.

> *Zack: They tend to, think in heteronormative way to say, that gender is associated with women. These men. What are they doing in this space?... I am a person Before I am a*

man. Please look at me beyond my gender…I'm a man, yes, but I'm an individual first. I'm a human being first.

Zack: if you present yourself as someone who is deemphasizing gender you people may not understand... Yeah, there are histories around these genders and there are certain privileges that certain people may not have if those genders are deemphasized. But I still stand by that concept of deemphasizing and essentializing gender so that we can be able to relate at human and individual level.

Following this, without being specific regarding who he is referring to, Zack then says that men typically think in a heteronormative way suggesting they are rigid characters and further recommends that men need to become dynamic characters by learning how to deemphasize their gender and emphasize humanity first. He suggests that men need to learn how to look past their gender by acknowledging that they are humans before acknowledging that they are men. Zack's wishes to deemphasize gender are very similar to Lorber (2000), Nielsen and Nielsen's (2017) concept of degendering that emphasizes the act of degendering gendered things such as labour and emotional sustenance and dismantling gender based discrimination. Additionally, Wild (2023) asserts that the professional and movement based spaces dedicated to anti-violence are evolving and becoming increasingly more inclusive of men. Although this shift provides many benefits, it calms tensions and new challenges regarding their gender and the privileges attached to their gender (Macomber, 2018; Wild, 2023). Therefore, it is important to actively negotiate and resist the reproduction of patriarchal and gender privileges in the context of the professional and activism gender justice spaces (Wild, 2023). In concluding, Zack narratives seem to allude to a hero that is gender neutral and able to relate to other human beings on an individual level. Zack speaks on how although deemphasizing gender is a good idea, he asserts that some villainous men will not understand because they have historically been benefiting because of their gender privilege (Clements, Derr & Rostosky, 2022). Some men are unlikely to comply because of the benefits and privileges associated with being male, a phenomenon known as male privilege (Clements, Derr & Rostosky, 2022).

5.1.3. Academic and community identities in gender justice spaces

Within this theme I explore how the men working in the gender justice space differ in their gender justice approach based on the line of their work. Despite the participants

similarities in race, gender and working within the gender justice space, some of them work in the academic space while some work within community intervention. Therefore in this theme I look specifically at the difference in approach between people in the academic space who theorize the space versus community activists who do the work.

> *Zack: So what happened was during my work I realized that, especially when it comes to cases of domestic violence. Because I was working at a court. So I could meet domestic violence offenders and domestic violence victims. What I realized was that. There were people like there were men who also came in, who also appeared in court as victims of domestic violence. So this captured my imagination.*
>
> *Siya: some of us grew up in places, you know, there are a lot of negative behaviors that are taking place…*
>
> *Mr. Game Changer: we grow in an environment where to be a man, you need to be seen being able to own the woman and not expecting the women to express themselves…*

In the extract above Zack narrates about the onset of his curiosity regarding domestic violence and gender justice. Zack made a decision to move from direct community engagement into the academic space. On the other hand Siya and Mr. Game Changer grew up in and around negative behaviours related to gender and violence. Interestingly, for various reasons which I expound further on in the following theme, through personally or vicarious exposure to catalytic events involving gender based violence these men seem to gravitate towards direct activism (Johnson, 2018). On the other hand, those who have never experienced gender based violence seem to adopt the scholarly approach. Despite their gender, race and passion for gender work, their passions and identities do not dictate that they will adopt similar approaches. Rather it seems that their direct or indirect exposure to gender based violence played a part in whether they adopt an academic or an community based approach.

5.1.4. Opinions of and experiences with other men

Within this theme I explore how men working outside the gender justice space perceive gender justice work and the men working within the gender justice space.

Mr. Mshengu: Usually I get different feedback sometimes…. One of my father's brother, he said this job is not for you. This work is not for you. This is for women. If you continue with this, you need to chop off your private part and become a woman. That was his response to me when I told him that I'm doing social work. So his response was this is for women. This is not for men. Men should go to the gardens and what not.

Mr. Mshengu: Others say it's fine because and then, um, others say I'm just doing it for money. They just saying it's for my salary and what not…But then yeah, OK, mostly from other elders. It's a negative feedback And then from others from other young adult, not young adults, but middle-aged adults, it's OK… I believe that not all, not all men are trash… So when I was going up, there was something missing, so I saw that if I become a social worker, I can be able to change people's lives and become their father in even though I'm not their biological father. But then I can be their father.

