

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF MASCULINITY AND INTIMATE PARTNER
VIOLENCE: UNDERSTANDING MEN'S PERSPECTIVES

by

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the impact of social constructions of masculinity on men's use of intimate partner violence (IPV), addressing two questions: (1) How do social constructions of masculinity and gender influence men's use of IPV? and (2) Based on their exposure to patterns of gender interaction, how do men learn and internalize processes that inhibit or encourage using IPV? Using Connell's (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), theory of hegemonic masculinity, this study analyzes the Canadian White Ribbon Campaign's "Boys Don't Cry" video through content analysis and employs it as a visual method for qualitative interviews with 16 men aged 19 to 25. Findings reveal some men make conscious choices not to use violence despite social pressures and learn through sensitizing experiences and gendered interactions with men and women that using violence leads to negative consequences. This study allowed for participants to gain more awareness about their conceptualizations of masculinity and IPV.

Dedication

To Mom and Dad. For everything.

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First and foremost, I would like to thank the 16 young men who participated in this study. Your enthusiasm and the knowledge that this study meant something to you reaffirmed to me that this research is so important and gave me the necessary boost of motivation to see this through to the end. Thank you for sharing your stories and experiences and for bringing my study to life in ways I could have never imagined.

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List of Abbreviations

GBV	Gender Based Violence
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
MAV	Men Against Violence
WRA	White Ribbon Australia

Chapter 1: Introduction

Gender based violence (GBV) is one of the most pervasive human rights violations in the world (United Nations Population Fund, 2017). The United Nations Population Fund defines GBV as: “violence involving men and women, in which the female is usually the victim; and which is derived from unequal power relationships between men and women” (2017, para. 1). Gender socialization prepares young men to want and expect that they will hold a position of power in relationships, and controlling or violent behaviors are used in order to assert or maintain this position (Giordano et al., 2016). According to Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), hegemonic masculinity is "the pattern of practice" that sustains men's social domination of women (p. 832) which can be supported by violence. Many researchers argue that the desire for power and the expectation that men must have dominance over women is connected to what men have been taught about masculinity (Bell & Naugle, 2008).

This study focuses on the relationship between the social construction of masculinity and intimate partner violence (IPV), a form of GBV between current and former legally married spouses, common-law partners and other kinds of intimate partners (Burczycka, 2018). IPV can include physical violence, such as hitting or punching, sexual violence, which can include forcing the partner to engage in sexual acts without consent or using sexually degrading language, emotional abuse such as using threats or intimidation, financial abuse which can include controlling or withholding access to money, spiritual abuse which will include using the partner's spiritual or religious beliefs to control them,

cyber violence and stalking (Status of Women Canada, 2020). People of any gender identity can use or experience violence, however, IPV remains a gendered form of violence, where the person using violence is more likely to be male and the person experiencing violence is more likely to be female or a person who belongs to a gender minority group (Government of New Brunswick, 2014; Status of Women Canada, 2020). While researchers have found that men are more likely to be perpetrators of IPV, this is still a topic of debate (Dardis et al., 2015; Giordano et al., 2016). Connell (1987) argued that men occupy positions of power and authority over women in the home and in other institutions, recognized that a relationship exists between masculinity and violence, and that some men will use violence in order to achieve and maintain power. More recently, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) assert that there is a hierarchy of masculinities, some more dominant than others. Different masculinities, due to differences in race/ethnicity, class, or sexuality, influence each other. Patterns of gender relations between men and women vary by social context and have changed over time.

Prior to beginning this research, I worked as a student research assistant at the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research and became familiar with the work of the Male Violence Research Team. I learned that engaging men through education or training on IPV prevention is an under-researched topic and that most research focuses on men who have used violence or who have been court-mandated into batterer intervention programs, rather than men who have not used violence and who choose to become involved in efforts to eliminate IPV. This noteworthy gap in the research, combined with my personal interest in the subject, lead me to conducting research on men

and IPV. In order to study how the social construction of masculinity influences how men use or think about IPV I interviewed sixteen men between the ages of 19 and 25.

I used Connell's (1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005) theory of hegemonic masculinity in this study to examine the relationship between masculinity and IPV and men's perspectives surrounding IPV. Hegemonic masculinity is a social structure which influences men to perform masculinity in ways that are culturally accepted (Marasco, 2018). Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity recognizes agency within structures and that hegemonic masculinity has been changed historically by men in subordinate groups and women in a variety of social contexts (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). The participants in this study recognized that masculinity can include both helpful and harmful ideas or behaviors, however, they were not challenging hegemonic masculinity in any structural ways in their lives. In addition, the men were not involved in antiviolence initiatives aimed at challenging hegemonic masculinity.

Research focusing on men who have used violence has found that how men rationalize and justify using violence against their partners is influenced by how they perceive and construct masculinity (Flood, 2011; McMahon & Dick, 2011; Reidy et al., 2014). Flood (2011) found that men's adherence to sexist, patriarchal and sexually hostile attitudes was an important predictor of their use of violence against women. Similarly, Reidy et al. (2014) found men who placed a high value on appearing masculine and experience a high degree of stress in maintaining a masculine status were more likely to perpetuate acts of violence. In a study of undergraduate men, Anderson and Anderson (2008) found variables associated with hostility towards women were significant predictors of committing violence against women.

Research on engaging men and boys in IPV prevention has begun to focus on how men's ideas about masculinity influence their decisions to become involved in antiviolence initiatives (Casey et al., 2012; Maddox et al., 2018). While the aim of this study was to recruit men to talk about masculinity and IPV, I did not recruit men who had acted violently. Furthermore, I did not seek to understand how men get involved in antiviolence initiatives, rather, I conducted this study to offer men the opportunity to think about their masculinity and its relationship to IPV. Men choosing to use or not use violence is influenced by negative attitudes and hostility towards women, as well as pressure and stress to adhere to hegemonic masculinity (Anderson & Anderson, 2008; Flood, 2007; Reidy et al., 2014). IPV is a highly stigmatized issue which puts additional pressure on men not to talk openly about their experiences. Yet IPV is widespread with 44% of Canadian women and 36% of Canadian men who have ever been in an intimate relationship reporting experiencing some kind of psychological, physical, or sexual violence since age 15 (Cotter, 2021, p. 5). Findings from this study showed that some men do make conscious choices to not use violence despite these pressures. Some of the men learned through sensitizing experiences and gendered interactions with men and women that using violence leads to negative consequences for themselves and the people they care about. Casey and Smith (2010, p. 959) found in their study with men who had become involved in an organization or event dedicated to ending domestic violence, that exposure to a sensitizing experience made the issue of domestic violence more visible or "real" to the men. The most common sensitizing experiences were hearing a disclosure of domestic violence from a female friend or family member, witnessing or experiencing violence during childhood, or being

exposed to a specific learning opportunity related domestic violence, such as a course or lecture.