Mr. Mshengu's interaction with men while working in the gender justice space is diverse. He has found that not only do men react differently, but he also found that different age groups also react differently to a man working in the gender justice space. The opinions and views he received from other men regarding his work are varied, both positive and negative. This aligns with Van Antwerpen and Ferreira (2010) who asserts that the reaction to men working in the gender justice space by other men is not unanimous, it can be varied. Mr. Mshengu's most distinct interaction was with his uncle who believes that social work is a feminine occupation and men should work in the garden, and if he continues to work in such a space he must mutilate himself and become a woman. In addition to this negative opinion, other common opinions are the homosexual labels attached to him and his work, the job being labelled as degrading and others say he is only doing it for money, these negative opinions and labels are similar to those expressed by other men in Williams (1992), and Van Antwerpen and Ferreira's (2010) articles. These opinions and views fit into the corrupter and the shirker villain types. The corrupter villain types is known for poisonous and/or demoralizing influence, these villains are usually close relationships, and their presence is of a corrupting nature, they can also be referred to as bad apples and degenerates (Klapp, 2017, Klapp, 1956). According to Mr. Mshengu some men also fit into the shirker type by actively shying away from the heroic work he is involved in. Mr. Mshengu goes on to narrate that regardless of the negative connotations, other people do not mind men working in such a job. He further separates other men's reactions by age, he narrates that most of the negative feedback comes from elderly men

while more neutral feedback is from middled aged individuals. Hardie's (2015) and Van Antwerpen and Ferreira (2010) note that in addition to changing times where everyone has the freedom to pursue a career of their choice and men are developing increasing aspirations for entering what is considered traditionally female-dominated occupations for a variety of other reasons such as education, family background, race and ethnicity.

When it comes to his perceptions regarding other men, Mr. Mshengu believes that not all men are responsible for gender injustices and does not intentionally position them in any distinct category. He seems to believe that men are trash on an individual level, suggesting that men are good but capable of being villains. His narrative places no direct responsibility on anyone. He narrates only to the reactions of men regarding his work in the gender justice space. Regarding his own role, although he does not explicitly say it but he has taken on the role of being the hero, the normal everyman hero. He speaks of himself as only trying to help other people and being a father figure to those in need. His position as a father figure aligns with Father A Nations (FAN) objective to help in the equipping of men as fathers, nation builders and role models as a way of addressing crime and GBV (Father a Nation, 2023).

The narratives provided in this theme indeed shows the varied ways in which the participants speak of themselves and of others as well as how they experience their positionality through engagement with other men. Some of the participants proclaim the men's potential to change, asserting that some men can change after they were previously perpetrators. Some even assert that all men are perpetrators and have the duty to protect women and educate other men. Although a few of the participants do recognise the victimisation of men, they mostly start the conversation about men being the victimiser and leave the conversation about male victims to the end. Ultimately, it seems as if men are spoken of and identified as the perpetrators who are also potential agents of change, men being victims seems to be an afterthought. Only one of the men speaks of himself as part of the problem and the others speak of themselves solely as part of the solution. Lastly, because they work in this so-called feminine field, some of these men have been ridiculed and maliciously labelled for the work they do, these men do not seem to care about how other men view them. All they care about is doing their job and achieving their goals towards gender justice.

5.2. Motivations for gender justice work

The participants provided various reasons for working in the gender justice space. For most of the participants their motives are personal and intrinsic. According to Holmgren and Hearn (2009), men position themselves as gender justice advocates either for the sole benefit of men such as men's and father's rights or for the sole benefit of women such as birth and women's rights. However, as I surmised below, some men are motivated to work in the gender justice space with altruistic motives to stand against injustice, based on selflessness and gender equality, for the sake of humanity. While others were influenced by their curiosity and need for scholarship.

5.2.1. Taking a stand against injustices

While multiple books and articles by Wright (2016), Jagacinski (1987), Peng and Jaffe (1979) and Dahlerup and Leyenaar (2013) have been written about the phenomenon of women entering male-dominated occupations, very few have written on the scarcity of men in so-called traditionally female jobs (Williams, 2023). One reason may be the deep rootedness of hegemonic masculinity in society that has remained unchallenged for decades. Such dominance is perpetuated by the categorisation of work in male and female terms. Most hegemonic masculinities dictate that there is work that is 'men's work' and there is work that is designated as 'women's work', and some work is deemed as being more masculine than other work (Carrigan *et al*., 1985). However, the participants in this study seem unaffected by rigid stereotypes associated with hegemonic masculinities. Additionally, despite discouragement the number of men choosing to work in female dominated fields is increasing substantially. Regardless of men choosing to work in a space that is female dominated, this does not make them less of a man. Chusmir (1990) and Lupton (2000) show that a lot of these men are portrayed as possessing qualities and characteristics that are often and biasedly attributed to women. They may embody these qualities and characteristics, but similar to the men described in Williams (2023), Carmichael (1992) and Chusmir (1990), these men are generally comfortable with their masculinity despite the popular stereotypes. 5 out of the 6 men who participated in this research, namely John, Mr. Game changer, Drake, Siya and Mr. Mshengu seem to be motivated to work in the gender justice space by the need to take a stand against gender injustices; therefore their motivations show in their direct activism and engagement with victims and perpetrators.

John: I've not personally experienced gender based violence…Women are getting killed, raped and everything so I was a concerned citizen, So I wanted to do something about that.

John narrates two motivations that led to working in the gender justice space. In the extract above he first mentions that he has no personal experience with gender based violence and that he is merely a concerned citizen that is worried about the numbers of women being rape and killed, therefore he felt that he needed to do something about it. John's egalitarianism affirms Ammann and Staudacher's (2021) assertion that newly emerging masculinities in Africa are based on and incorporating ideals such as love, compassion and egalitarianism. His narratives show that he differs in values and attitudes to traditional men, men working in female dominated fields are found to embody more love, nurturing and altruism than regular men working in male dominated fields (Chusmir, 1990). Uchendu (2008), Ratele (2013), Pasura and Christou (2018) and Decoteau (2013) assert that men are starting to believe that traditional hegemonic masculinities are no longer appropriate and are moving towards more positive masculinities. Johns actions as a 'concerned citizen who wants to do something', whether intentionally or unintentionally speaks to the fact that his work is adding to the shift in men resisting and challenging notions of men as being violent and problematic.

Mr. Game Changer: I was in prison, by the way. I was introduced to Women's forum while in prison. And I felt that there is a serious need for such such structure outside.

Mr. Game Changers motivation seems to emanate from experiencing imprisonment. During his prison sentence Mr. Game Changer seems to have become a reflective thinker who has become motivated to help in combating gender injustice as well as in changing the notions of men being problematic. Mr. Game Changer seems keen in challenging and resisting the ideas of 'owning a woman' that he learned from the environment he grew up in. By involving himself in the gender justice space and rejecting hegemonic masculinities, this may according to Kimmel (2010) and Messer (1997) have had a 'humanizing' effect on him, expanding his emotional repertoire and his ability for intimacy with other men. Mr. Game Changers motivation seems to be influenced by reflecting on his personal experiences. Mr. Game Changers motivations align with Siya's assertion that men who have been to jail are dynamic

characters who tend to serve their jail sentence and emerge as changed individuals who try to promote and spread positive behaviours.

> *Siya: Well, for me, I think it's the need, the need to address these issues that we are dealing with being informed by the fact that the community where some of us grew up in, you know, there are a lot of negative behaviors that are taking place and for me, I realized that you know, we really need to ensure that we change the language. You know, in order for us to be in a space where we change the behaviors that are taking place, within our society, I've joined the organization because the organization promotes and speaks. You know, a language that I think it's a language that it's needed.*

Siya's motivation also seems to be intrinsic. He narrates that what motivated him to start working in the gender justice space was that he felt the need to address negative behavioural issues he noticed within his community. As mentioned earlier, Holmgren and Hearn (2009) assert that some men position themselves as gender justice advocates either for the benefit of men or for the benefit of women. However, Siya's narratives prove this assertion wrong. His intention was to change the narrative surrounding gender injustice as he believed that there are certain negative narratives regarding gender and negative behaviour in his community and he wanted to change those narratives. In his own words he asserted that there is a 'language' that he thinks is necessary to be used in the attempt to change the negative behaviours and narratives. His assertions align with Hoffmann and Addis (2023) assertion that there should be a change and use of language such as 'a man is a breadwinner' to language such as 'a man can take care of his family the best way he can', removing pressure to adhere to hegemonic gender roles. Although Siya is not working with academia or attempting to contribute new knowledge to the scholarship of masculinities and gender justice, his attempts to change the 'language' and narrative surrounding gender issues notably helps in contradicting the northern masculinities imposed on African men. His work is important in undoing the violent label attached to African masculinities. Siya's plan to change the language of violence is echoed in Ammann and Staudacher (2021) and Decoteau's (2013) text asserting that African masculinities are fluid and can be challenged, redefined and (re)negotiated. It also speaks to Jewkes *et al*., (2015) and Askanius and Hartley's (2019) claim that men are intentionally resisting old and problematic notions of manhood. Siya's plan may help in bringing back an element of ubuntu and other indigenous values characterising African masculinities. This is

consistent with York's (2014) asserting that Ubuntu is a highly effective method for promoting gender equality and for the transformation of masculinities.