Prior to the 1990s, the majority of men's involvement with engaging other men to end IPV and promote gender equality occurred in small grassroots groups. These groups focused on local initiatives in the community, however, many were not sustained over time (Minerson et al., 2011). In the mid-1990s, following the tragic events at L'École Polytechnique in Montreal on December 6, 1989, more formal, unified organizations for men working to end IPV began to emerge around the world (Minerson et al., 2011). One of the main organizations was the White Ribbon Campaign, a global organization dedicated to engaging men and boys in ending IPV. In 2005, the White Ribbon Campaign conducted a survey with men in Canada, and found that 75% felt it was important to speak out on issues of IPV, and 66% felt they could personally do more to help women who are victims (Minerson et al., 2011).

My study created an opportunity for participants to discuss masculinity and IPV, subjects that are often considered sensitive or "controversial," in a safe and non-judgmental setting. Facilitated discussions with men can act as sensitizing experiences for men to open up about their experiences of violence and reflect on how these experiences have impacted their ideas of masculinity and IPV (Casey & Smith, 2010). Findings from this study reveal that some men want to open up and discuss these topics with other men, but do not have safe opportunities to do so. Education can serve as a potential context for the creation of safe spaces for these discussions. However, the educational context is also complex and problematic. Although the men in the study described learning about IPV from courses in university or presentations in school, many of their personal experiences of violence within

these contexts were not addressed. The men may have learned about IPV and violence in their education, but they may not have had enough opportunities to reflect on their own experiences.

This research is important because it focuses on how participant's decisions regarding IPV are influenced by ideas of masculinity that support or encourage violence. The study allowed for participants to learn more about IPV and to gain more awareness about their conceptualizations of masculinity and their relationship to IPV. Increased awareness of the impacts of IPV on boys and men could lead to more action and involvement in antiviolence initiatives and prevention. Being able to reflect on their own experiences could lead to healthier and deeper relationships with women. Furthermore, increased awareness could lead to a higher enrollment of men in courses on IPV or gender studies, which could then lead to more men becoming involved in antiviolence prevention work long term or as a future profession. Research on engaging men in IPV prevention highlights that it is important for men to have open conversations on IPV with other men (McMahon & Dick, 2011). Some of the participants recognized the importance of research on IPV. This study could have been a "first step" or sensitizing experience for participants to learn more about IPV and to informally engage in IPV prevention in the future.

Following this introduction, the thesis chapters include the theoretical framework, literature review, methods and data, content analysis findings, interview findings, discussion and conclusion. The theoretical framework introduces Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity which is used in this research to help better understand and examine the relationship between masculinity and IPV. The literature review covers three areas of research: masculinity (which is further broken down into three sub-sections on pressure

and expectations to perform hegemonic masculinity, men's experiences and emotions, and lifetime exposure to violence), changing men's violent behaviors, and barriers to changing violent behaviors. The methods and data chapter describes the two methods that were used, content analysis and semi-structured interviews. This chapter introduces the visual method, specifically a video, and how it helped begin conversations with the participants on masculinity and IPV. The "Boys Don't Cry" video was created by the Canadian White Ribbon Campaign to teach men and young boys about healthier masculinities. The detailed findings from the content analysis of the "Boys Don't Cry" video is in content analysis findings chapter. The next chapter describes the findings from the thematic analysis of the interviews. The interview findings and the content analysis findings chapters are each organized into four sections: masculinity, gender relations, patterns of gender interaction, and IPV. The findings from the content analysis and interviews are then discussed in relation to hegemonic masculinity and the research literature in the discussion chapter. The thesis concludes with a summary of the key findings, a consideration of the study's limitations and recommendations for future research.

This thesis will answer the following research questions:

1. How do social constructions of gender and masculinity influence men's use of IPV?
2. Based on their exposure to patterns of gender interaction, how do men learn and internalize processes that inhibit or encourage using IPV?

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

Numerous theories and approaches have emerged over the years to understand and conceptualize gender and masculinity. One of these theories is Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity which has been used to examine the relationship between masculinity and IPV. Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity has helped me to better examine and understand the link between gender and IPV. IPV is a complex issue that exists within larger structures of violence and masculinity, and Connell's theory helped make sense of men's ideas about IPV.

Connell (1995, p. 77) defines hegemonic masculinity as "the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women." Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity stems from a culturally idealized form of masculinity and is based on a society where one gender of a particular social class and ethnicity is dominant in the social hierarchy. As such, Connell proposes that hegemonic masculinity gives some men their culturally dominant position in society and power over women and other men.

The concept of hegemonic masculinity has also evolved in various ways since it was originally formulated by Connell in the 1980's, and according to Connell and Messerschmidt (2005, p. 835), research has expanded on the concept in four main ways: "by documenting the costs and consequences of hegemony, by showing greater diversity in masculinities, uncovering the mechanisms of hegemony and by tracing changes in hegemonic masculinities." As outlined by Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), one of the ways the research was expanded was by focusing more on how the concept of hegemony

applies to hegemonic masculinity. Connell (1995, p.77) referred to hegemony as the “cultural dynamic by which a group claims and sustains a leading position in social life.” Similar to Connell’s original formulation of the concept, researchers have found that in order for hegemonic masculinities to persist, there must be a pattern of hegemony, with one group maintaining dominance over the other (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Messerschmidt, Schippers, 2007; 2019). Researchers have recognized however, that hegemony does not have to be maintained through force or violence, but rather is maintained through consent or compliance from subordinated groups (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Mahutga & Stepan-Norris, 2015; Messerschmidt, 2019).

Also well supported is the idea that the hierarchy of masculinities is a pattern of hegemony, not a pattern of simple domination based on force. Cultural consent, discursive centrality, institutionalization and the marginalization or delegitimation of alternatives are widely documented features of socially dominant masculinities (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 846).

Moreover, Messerschmidt (2019) and Mahutga and Stepan-Norris (2015, p. 3) found that hegemonic masculinities will be accepted and perceived as “normative.”

Messerschmidt (2019, p. 85) argued that hegemonic masculinity is still “highly salient” to contemporary research on masculinities, and continues to provide strong reasoning for how unequal relationships between masculinities, masculinities and femininities, and men and women are legitimated. Research has started to focus more on how hegemonic masculinity can be challenged or changed, and how other “nonhegemonic” masculinities or femininities emerge that do not comply to hegemonic masculinity (Messerschmidt, 2019; Schippers, 2007). Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) and Messerschmidt (2019) argue that hegemony must be maintained, and if a certain

masculinity is no longer perceived as hegemonic, it will be changed or replaced by a new hegemonic masculinity. “[M]asculinities are not simply different but also subject to change. Challenges to hegemony are common, and so are adjustments in the face of these challenges (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 835). As such, the theory of hegemonic masculinity has been reformulated to recognize agency within structures and the potential for hegemonic masculinity to change or be challenged (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

Hegemonic masculinity is a social structure. Social structures are “regular and patterned forms of interaction over time that constrain and enable behavior in specific ways,” and can provide a simpler way of explaining how gender is organized (Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 197). Messerschmidt (2005) noted that structure can only be recognized through social action, and social action requires structure as its condition. Therefore, gender is structured action that people take under certain social-structural constraints and opportunities. Hegemonic masculinity influences men to perform masculinity in ways that are culturally ideal and the “particular criteria of masculinity are embedded in the social situations and recurrent practices whereby social relations are structured” (Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 197). Men will experience pressure to perform masculinity in these culturally ideal ways from other men and from women. These culturally ideal and accepted ways of being masculine include being strong, aggressive, unemotional and heterosexual (Connell, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Marasco, 2018). Culturally ideal and accepted ways of being masculine are also influenced by power and social relations between men.