> *Mr. Mshengu: I think it's my passion. I've loved social work from the beginning… Firstly, I grew up In an environment where there was no father figure in my life or male figures in my life, so I saw the need for a male figure in a child's life….the so when I was going up, there was something missing, so I saw that if I become a social worker, I can be able to change people's lives and become their father in even though I'm not their biological father. But then I can be their father.*

Mr. Mshengu's motivation, like the other participants above is intrinsic. His desire to work in the gender justice space, more specially with children seems to be fuelled by personal circumstance illustrated in his extract above. Additionally, he narrates that working in the gender space as a social worker has always been his passion; although he pursued a psychology course before moving into social work. Despite the change in careers, they both seem to align with his passion to help others. Most men who choose to pursue gender justice advocacy through social work are motivated by the desire to help improve lives or because the work is rewarding and interesting (Furness, 2007; Stevens, Moriarty, Manthorpe, Hussein, Sharpe, Orme, Mcyntyre, Cavanagh, Green-Lister & Crisp, 2012).

In addition to his passion to help others through social work, Mr. Mshengu also refers to the lack of a father as one of the factors that motivated him into becoming a social worker. Based on the fact that he grew up with no father figure, Mr. Mshengu put it upon himself to play the role of a father figure to children that do not have fathers. Fatherhood can be described in two different ways, the first is narrowly described as a biological father. The second, which matches Mr. Mshengu's approach is fatherhood by becoming a social father by taking parental responsibility of a child (Pleck, 2010). Mr. Mshengu's social status as a father to fatherless children can help prevent deviant formations of masculinities and femininities (Pleck, 1975).

He is motivated by the idea that he can help change lives for the better. Mr. Mshengu's contribution to challenging and resisting problematic notions of fatherhood such as domestic violence and absent fathering is by adopting a masculinity that is characterized by positive traits such as male courage, generative and responsive fatherhood, these traits resonate with Cole and Patterson (2022), and Hoffmann and Addis's (2023) claim of constructing positive

masculinities through the embracing of fatherhood. Mr. Mshengu's contribution in redefining problematic notion of masculinities seems to be through fatherhood.

According to Cole and Patterson (2022), Mr. Mshengu's pursuit of fatherhood seems to be an important factor in which he and other men can express positive masculinities. Mr. Mshengu's offering of fatherhood to fatherless children is his way of helping. Unbeknownst to him, the act of taking responsibility of children is claimed by Boonzaier and Enderstein (2015) to help men in resolving the tension between hegemonic gender ideals and men's want to become caregivers. The young age of father figures such as Mr. Mshengu favours well for the future of positive masculinities (Boonzaier & Enderstein, 2015).

5.2.2. Inspired by curiosity and scholarship

2 out of the 6 participants, namely Zack and John prefer to put and locate their gender justice activism rather through their scholarship. In addition to the need to help others, their motivations seems to also be inspired by their desire to learn and to create new knowledge about gender, experiences of domestic violence, about violent offenders, forms of violence and victimhood. This is evident in Zack's assertion below.

> *Zack: I was working in Zim at in the Justice Department, and I was working as a community service officer. I think here in South Africa they're called community services or parole offices. During my work I realized that when it comes to cases of domestic violence I could meet domestic violence offenders and domestic violence victims. What I realized was that there were men who also came in, who also appeared in court as victims of domestic violence. So this captured my imagination because I've always had an imagination of a victim being in most cases, they are women. But what captured my interest was these group of men who also presented as victims. So I wanted to understand their circumstances, their experiences, what forms of violence they are, or abuse they might be experiencing, so that's how my interest started.*

In the extract above Zack narrates that he used to work as a parole officer and was privy to information regarding victims and offenders and it was during this work as a parole officer that he developed the interest to work with victims of gender based violence, particularly men.

He seemingly saw his work as an incubator of new knowledge and decided to start research on it. Choudry (2020) asserts that knowledge producers such as Zack are essential in helping activists such as John, Mr. Game changer, Drake, Siya and Mr. Mshengu in conceptualising their work. As a researcher, he essentially moved from direct interaction with victims and offenders into academic scholarship. He mentions that the fact that men can also be victims of domestic violence captured his imagination. As mentioned earlier, male rape is taboo and this intrigued Zack (MatrixMen, 2022; Peel, 2004; Jina, *et al*., 2020). He always believed that victims of domestic violence are women, so he wanted to explore and understand the male experience of victimisation, their form of victimisation and the circumstances that lead into these men becoming domestic violence victims. He seems to have been intrigued by this rare concept of men being victims.

> *John: I'm studying psychology and I think these things have a psychological effect on the victims. So it was also a learning curve for me.*

In the extract above John narrates that as a psychology student he was interested in understanding about the psychological impact of experiencing violence. In this case it seems his work in the space was also motivated by the desire to learn psychology related knowledge. By getting involved outside the classroom and learning through social practice John can directly experience course content and recognize the discrepancy between knowledge production and direct activism. This connection between his course content and experiences can inspire further social action. Through this engaged scholarship John can gain more contextual knowledge, hopefully add to a scholarship that aims to reduce stereotypes, and according to Meyers (2007) this is a good step towards resisting and challenging negative notions of manhood.