Thus, masculinity is based on a social construct that reflects unique circumstances and relationships—a social construction that is renegotiated in each particular context. In this way, men construct varieties of masculinities through specific

practices as they simultaneously reproduce, and sometimes change, social structures (Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 198).

Connell's (1995) original theory of hegemonic masculinity was criticized for being too structural, and for perceiving hegemonic masculinity as a "fixed character type" (p. 76). This led to confusion from researchers around "who and what type of men actually represent hegemonic masculinity," and inconsistencies in how the concept is applied to men (Messerschmidt, 2019, p. 87). In Connell and Messerschmidt's (2005, p. 838) reformulation of the concept, they recognized that hegemonic masculinity is fluid and subject to change and "sometimes refers to a fixed type of masculinity and on other occasions refers to whatever type of masculinity is dominant at a particular time and place."

Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) retained Connell's (1987;1995) original argument that hegemonic masculinity is not a set of fixed character traits, but rather is an unequal gender relationship between emphasized femininity and marginalized or subordinated masculinities. "Hegemonic masculinity was understood as a pattern of practice (i.e., things done, not just a set of role expectations or an identity) that allowed men's dominance over women to continue" (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 832).

Individuals live within social structures and their actions are constrained or influenced by them. As a researcher, I am aware of these structures and how they may have influenced the research participant's perceptions and behaviors. The data analyzed and discussed in this study was collected from individual men, however it was analyzed through the lens of hegemonic masculinity, a social structure.

While masculinity is often defined in contrast to femininity, the concepts are also interrelated, and Connell (1987, p. 183) argued this interrelation is "centered on a single

structural fact, the global dominance of men over women.” This “structural fact” provides the main foundation for relationships between men and women. Women’s identities and practices influence how men construct gender and hegemonic masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Connell has since revised this idea of the relationship between masculinity and femininity to recognize that gender hierarchies include complex relationships in which incorporation and oppression occur together. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005, p. 848) stated that “women are central in many of the processes constructing masculinities—as mothers; as schoolmates; as girlfriends, sexual partners and wives; and as workers in the gender division of labor; and so forth.” As such, they argue that research on hegemonic masculinity needs to focus on how women’s practices influence masculinity and the relationship between hegemonic masculinity and femininity. After being asked to describe their thoughts on masculinity, the participants were asked to describe their ideas of femininity.

Connell (1987, p. 108) found that men are “empowered in gender relations” and will hold positions of authority and power over women in the workplace, home, and larger institutions. Connell (1987) also recognized that men who are able to align with hegemonic masculine ideals, will tend to have the most power and authority within institutions. Messerschmidt (2005) argued that hegemonic masculinity is crucial to understanding power relations among men. Men who are perceived as fitting with hegemonic masculine ideals will have more power in society than other men in subordinated masculinities. These power relations are constructed historically on the basis of, for example, class, race, and sexual orientation. Therefore, not only is hegemonic masculinity defined by men’s power and dominance over women, it also encompasses men’s power over other men in

subordinated groups (lower class, racial minorities, gay men). Messerschmidt (2005) noted that men's abilities to meet hegemonic masculine ideals will vary depending on their position within social structures of class, race, and sexual relations. Men in subordinated groups or positions may experience more difficulties performing hegemonic masculinity than men in dominant or privileged groups (white, heterosexual, upper class) and they are constrained because of their position.

Although there is a dominant idealized form of masculinity, Connell (1995) argued that multiple forms of masculinity exist and are influenced by a number of factors, such as race, class and sexuality. Men in marginalized or subordinated groups may develop new masculinities in response to not being able to live up to the ideal hegemonic masculinity. These new masculinities are recognized as hybrid masculinities. Bridges and Pascoe (2018) identified hybrid masculinities as those that incorporate ideas or behaviors from marginalized masculinities as well as femininity. Bridges and Pascoe developed their theory on hybrid masculinity in response to limitations with Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity which could not explain why men in positions of power may adopt ideas or behaviors from subordinated groups. Bridges and Pascoe suggested that men in privileged groups can strategically borrow ideas or behaviors associated with marginalized masculinities to identify with members of these groups, while also maintaining their power over these groups. Some men may feel constrained by the structure of hegemonic masculinity, and they may not be able perform certain actions or behaviors because of their status or position. Men in privileged positions who are seen to align with hegemonic masculine ideals will use hybrid masculinities to explore interests of marginalized groups, while avoiding the pain or injustice these groups experience, such as racism or oppression.

As such, men who are seen as hegemonically masculine can perform behaviors associated with marginalized groups while also maintaining their position of dominance over these groups. For example, Demitriou (2001, p. 350) found that heterosexual men are able to adopt “bits and pieces” of gay men’s styles and practices into their lives.

Bridges and Pascoe (2018, p. 260) suggest that hybrid masculinities can “exacerbate, reflect and conceal existing inequalities in patterned ways,” among men. Furthermore, the hybrid masculinities available to men in positions of power will look different from the hybrid masculinities available to men in subordinated or marginalized groups. Men will develop new hybrid masculinities in response to not being able to live up to the ideal hegemonic masculinity, or to incorporate ideas or practices into their identity that do not align with dominant ideals, however, these new masculinities may not be attainable to all men. As such, boundaries and hierarchies between masculinities are still being maintained and reinforced. Men developing new hybrid masculinities also reinforces ideas that there are multiple forms and enactments of masculinity among men.

Some researchers have identified that men are also able to hold positions of power over marginalized groups without engaging in behaviors aligned with hybrid masculinities or hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). These men are performing complicit masculinity and are “men who receive the benefits of patriarchy without enacting a strong version of masculine dominance” (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 832). They are still able to receive the same privileges as men who embody hegemonic masculinity because of their gender.

Some researchers have focused on the link between hegemonic masculinity, violence and crime (Messerschmidt, 2005; Marasco, 2018). For Messerschmidt (2005, p.

203) “a satisfactory theory of masculinities and crime requires an understanding of the meanings boys and men attach to their social actions and how these actions are related to conscious choice and specific social structures in particular settings.” Instead of focusing solely on men’s individual actions or decisions to engage in crime, theories of masculinity and crime need to look at social structures, and how men’s positions within social structures influence their decisions to engage (or not engage) in crime or violence (Messerschmidt, 2005).

In their work on masculinity and crime, Messerschmidt (2005) aimed to understand why some boys engage in violence and others do not, and why boys use different types of violence. In order to answer these questions, they focused on the relationship between different forms of violence, the body, structured action and masculinity. They found that some young boys use their bodies to gain control over others and perform hegemonic masculinity. Adolescent boys “viewed their bodies as instruments—weapons in the service of a desire to dominate and control another body through a particular type of interpersonal violence” (Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 209); thus, hegemonic masculinity is embodied. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005, p. 851) argue that men’s bodies are actively involved in masculine social actions and “bodies are both objects of social practice and agents of social practice.” Men and boys engage in various bodily activities, such as sports, to change the appearance of their bodies and act more masculine. In their research with violent and non-violent boys in school, Messerschmidt (2005) found that engaging in physical and sexual violence gave some boys dominance and power over others in their working-class neighborhood.

Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) proposed that studies which include a focus on embodied masculinities also need to consider the social context in which they are performed. Geographic location can influence the construction of hegemonic masculinities at three interrelated levels: local, regional, and global. For example, sports teams at the local level that emphasize or encourage competitiveness, aggression, or violence as ideal expressions of hegemonic masculinity could be influenced by how hegemonic masculinity is obtained in other local settings or at the regional level and vice versa.

The relationship between gender, power, and violence, as recognized by Connell (1987, 1995) and Messerschmidt (2005), has important implications for the relationship between hegemonic masculinity and IPV. Connell states that a relationship exists between hegemonic masculinity and violence, and while violence is not required to achieve hegemony, the two do occur together. According to Connell (1987, p. 185-186),

...[H]egemonic masculinity must embody a successful collective strategy in relation to women. Given the complexity of gender relations no simple or uniform strategy is possible: a 'mix' is necessary. So hegemonic masculinity can contain at the same time, quite consistently, openings towards domesticity, openings towards violence, towards misogyny and towards heterosexual attraction.

The relationship between power, gender and IPV is also recognized in feminist theory. Feminist theory suggests that violence in heterosexual relationships is perpetuated by some men in an attempt to control their female partners (Ali & Naylor, 2013). Researchers using feminist theory to examine men's use of violence against women have found that some men use various tactics, such as IPV, to control and exert dominance over women and their families (Bell & Naugle, 2008; Michalski, 2004). As such, IPV is a pattern of behavior and a strategy that reinforces hegemonic masculinity in order to exert power and control over women.

The New Brunswick Woman Victims of Abuse Protocols (GNB, 2014, p. 22) states that the “abuse of women is about power and control,” and a woman’s current or former intimate partner will use different types of IPV to maintain control over her. As was stated in the introduction, IPV is a form of gender-based violence where the man is more likely to be the one using violence and the woman is more likely to be the one experiencing violence. Connell (1995) recognized that violence exists within larger structures of gender and inequality. “[I]t is overwhelmingly, the dominant gender who hold and use the means of violence,” and members of the privileged group use violence to maintain their dominance (p. 76).

In Messerschmidt’s (2005, p. 208) study on masculinity and crime, the boys who used violence in school were described as having made a “conscious choice” to use violence in order to pursue hegemonic masculinity. Although they found that the boys’ decisions to engage in violence were influenced by social structures, such as gender, race and class, violence is not inevitable. Rather, the boys made conscious decisions and the types of violence they used were influenced by their bodies and the resources available to them. Since their research focused on why men and boys engage in crime, they suggested that it is important for research to examine why others do not. In addition, Messerschmidt (2005) suggested future research should aim to “discover what type of masculinity people construct who do not commit crime and how it is different from the gender of those who do commit crime” (p. 210). This suggestion is pursued in this thesis which explores how some men are influenced by ideas of masculinity that do not encourage or require violence. This study will address gaps in understanding, the need to more fully recognize links

between constructions of masculinity and violence, and how some men's conceptualizations of masculinity may influence their ideas about violence.

Connell (1995, p. 191) wrote that hegemonic masculinity is transformed over time and

[t]he history of European/American masculinity over the last two hundred years can be broadly understood as the splitting of gentry masculinity, its gradual displacement by new hegemonic forms, and the emergence of an array of subordinated and marginalized masculinities.

Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) stated that changes may be shaped by contradictions within masculinities and can be intentional. Women or men in subordinated groups can challenge and have the capacity to change hegemonic masculinity. Furthermore, hegemonic masculinity does not rely on a theory of social reproduction. As such, if the current pattern of hegemonic masculinity is no longer perceived as hegemonic, or if its practices no longer result in power or dominance, then it will be challenged. As discussed previously, men in marginalized or subordinated groups develop hybrid masculinities that challenge and contribute to changing hegemonic masculinity (Bridges & Pascoe, 2018). Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) found that men who cannot achieve hegemonic masculinity may choose to engage in protest masculinities in order to challenge gender hierarchies. Protest masculinities are “a pattern of masculinity constructed in local working-class settings, sometimes among ethnically marginalized men, which embodies the claim to power typical of hegemonic masculinities, but which lacks the economic resources and institutional authority” (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 848). Protest masculinities can challenge and change hegemonic masculinities.

Some researchers are critical of hegemonic masculinity being reduced to only include harmful or toxic behaviors, such as violence and crime (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Messerschmidt, 2019). Connell and Messerschmidt (2005, p. 840) noted that hegemonic masculinity was frequently used to account for violence and crime, and “...came to be associated with negative characteristics that depict men as unemotional, independent, non-nurturing, aggressive, and dispassionate—which are seen as the causes of criminal behavior.” Marasco (2018) and Waling (2019) found that hegemonic masculinity often encompasses behaviors associated with toxic masculinity. Toxic masculinity refers to the detrimental or “toxic practices” of masculinity, including engaging in aggressive or violent behaviors, suppressing one’s emotions, having dominance and control over women, and displaying misogyny and homophobia. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005, p. 833) suggest that hegemonic masculinities that present harmful behaviors or toxic masculinity as dominant can be replaced by more helpful ideas or types of masculinity, and “a more humane, less oppressive, means of being a man might become hegemonic.”

In addition to outlining a clear framework for hegemonic masculinity, it is important to clearly define the other concepts that were introduced earlier in the chapter in relation to hegemonic masculinity. The first is the concept of emphasized femininity which Connell (1987, p. 187) defined as a form of femininity that complies with women’s subordination to men “and is oriented to accommodating the interests and desires of men.”

The next concept is hybrid masculinities. Bridges and Pascoe (2018, p. 258) introduced the concept of hybrid masculinities, which refer to the “selective incorporation of elements of identity typically associated with various marginalized and subordinated

masculinities and—at times—femininities into privileged men’s gender performances and identities.” Bridges and Pascoe (2018) found that men in privileged groups adopt styles and practices of marginalized groups while still maintaining positions of power over these groups. As such, research on hybrid masculinities often focuses on how hybrid masculinities perpetuate gender hierarchies rather than challenge them (Bridges & Pascoe, 2018).

The last concept is embodied masculinities. Researchers recognized that certain practices involving the body, such as participating in sports, eating meat, and engaging in risk-taking behaviors, such as dangerous driving, are linked with masculine identities (Connell, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Messerschmidt, 2005; Messner, 2007).

In summary, hegemonic masculinity is perceived as the most culturally ideal form of masculinity which gives some men a dominant position in society and power over women and other men (Connell, 1987; 1995). Hegemonic masculinity is socially constructed. As such, gender is structured action that individuals do under social structural constraints and opportunities. Men and women exert pressure on men to perform masculinity in ways that are influenced by social contexts and culturally accepted. Connell’s theory recognizes individuals’ agency within structures and the potential for hegemonic masculinity to be challenged and changed by subordinate groups of men and women.