> *Drake: I was invited by Professor … to come in because of the experience around issues of sexual abuse and also working with young sexual offenders because we wanted to expand our work towards, you know, the project was called* [redacted] *which was focusing on on men as allies in the space of gender based violence.*

> *Drake: One of the things which has been an issue with us man is that we become bystanders because it's not. It's not my story. I can't be part of it. let's invite men to be*

allies in fighting gender based violence. Because if the case is reported, you're also counted as as a trash, or you are also counted as someone who's a harasser.

Drake seems to be motivated by both internal and external factors. In the extract above he narrates his external motivation, his external motivation is that he started working on ending gender-based violence due to an invitation by a well-known scholar. He asserts that he was invited by a particular Professor because of his experience in working with sexual abuse victims and offenders. Similar to Zack who moved from being a parole officer to working in academia, Drake also transitioned from direct activism and interaction with victims and offenders into academia where he works as a researcher, although he does not narrate on his experience prior to the Professor invitation. His work in academia however still involves an element of activism. Following this, Drake then narrates his internal motivation to working in the gender justice space. His internal motivation being that he refused to let his personal journey and story be that of a passive bystander, he refused to adopt the character of a shirker villain. He believes that by being a bystander he is also part of the problem and he would rather his personal journey be that of an activist. He believes that men have a problem of being observers and bystanders, and also believes that once you are a bystander you can also be counted as part of the GBV problem and he is motivated in being an ally of anti-GBV.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

In this chapter, I conclude the thesis by providing a summary of the findings discussed in Chapter 5 and a discussion of the limitations. Following this I discuss and provide recommendations and suggestions for future research, and finally provide a concluding statement.

6.1. Summary

In this study I sought to understand progressive contextualized constructions of African masculinities within the gender justice space by exploring the constructions of masculinities by men who work in the gender justice space. This was done through 3 main objectives. The first was explore how men negotiate their masculinities while working in gender justice spaces. The second objective was to explore how these men speak of themselves and other men in relation to the work they do. Finally I explored their motivations for working in the gender justice space. I explored these factors with the intentions to understand the constructions of their masculinities and whether these constructions resist and challenge or reinforce prevailing global northern notions of problematic African masculinities. To achieve these objectives I employed a narrative theoretical framework and through semi-structured interviews I collected narratives from six male participants who work in the gender justice space. Through their narrative I located the following two themes.

The findings from the first theme *Social and personal subjectivities* highlighted how men working in the gender justice space whether in activist or scholarly capacity speak of themselves and how they speak of other men. The findings show that male gender justice workers speak of themselves and each other in a variety of ways. As these men all work in the gender justice space they often encounter the stereotype of Black African men being violent, through their work they attempt to reimaging and overturn this colonial stereotype into a positive one. Through their sensitive and often unappreciated work their navigate various identities, sometimes seeing and positioning themselves as the horoes fighting against gender injustice and at other times acknowledging their role as the villains, inadvertently through their ignorance and inaction. Very few of the participants recognised or spoke of men as also being legitimate victims of GBV. Perpetuated by stereotypes such as “Indoda ayikhali”, male victims continue to experience victimisation in silence due to fear of social retaliation. Although they

spoke of men as villains and sometimes victims, they also narrated the men's potential as agents of change and drivers of positive and caring masculinities. They argue that with the right exposure and support networks men can become heroes and play a significant role in promoting positive behaviours in a fight against GBV.

In the second theme, titled *Motivations for gender justice work,* the findings highlighted what motivated men to work in the gender justice space. The participants narratives reflect a diverse range of motivations, some drawing from their innate and intense sense of compassion and justice, some from personal experiences of incarceration, some desire to gender existing gender roles and some are motivated by their personal curiosity and need for the production of knowledge. Although diverse their motivations can all be clumped up into two overarching motivations. One being the need to fight against gender injustice and the other being curiosity and the need for gender justice scholarship. Majority of the participants narratives reflect their desire to promote positive behaviours in their communities by shifting towards more positive, compassionate, progressive and egalitarian masculinities. The remaining minority are motivated by their intellectual curiosity and their desire to making their mark by contributing to activism through their academic work. Irrespective of the scholarly or the direct activism route, all these men intend to promote change regarding the perception of being a man and also promote positive constructions of masculinities. As Elliot (2016) asserts, the concept of progressive and caring masculinities is a relatively contemporary social phenomenon that requires further theorizing and engagement with. The participants in this study are on the forefront of a relatively underappreciated field that requires more male engagement, whether through scholarship or through direct activism.

Within these two broad themes, it became apparent how these men construct and negotiate their masculinities while working in the gender justice space. The findings showed how men within the gender justice space positioned themselves and other men within hero and villainy categories as well as other characters within their narratives. Through their narratives they assigned responsibility for the perpetuation GBV and narrated on who they believe is responsible for solving it. Additionally, the themes also showed what motivates these men to work in the gender justice space and how other men respond to them working in such a space. This thesis makes a good contribution to the scholarship on contextualised masculinities and on the gender justice space within South Africa, it serves as an example of how African masculinities can be studied within Africa and free the influence of global northern research

enterprise. It further adds to an ever growing scholarship of exploring African phenomenon using African knowledge sharing techniques such as story-telling. It has for me ignited an appreciation for gender, gender justice, gender justice community work and for gender justice research. By simply narrowing down and focusing on masculinities within their originating contexts this study sheds light on the ongoing categorization of men as violent and evil. This study further reiterates the positives of reimagining men and their masculinities as allies of gender justice rather than as the problem. It shows that the although the reconstruction of old and adopting of new positive masculinities is restricted by various social and historical factors, through collaborative efforts it is achievable.

6.2. Limitations

There were a few limitations to this study, the first one being that the four of the participants worked and resided in Gauteng, one in Free State and one in the Western Cape, the inclusion of more provinces or locations may have yielded a greater variety of narratives. This may have helped in providing a broader view of masculinities in the gender justice space across all South African provinces.

Lastly, there were some limitations with the research process and quality of the study. As a novice researcher the methodology and framework are new to me. This may have an impact on the way the research was carried out or the quality of the research, ultimately affecting the presentation of the final results. Acknowledgement of this limitation serves to show that exceedingly noteworthy and invaluable nature of this study for the gender justice space. Not only are the constructs being studied within the study contemporary, but so is the context at which they are being studied. With further training and theorizing of the constructs and the context this limitation will be overcome leading to a better quality complementary study.

6.3. Recommendations

The data collected and interpreted in this research provided an understanding of masculinities constructed within the gender justice space. Although this context is particularly important, within this specialized focus however lies a limitation. One of the participants

narrated on how his masculinity is practiced through fatherhood. I believe that future research on the relationship between masculinities and fatherhood would benefit the scholarship.

Additionally, constructions of masculinities also seem to have cultural and traditional influences irrespective of predominantly being constructed within the gender justice space, it would be interesting to conduct a comparative study on the different type of masculinities in South Africa within each culture.

Lastly, the men who participated in the study do not occupy one social identity. In addition to being men they also belong to various other social categories such as race, class, gender, age, ethnicity, ability and sexual orientation (Bilge, 2009; Jordan, 2020). It would serve future research well to apply a much more thorough intersectional lens in addition to the narrative lens applied in this study. A deeper application of the intersectional approach will help in deconstructing and understanding masculinities by exploring the ways in which it is constructed within various other social relations and groups, in order to identify and explore the interconnections between masculinities and other social systems and categories.

6.4. Conclusion

The aim of this research was to understand constructions of masculinities in the gender justice space through the narrative lens. As mentioned earlier, much existing research such as that of Wright (2016), Jagacinski (1987), Peng & Jaffe (1979) and Dahlerup & Leyenaar (2013) has conceptualised the phenomenon of women working in male-dominated occupations and very few have asked or written on why men are few in so-called traditionally female professions (Williams, 2023). Very few scholars have written on and published on the complexities of how men construct their masculinities in the gender justice space, a so-called feminine space. The scarcity and location of research is what makes this particular study unique. In an effort to understand the constructions of masculinities, this study also looked at why men choose to work in the gender justice space and how they speak of themselves and of other men.

One aim of this study was to understand how these men, while working in the gender justice space construct progressive masculinities that challenge and renounce hegemonic and

problematic perceptions of African masculinities. The findings show that these men challenge and renounce hegemonic masculinities by working in the gender justice space and attempting the alleviate the suffering caused by hegemonic masculinities whether through direct activism or through their contribution through knowledge generation, and also by encouraging other men to form more positive and progressive forms of masculinities.

Lastly, despite their similarities in race and gender, the study showed that the participants individual life experiences led to their different motivations to work in the gender justice space, namely motivated by the need to stand against gender injustice and others by curiosity of the relationship between gender and violence. Additionally, their direct or indirect exposure to gender based violence led to a difference in their approach to gender justice work, those who were exposed to gender based violence indirectly choosing to focus on the scholarship and those exposed directly choosing direct activism. Irrespective of their motivation or approach, their work ultimately resulted in the same effect, the reconstruction of progressive and positive masculinities.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Schedule/Guideline

1. **Biographical Information and Background Information**
   - 1.1. How old are you?
   - 1.2. What racial group best describes you?
   - 1.3. What is your marital status?
   - 1.4. What Language do you prefer to speak?
   - 1.5. What is your nationality?
   - 1.6. What is the nature of your employment?