Men in subordinate groups may develop new masculinities in response to not being able to live up to hegemonic masculinity. These new masculinities are recognized as hybrid masculinities. In addition, men who cannot achieve the ideals of hegemonic masculinity may choose to engage in protest masculinities to challenge hegemonic masculinity.

Hegemonic masculinity is transformed over time and these transformations can be intentional. Women or men in subordinated groups can challenge, criticize and change hegemonic masculinity.

Hybrid masculinities can reinforce and maintain boundaries and hierarchies between men. Men in positions of power or who are perceived as aligning with hegemonic masculine ideals will use hybrid masculinities to perform behaviors associated with marginalized groups while also maintaining their positions of power over these groups. Some men will also perform complicit masculinity in order to receive the same privileges as men who are perceived as aligning with hegemonic masculinity.

A relationship exists between hegemonic masculinity and violence, and the two will often occur together. Theories of masculinity and violence need to focus on structures, attitudes about violence, stress in response to pressure to achieve the ideals of hegemonic masculinity and how some men's positions within structures of class, race and sexuality, for example, influence their decisions to engage (or not engage) in violent crime. The participants in this study did not use IPV and their decisions to not engage in violence are influenced by hegemonic masculinity and social contexts.

Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity is used in this thesis to help better understand and examine the relationship between masculinity and IPV. Furthermore, Connell's theory will be used to theorize men's perceptions of IPV.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

In response to the growing body of research on masculinity and men's studies, researchers have begun to examine how the social construction of masculinity influences men's perceptions and attitudes towards violence (Davis, 2002; Schrock & Padavic, 2007; Mullaney, 2007; Funk, 2008; Reidy et al., 2014). Research has begun to focus on men's experiences and socialization processes in order to better understand how patterns of gendered interaction shape how men perceive and think about masculinity and whether these perceptions contribute to violent or harmful behaviors (Funk, 2008; Flood, 2011; Reidy et al, 2014). In addition, research focusing on men's involvement in anti-violence initiatives or prevention has found that men's understandings and experiences of themselves as men will have an impact on prevention efforts (Funk, 2008). Funk (2008, p. 156) suggested that what it means to "be a man" is influenced by behaviors as well as by experiences. Therefore, thinking about and working to end IPV has the potential to impact how men understand themselves and their experiences.

This literature review is organized into three sections. The first section focuses on research concerning masculinity and how hegemonic masculinity and male privilege influence men's experiences and behaviors. This section highlights research studies that

examined how hegemonic masculinity and male privilege can act as barriers to men changing their behaviors or becoming involved in antiviolence initiatives. This section includes two sub sections: men's experiences and emotions, and lifetime exposure to violence. The second section focuses on changing men's violent behaviors and how changing violent behaviors can lead to preventing violent behaviors. The third section focuses on barriers to change, how men can work to overcome these barriers, and how overcoming these barriers and changing violent or unhealthy behaviors can have benefits for men.

Masculinity

Men's conceptualizations of masculinity have been shown to influence their use of violence which can have the potential to act as barriers for men to change their violent behaviors or become involved in antiviolence initiatives (Casey et al., 2012; Mullaney, 2007; Reidy et al., 2014). In White Ribbon Campaign Issues brief prepared for the Status of Women Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada, Minerson et al. (2011) argue that the issue of IPV and men's power and privilege in society are often invisible to men, as systems of patriarchy create social norms and expectations for men to view their power and privilege as normal. Male privilege is understood as men's power over women, as inevitable, and resistant to change.

Research focusing on overcoming barriers to changing violent behaviors has demonstrated that, for many men, resistance to change stems from what they learned about gender and how they have been socialized to perform behaviors associated with masculinity (Davis, 2002; Giordano et al., 2016; Reidy et al., 2014). According to Reidy

et al. (2014), a well-documented risk factor for IPV perpetration by men towards women is their adherence to harmful behaviors and ideas associated with hegemonic masculinity.

McMahon and Dick (2011) argue that men's willingness to help victims of IPV or who become involved in IPV prevention programs is closely related to their conceptualizations of masculinity. Harris (2009, p. 455) defined conceptualizations of masculinity as "the meanings, beliefs, and attitudes that men ascribe to masculinity, which potentially influence the behaviors they rely upon to express a masculine identity." Studies by Reidy et al. (2014) and Mullaney (2007) showed that men's use of violence is influenced by their conceptualizations of masculinity.

Finally, Flood (2011) found that engaging men in ending IPV and overcoming barriers to involvement requires engaging the socially privileged group in ending a problem created by social structures and interactions that promote and encourage violence. When men participate in efforts to stop IPV, they are required to examine their masculinity, their own past behaviors and men's power and privilege in society.

Men's experiences and emotions

One of the defining behaviors of hegemonic masculinity is emotional restriction (Marasco, 2018). Researchers have found boys and men experience more difficulties expressing emotions and they are less likely to open up and talk about their emotions than girls and women, because they do not want to be seen as weak (Kaufman, 1993; McQueen, 2017; Schwab et al., 2020). McQueen (2017) found that men were afraid to show vulnerability and they attempted to control their emotions to avoid being seen as weak or helpless. McQueen's (2017, p. 208) research highlighted that being able to successfully

control and suppress one's emotions was seen as a successful act of "manliness" among men. Marasco (2018) found that emotional restriction can be associated with masculinity and emotional expression can be associated with femininity. Therefore, men learn that showing or talking about emotions is feminine, and they will be afraid of being labelled feminine by other men if they are too emotional.

While masculinity is frequently defined and conceptualized as being unemotional or lacking emotions, researchers have found that although men experience emotions as often as women, they may not always show them. Rather, they may only express certain emotions, such as anger, and suppress others, such as fear or sadness (McQueen, 2017). As such, researchers have begun to examine how expressing or not expressing certain emotions impacts men's experiences, as well as their relationships and interactions with others (Davis, 2002; Hong, 2000; Marasco, 2018; McQueen, 2017; Schwab et al., 2020). In their qualitative study with young men in Scotland, McQueen (2017) found that although men were drawn to being emotionally open, they found this difficult. The men in McQueen's study felt that talking about their feelings or emotions was exposing and uncomfortable. The context in which emotions were expressed was important to men and they described being more likely to share their emotions or feelings in an intimate space, such as a relationship, with another woman or a female partner. Some men were encouraged to become more emotionally open and vulnerable by women or female partners and expressing emotions with their partner led to closer relationships.

Not expressing emotions or hiding emotions is connected to how men have been socialized into patterns of gender interaction. In their qualitative study with male college students, Schwab and Dupuis (2020, p. 3) found men internalized the belief that they need

to hide their emotions from others and described “silencing” their own emotional experiences by not discussing them with other people. Men were afraid to talk about their academic struggles or if they were failing a class with their male peers. The men saw talking about difficulties with school as a sign of failure and that they do not live up to the idea of the successful man who has everything under control. In a similar qualitative study by Davis (2002), men reported that they valued self-expression and communication, however, they were afraid to express themselves in certain ways around others. They were afraid that other people might label them as feminine, gay or as not being a man. Participants described that being more comfortable with self-expression and wanting to open up was a behavior men learned later in life, rather than as children. Men’s desire to be more emotional is a behavior that does not fit with what they learned as boys about masculinity.