2. **Work Experiences**
   - 2.1. How do you define the work you do?
   - 2.2. Tell me how you came to work in the gender justice space.
   - 2.3. Tell me what has been the most enjoyable aspect of working in this space.
   - 2.4. What has been the most challenging aspect of working in this space?
   - 2.5. Outside your work, tell me how you engage with issues of gender equality and gender based violence.
   - 2.6. In your work, how have you found other men respond to your work?
   - 2.7. Can you share how your work has been shaped by recent movements such as the #MeToo Movement and the #MenAreTrash Movement?

3. **Masculinity**
   - 3.1. In what ways does your gender challenge or enable you to do your work?
   - 3.2. Tell me of any experiences that you feel were important in your construction of masculinity?
   - 3.3. Tell me of a situation at work where being a men proved to be an advantage.
   - 3.4. Tell me of a situation at work where being a men proved to be a disadvantage.

4. **Reflection/Debrief**

4.1. Can you share how talking about your work was for you?

4.2. What would have made it better for you?

4.3. Do you have any questions?

4.4. Can you recommend someone who might be interested in participation this study?

Appendix B: Information Sheet

Title of research project: Constructions of masculinities by men working in the Gender Justice space

Principal Researcher: Mulalo Sadiki **Email:** SDKMUL002@myuct.ac.za

Supervisor: Dr. Refiloe Makama **Email**: refiloe.makama@uct.ac.za

Department Address: P.D. Hahn Psychology Building, Chemistry Road, UCT, Rondebosch.

Dear Participant

Thank you for taking the time to participate in the study.

The *Aim of the study*: To explore the constructions of masculinities by men who work in the gender justice space.

This study is completed towards a masters' degree in Research psychology at the University of Cape Town, under the supervision of Dr. Refiloe Makama.

Participants: For this study I aim to recruit male adults (over 18) working in the NGOs, CBO, NPOs and/or research space within South Africa that focuses on gender justice.

What is the nature of my participation? The study involves one-on-one semi-structured interviews. The interviews will be audio recorded. You will be asked questions about your construction of masculinity and your work experiences in the gender justice space. It is anticipated that the interview will not take longer than an hour.

What are the risks associated with this study?

Physical: I do not envision any physical risk to participating in this study. To ensure that both you as the participant and I as the researcher are safe and comfortable, the research interview will take place at a location that is accessible and convenient for both.

Psychological: While the study poses no psychological harm, due to the nature of the topic some content might be difficult to speak about. Please see list of resources for support should you feel you need it after participation.

Additionally, the information you will share will be kept confidential. Your name will not be used in the write up of this study, a pseudonym (fake name) will be used instead. For the online interview, Microsoft Teams will be used as it ensures the interview is encrypted. Limiting access to you as the participant and the researcher. The interview will be deleted after being moved to a password protected laptop.

Will I be compensated for my participation? Participation in this study is voluntary, participants will not be remunerated for their participation in this study.

What are the benefits of participating in this study? Your participation will help in the creation of new knowledge, and this may provide you a quasi-therapeutic environment for you to vent, voice and speak their mind.

Costs: You may need to pay for either transport or data costs depending on whether your interview is face-to-face or online.

What if I change my mind? You are free to change your mind about participation without any consequences.

Should you have any concerns about the research or the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact the Chair of the Ethics committee through Rosalin Adams at Rosalind.Adams@uct.ac.za or 021 650 3417.

Should you have any none ethical concerns about the research, directed at the principal researcher, or wish to ask questions, You may contact the principal researcher at sdkmul002@myuct.ac.za or 0722035195.

Appendix C: Consent Form

Title of research project: Constructions of masculinities by men working in the Gender Justice space

Principal Researcher: Mulalo Sadiki **Email:** SDKMUL002@myuct.ac.za

Supervisor: Dr. Refiloe Makama **Email**: refiloe.makama@uct.ac.za

Department Address: P.D. Hahn Psychology Building, Chemistry Road, UCT, Rondebosch.

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Physical: I do not envision any physical risk to participating in this study. To ensure that both you as the participant and I as the researcher are safe and comfortable, the research interview will take place at a location that is accessible and convenient for both.

Psychological: While the study poses no psychological harm, due to the nature of the topic some content might be difficult to speak about. Please see list of resources for support should you feel you need it after participation.

Additionally, the information you will share will be kept confidential. Your name will not be used in the write up of this study, a pseudonym (fake name) will be used instead. For the online interview, Microsoft Teams will be used as it ensures the interview is encrypted. Limiting access to the participant and the researcher. The interview will be deleted after being moved to a password protected laptop.