The studies presented here suggest that many men want to be more emotionally open with other individuals and other men and talking and opening up about emotions can lead to stronger and closer relationships. However, many men are fearful of being labelled weak or feminine if they talk about or show their emotions. As a consequence, research focused on men’s involvement in anti-violence initiatives has found that men’s emotional restriction may present a potential barrier for them to participate in these conversations (Kaufman, 1993; Marasco, 2018; McMahon & Dick, 2011). Moreover, social norms and views about gender that align with hegemonic masculine ideals of being strong, tough and unemotional can act as barriers to men being more emotionally open.

Lifetime exposure to violence

Men and boys are exposed to violence across the lifespan in different social contexts. Contexts that researchers have commonly identified as influencing men's attitudes towards violence are the media, watching or participating in high contact sports such as hockey or football, being exposed to violent or aggressive peer groups, and witnessing or experiencing violence in the family (Allain, 2008; Brendgen et al., 2002; Giordano et al., 2006; Messner, 2007). In their quantitative study, Brendgen et al. (2002) tested boys at the age of 12 then again at the age of 16 and found in addition to being exposed to violence in the media or their communities, the boy's exposure to violence in the family or their peer group played a crucial role in their development of violent behavior. Children who are exposed to violence in the home or from peer groups will be more likely to use violence against their intimate partners as adults (Brendgen et al., 2002; Sabina & Ho, 2014). However, researchers have noted that this is not inevitable, and not all children exposed to violence will go on to perpetuate violence (Brendgen et al., 2002; Sabina & Ho, 2014).

As discussed previously, researchers have found that the media have an impact on individual's identities and behaviors, and how they perceive and use gender. In their chapter on gender embodiment in the media, Mackey-Kallis (2012) wrote:

Hundreds of studies of the representations of gender in the media, from advertising to entertainment television to film and Internet, have found that the sexual and the passive/vulnerable body is central to depictions of feminine identity, whereas the aggressive and active body is a significant marker of masculine identity. (p. 143)

Moreover, research on the media largely focuses on how men and women are represented and how individuals, and especially children, are exposed to these representations

(Brendgen et al., 2002; Dill & Thill, 2007; Aley & Hahn, 2020). Media targeted at young audiences often portray characters according to stereotypical gender roles (Aley & Hahn, 2020, Dill & Thill, 2007). Aley and Hahn (2020) conducted a quantitative content analysis of popular animated children's movie posters and found that female characters were often shown as secondary characters. They appeared smaller on the poster or were in the background behind the male main character. "When prominent female characters were present, they were portrayed as smaller, less socially important, and less powerful than male characters" (Aley & Hahn, 2020, p. 505). Similarly, in their study on depictions of male and female characters in video games, Dill and Thill (2007) surveyed adolescents, and found that stereotypes were recognized by both gamers and non-gamers. Women or female characters were sexualized, or portrayed as the "damsel in distress," whereas men or male characters were portrayed as violent, macho or as the hero (Dill & Thill, 2007, p. 853). These representations can create unrealistic ideas or expectations for how men and women need to act or appear in society, and have been found to have detrimental effects on individual's self-esteem (Dill & Thill, 2007; Aley & Hahn, 2020). In addition, the media influence what young boys and girls perceive to be "proper" for their gender (Aley & Hahn, 2020, p. 501). Young girls and boys may avoid certain hobbies, sports or careers if they are not represented in the media as being appropriate for their gender (Aley & Hahn, 2020).

The media shape individual's ideas and expectations of gender, however, research has found the media are limiting, do not always represent reality, and do not reflect all of the complexities of gender (Kean & Kazou Steains, 2022). Kean and Kazou Steains (2022) examined Australian domestic violence primary prevention campaign videos and found that the relationship between violence, harm and the development of masculinity was a

central concern in all of the videos. However, Kean and Kazou Steains (2022) found that the videos failed to show the complexities of gender and masculinity and the harm that rigid gender stereotypes can have on boys. “[W]e believe that representations which erase signs of ambivalence, discomfort, confusion, and conflict also erase the more common and more complicated experience of becoming masculine” (Kean & Kazou Steains, p. 27).

In addition to the social contexts of the home and peer groups, young boys are exposed to violent patterns of gendered interaction within the social context of education. Researchers have found that boys learn to perform hegemonic masculinity in school and in the classroom (Dalley-Trim, 2007; Renold, 2001). According to Dalley-Trim (2007, p. 204) “the classroom is a socially produced context,” and gender is reproduced there. In their qualitative case-study with adolescent boys, Dalley-Trim (2007) found the boys used certain practices in the classroom to perform hegemonic masculinity. These practices included bodily practices such as shouting and being loud, interrupting others, getting into fights or threatening to fight, acting tough, and refusing to affirm a teacher’s authority. Boys who were able to perform these masculine practices occupied positions of dominance in the classroom. “These practices (or range of performance techniques) serve to reinforce hegemonic discourses of masculinity that are powerful, and indeed, desirable to adolescent boys” (Dally-Trim, 2007, p. 203).

Renold (2001) examined the relationship between academic achievement at school and hegemonic masculinity in a qualitative case-study among boys aged 10 to 11 and found that working hard and being studious was considered feminine, and being masculine was associated with being “cool,” not caring about grades, and getting into fights in the classroom. Similar to Dally-Trim (2007), Renold (2001, p. 377) found that boys wanted to

maintain their status as “dominant hegemonic boys,” by playing football and getting into fights.

Renold (2001) found that a hierarchy existed within the context of the school and boys who did not play sports, and who chose instead to work hard in school were considered to be feminine or gay. Some of the boys in Renold’s study changed their behaviors in order to be seen as more masculine. They started playing sports, stopped working hard in class, and started fighting other boys in the classroom. “Clearly, to resist dominant codes of masculinity within the school site, and more specifically within the classroom, is a precarious business—it is to risk being labeled ‘gay.’” (Dally-Trim, 2007, p. 203)

Researchers have also found that a relationship exists between hegemonic masculinity and higher education. Wagner (2015, p. 475) stated “there are real, observable, and measurable negative outcomes related to the persistence of hegemonic masculinity in higher education.” In a case study conducted with college-aged men, Harris (2009) found when men were asked to define masculinity, they gave positive and productive conceptualizations of masculinity, such as having integrity, showing maturity, and taking leadership. However, when asked to discuss their behaviors and interactions with other men, Harris (2009) found that men provided examples that were more consistent with harmful ideas of hegemonic masculinity. For example, men described incidents where they sexually objectified women, and engaged in fights to prove their “manhood” to their peers. This research reveals a conflict between conceptualizations of masculinity and masculine performances, and may also suggest that despite having ideas about what it means to be a

man that do not align with hegemonic masculinity, social norms and pressures to live up to these ideals still inform day to day practices among men.