Will I be compensated for my participation? Participation in this study is voluntary, participants will not be remunerated for their participation in this study.

What are the benefits of participating in this study? Your participation will help in the creation of new knowledge, and this may provide you a quasi-therapeutic environment for you to vent, voice and speak their mind.

Costs: You may need to pay for either transport or data costs depending on whether your interview is face-to-face or online.

What if I change my mind? You are free to change your mind about participation without any consequences.

I _____ (participants name), hereby volunteer to participate in this study conducted by Mulalo Sadiki from the UCT. I understand purpose of this study and I have been told about the nature, procedure, potential inconveniences as well as potential benefits.

I have read and understood the study as explained above. I have had enough opportunity to ask questions and I am prepared to participate in the study. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that should I feel uncomfortable in any way during the data collection process, I have the right to refuse to answer any question or to withdraw my participation in the study without penalty. I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings. Any information that may lead to my identification as the participant will be removed.

Moreover, I understand that should I experience any emotional distress or personal embarrassment during the course of participating in the study and require therapy. I may be referred for counselling at my own cost. In addition, should I have any concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, I may contact the Chair of the Ethics committee through Rosalin Adams at Rosalind.Adams@uct.ac.za or 021 650 3417.

I agree to participate in the research, and I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Signature of Participant: _____ **Date:** _____

Chosen Name (pseudonym) of Participant: _____

Signature of Primary Researcher: _____ **Date**: _____

I give my permission for this interview to be voice recorded.

Participant Signature: _____ Date: _____

OR

I do not give permission for this interview to be voice recorded.

Participant Signature_____ Date: _____

Appendix D: Referral list

Please find a below a list of contact details for individuals and organizations in case you need counselling or support post the interview session.

Counselling

UCT Student wellness counselling services (for UCT students)

Services

Short-term counselling and psychotherapy

Cost

R100 per session with the first session being free. Students receiving NSFAS will not be charged. Students will not be denied services should they be unable to pay.

Contact details

021 650 1017

For appointments online bookings can be done on the following link

https://outlook.office365.com/owa/calendar/STUDENTWELLNESSSERVICEPSYCHOLOGICALSERVICES@mscloudtest.uct.ac.za/bookings/

Life Line

This a 24-hour telephonic service that assists people to address the psychological and social stresses and trauma that they are struggling to deal with. This could be family problems, trauma, depression, loneliness, pregnancy, HIV infection/affection, bereavement, sexual and gender violence, substance abuse, or any other situation where a person is struggling to cope with life, in general.

Services

24-hour telephone counselling service

Trauma counselling

Face to face counselling

Payment

Free

Contact details

0861 322 322

The Counselling Hub

This organisation is located in Woodstock Cape Town, it is a multi-faith hub that provides basic mental health services. This hub also provides counselling for health care workers and other people facing life challenges.

Payment

R50 per session

Contact details

info@counsellinghub.org.za

021 462 3902 / 067 235 0019

People Against Women Abuse

This is a feminist organisation that provides professional services that comprise of advocacy, training, psycho-social support, legal and sheltering to survivors of violence. POWA is committed to enhancing the quality of life of all women and girls. This organisation also provides referral services, counselling and dialogues against GBV for men to engage in.

Services

Counselling

Payment

Free

Contact details

011 591 6803

Trauma Centre

The trauma centre is a human rights organisation that offers an inclusive healing process for those that have previously been traumatized, victims of violence and torture in a multiple wounded society.

Contact details

info@trauma.org.za

021 465 7373

Other services

South African Men's Forum

This Forum aims to deconstruct negative masculine expectations, promote gender equality, encourages men to respect their partners and to become positive role models in the community. The forum also provides mentorship.

Payment

Free

Contact details

082 518 1177

One in Nine

This organisation is guided by feminist principles in supporting survivors of sexual violence. It ensures that women are agents of their own lives as well as liaison with the criminal justice system to acquire justice for the victims of GBV.

Payment

Free

Contact details

011 024 5185

Appendix E: Ethics Approval Letter

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

Department of Psychology

University of Cape Town Rondebosch 7701 South Africa
Telephone (021) 650 3417

Fax No. (021) 650 4104

12 July 2022

Mulalo Sadiki
Department of Psychology
University of Cape Town
Rondebosch 7701

Dear Mulalo

I am pleased to inform you that ethical clearance has been given by an Ethics Review Committee of the Faculty of Humanities for your study, *Constructions of masculinities by men working in the Gender Justice space.* The reference number is PSY2022-025.

I wish you all the best for your study.

Yours sincerely

Signed by candidate

Lauren Wild (PhD)
Associate Professor
Chair: Ethics Review Committee