In a similar qualitative study conducted by Hong (2000), male college students involved in Men Against Violence (MAV), a program focusing on promoting healthy masculinity and eliminating sexual or physical violence against women, were interviewed on their perceptions of masculinity and their involvement in the program. Hong found that, while men involved in MAV expressed wanting to avoid harmful or unhealthy masculine behaviors, they continued to feel pressured to perform harmful behaviors associated with hegemonic masculinity in order to defend their involvement in MAV and prove they were still real men. Researchers have found that while many men identify that they are against using violence and reject harmful aspects of masculinity in favor of more helpful conceptualizations of masculinity, often their behaviors did not match their verbal statements, and many men felt pressure to perform harmful behaviors associated with of hegemonic masculinity with their male peers (Davis, 2002; Harris, 2009; Hong, 2000). Harmful behaviors presented in the research included getting into fights, consuming alcohol, and engaging in misogyny and homophobia.

Watching and participating in high-contact sports at an early age exposes men and young boys to violence. Young boys and men learn that violence and aggression “is just part of the game” and violence in sports is not perceived as “real violence” (Weinstein et al., 1995, p. 833). Young boys and men who participate in sports learn that violence in sports is not real violence if it is used within the written or unwritten rules and culture of the sport. For example, within hockey, Allain (2021, p. 6) argues that specific written and unwritten rules exist to form “hockey culture”. Hockey culture dictates how games are

played, how rivalries or conflict between players are solved, as well as how relationships form between players on a team. Hockey culture supports and encourages violence and violence “within the rules” is considered acceptable and legitimate (Allain, 2021, p. 6).

Hockey culture exists in the locker room. Boys and men strive to avoid being seen as weak by their teammates and participate in locker room talk with other players in order to live up to the image of hegemonic masculinity that is valued in sports (Messner, 2007; Allain, 2008). Locker room talk often involves “competitive sexual talk” and includes themes of competition, violence and sexual conquests of women (Messner, 2007, p. 28). Researchers have found there is a connection between participating in locker room talk and perpetrating physical and sexual violence (Allain, 2008; Messner, 2002; 2007). Violence and hegemonic masculinity are encouraged and expressed within the locker room and can lead to using physical or sexual abuse against others outside of the sports context (Allain, 2008).

While research has confirmed that most male athletes do not engage in violence against others and/or women, many will remain silent and not stop or discourage teammates who use violence (Messner, 2002; 2007). Remaining silent or complicit during conversations of sexual aggression or violence has created a “culture of silence” in sports. Men who do not use violence are afraid to speak out against their male teammates for fear of being beaten up, humiliated or shunned by the group (Messner, 2007). Moreover, the dynamics and interactions of the team are a key factor for predicting a male athlete’s violence against women (Messner, 2007). Male athletes use violence against women as a way to gain respect from their teammates and receive encouragement from their teammates to use violence in their relationships (Allain, 2008).

Changing violent behavior

Social norms and contexts that influence men and boy's views about gender and violence have been referenced in relation to batterer intervention programs. Researchers found that these views emerged in discussions with men about their use of violence (McMahon & Dick, 2011; Silvergleid & Mankowski, 2006; Schrock & Padavic, 2007). This subsection details literature focused on men in court-mandated batterer intervention programs as well as literature on men's voluntary antiviolence initiatives. These areas of research are informative because they highlight how useful it is for men to reflect on ideas about violence and factors influencing their behaviors in order to begin a process of change, and to engage in discussions with other men. Research focusing on men and IPV has been conducted with men in court-mandated batterer intervention programs, however men who have not used violence also need to be involved in IPV prevention initiatives (Mullaney, 2007).

When men are court-mandated to attend batterer intervention programs, they will often begin the program with the belief that they are not the problem and change is unnecessary (Mullaney, 2007). In a qualitative study involving men who had abused their partners, Mullaney (2007) interviewed men in batterer intervention programs at two different agencies and found men excused, rationalized and justified their abusive behavior as being caused by external factors, such as alcohol or stress. The men also blamed their partners for their abusive behavior, believing that their partner's "flaws" caused them to act violently, or they were only using violence in self-defense, and their partner was the one who was acting violently. When men were required to discuss or justify their violence

in the intervention programs, they felt their dominant position over women, and their rights and privileges as men were being challenged or taken away from them.

Many batterer intervention programs focus on changing behaviors and beliefs about masculinity that men learn in their childhood. In addition, many men in the interventions expressed difficulty and resistance when asked to change behaviors that were taught to them at an early age and believed to be appropriate. In their study on challenges to involving men in antiviolence initiatives, Casey et al. (2012) interviewed representatives from organizations that engage men and boys in prevention and found that the most common challenge reported by the participants centered on the role of masculinity in violence prevention. Participants stated that when men become involved in IPV prevention, they are asked to examine their beliefs and ideas about what it means to be a man, and also the sources of their male privilege. For many men, these ideas and beliefs are developed early on in life, and it is difficult for men to evaluate and change ideas they have held their whole lives (Casey et al., 2012).

Recent studies examining the outcomes and effectiveness of batterer intervention programs acknowledge and account for the influence of masculinity on men's attitudes and behaviors during the interventions and how masculinity is constructed within the intervention programs (Mullaney, 2007; Schrock & Padavic, 2007). When men in batterer intervention programs are influenced by harmful ideas associated with hegemonic masculinity, they express more resistance to intervention and experience more difficulty opening up in discussions with other men (Schrock & Padavic, 2007). Therefore, many batterer intervention programs have made deconstructing masculinity a deliberate goal of the program (Schrock & Padavic, 2007; Silvergleid & Mankowski, 2006).

In their therapeutic work with men who had used violence, Augusta Scott (2022) found that men developed unhelpful ideas of masculinity following their experiences of trauma. “Unhelpful ideas about masculinity, for example, often support men insisting that they are right, that being wrong is unsafe, that they need to win at all costs, that they know everything, and that they are not to blame when people are harmed” (Augusta-Scott, 2022, p. 162-163). According to Augusta-Scott (2022), unhelpful ideas of masculinity contributed to men not taking responsibility for using violence. In their work, Augusta-Scott found in order for men take responsibility for the harm they have caused to their partners, they need to learn that they have choices in how they treat others, and how they act in relationships with their partners. Men must also reflect on their own experiences of violence or trauma and how it has impacted their lives and relationships.

Men can experience support from other men and the program facilitators in batterer intervention programs in reflecting on the impacts of their behaviors. Silvergleid and Mankowski (2006) found in their study with men who had completed a court-mandated batterer intervention program, many men reported being confronted by other men in the program on their violence and the harm their behaviors caused to others. The confrontations the men experienced were important in beginning a process of change because the violent and abusive behaviors that brought them to the program were the same behaviors that were supported or endorsed by men in other contexts. The men in the intervention programs reported changing their behaviors as a result of observing or modelling other men in the group (Silvergleid & Mankowski, 2006).

Some researchers recommend that batterer intervention programs need to focus on how masculinity and patriarchy influence men’s violence against women, their use of

violence and how they talk about it (Mullaney, 2007). Researchers and intervention leaders recognize, however, that taking responsibility and change are complex processes that do not exist in isolation of broader social norms and ideals about what it means to be a man. For men to change their violent behaviors and beliefs and learn new nonviolent behaviors, social constructions of masculinity and gendered patterns of interaction that promote violence also need to change (Mullaney, 2007; Schrock & Padavic, 2007).

Barriers to change

Men's perceptions of IPV and masculinity can change over time and these changes will have an impact on men's decisions to use or not use violence (Flood, 2011; Funk, 2008; Mullaney, 2007; Reidy et al., 2014). Research on men changing their violent behaviors, in particular, has shown that change is difficult as numerous barriers exist (Mullaney, 2007; Schrock & Padavic, 2007; Silvergleid & Mankowski, 2006).

Researchers have found that men often lack awareness about the issue, do not see IPV as serious or an issue that involves them as men (Casey et al., 2012; Koski & Mangold, 1988; Maddox et al., 2018). In a study with 1,000 men in Alberta, Canada for example, 13% believed violence against women was "not as serious" if the man is angry or temporarily loses control and almost 40% reported there are certain conditions where the woman is responsible for being raped (Wells et al., 2013, p. 228). In a similar study focused on men's and women's attitudes towards family violence, Koski and Mangold (1988) found women were more likely to respond that family violence was a serious problem, and they were less likely to tolerate violence in the home than men. While men often lack awareness about IPV, lack of accountability can also act as a barrier to involvement in

antiviolence initiatives or IPV prevention (Minerson et al., 2011). Accountability barriers occur when men believe they are not part of the problem, that IPV is not their problem to solve, and that the only men who should be involved are the ones who actually use violence.

Similar to the culture of silence in hockey described by Allain (2008, 2021), men who have experienced violence themselves are afraid to speak up because they do not want to be seen as weak. Men may remain in a position of silence, where they will not speak up about experiencing violence, such as being abused as a child or witnessing violence between parents. These positions of silence act as barriers to becoming involved in antiviolence initiatives (Minerson et al., 2011). By not speaking up to challenge hegemonic masculinity, harmful ideas and behaviors are being supported and reinforced.

Studies have found there are men who wish to get involved and talk about IPV, but that many identify they do not know how or that there are not safe opportunities to do so (Casey et al., 2012; Funk, 2008). Based on a qualitative study of factors that influence men's involvement in violence prevention, Casey and Smith (2010) identified for men in their study, participation was a process that developed over time and was influenced by an initial experience that sensitized men to the issue, a change in the internal meaning attached to the experience, and a tangible opportunity for involvement. Casey and Smith (2010, p. 959) found that nearly all participants in their study presented an initial "sensitizing" experience that raised their level of awareness towards the issue of IPV. The most common sensitizing experiences reported by men included witnessing violence during their own childhood or listening to a female friend, family member or partner disclose their experience of violence. Maddox et al. (2018) used a participatory mixed-methods approach, to examine motivations for men's participation in anti-violence efforts and

reported that decisions to participate in antiviolence work were often linked to external motivation and desires to minimize violence among the women in their lives that they love and care about.

Once they had a sensitizing experience, some men in Casey and Smith's (2010) study reported feeling a new sense of obligation and commitment toward ending IPV. They recognized that simply not using violence in their own lives was not enough to stop the problem. This process of evaluating the meaning of the sensitizing experience triggered these men to agree to or seek out opportunities to become involved in anti-violence initiatives. For some men, opportunities came in the form of an invitation from a professor, supervisor or friend to join a group or through actively seeking volunteer or job positions with antiviolence organizations.

While most men do not use or condone violence, initiatives to stop IPV need to include men who have used or experienced violence and men who have not (Maddox et al., 2018; Minerson et al., 2011; Wells et al., 2013). The National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence recognizes that primary prevention approaches need to stop GBV before it occurs and discusses various opportunities for prevention. One of these opportunities is to "engage men and boys to challenge and change norms, attitudes and behaviors that perpetuate gender inequality; to become positive role models; and to understand and take action against GBV" (Government of Canada, 2022, p. 5).

Researchers have recognized there are various reasons for why all men should be involved in initiatives to stop IPV (Flood, 2011; Maddox et al., 2018; Minerson et al., 2011). One of the main reasons is because men are more likely to be perpetrators, and while most of the research on IPV focuses on women's perspectives as survivors, more research

and focus is needed on men's experiences and perspectives. Initiatives to stop IPV can also help men to resist pressures created by hegemonic masculinity. Flood (2011) argued that although men gain power and dominance when they use violence, they can be motivated by other interests to become involved in prevention work. "While men's violence against women expresses and maintains men's power over women, men in general also pay a personal price for this violence. Violence against women fuels women's distrust and fear of men and hurts the women whom many men love." (Flood, 2011, p. 360)

When men participate in opportunities to help end IPV, they are not only helping women who are victims of violence, but they can experience positive outcomes. In an intervention study focused on engaging men as active bystanders to prevent IPV, McMahon and Dick (2011) discovered the intervention workshops provided the men an opportunity to discuss sensitive topics and gain support from other men. Participants also reported that they felt less alone in their feelings and experiences and they felt a sense of solidarity being among other men working toward a similar goal—stopping IPV (McMahon & Dick, 2011).

Since the early 1970's, following the feminist movement, there has been a significant growth in the amount of attention placed on domestic violence (DeKeseredy & Hinch, 1991). Although domestic violence existed prior to this event, women at this time were sharing their experiences more, and were realizing through shared lived experience that domestic violence was more common than previously believed. Similarly, research on men's participation in batter intervention programs and antiviolenace initiatives has shown that men can benefit from opportunities to share their experiences of violence with other men (Casey & Smith, 2010; McMahon & Dick, 2011; Silvergleid & Mankowski, 2006).

This chapter summarized studies on men's experiences of and attitudes towards violence in the context of the social construction of masculinity, and how exposure to the performance of masculinity and violence across the lifespan from different contexts, such as family, education, peers, media or sports can impact their perception towards using violence in relationships. Boys and men experience pressure to perform hegemonic masculinity, specifically in social contexts such as education, sports and among male peers. Masculinity influences how men experience and display emotions. Furthermore, this literature review outlined studies on men in court mandated intervention programs as well as studies on men participating in voluntary antiviolence initiatives. Changing conceptualizations of masculinity and attitudes towards violent behaviors can prevent violent behaviors, yet barriers exist to changing behaviors associated with masculinity and learning not to use violence. These studies revealed that all men need to be involved in preventing IPV, whether they have used violence or not. Men's perceptions and understandings of themselves as men and their conceptualizations of masculinity influence their decisions to become involved in IPV prevention and antiviolence initiatives.

There is accumulating evidence that men's perceptions of violence are influenced by the social construction of masculinity, its association with violence as well as their experiences of violence throughout their lives (Davis, 2002; Mullaney, 2007; Schrock & Padavic, 2007; Reidy et al., 2014). Because these experiences and perceptions can influence the use of violence, identifying opportunities and initiatives that can contribute to preventing boy's and men's violence is crucial. As was outlined in the research literature presented in this chapter, one approach that demonstrates promise is engaging boys and men in discussions about masculinity and violence. The research studies presented here

show evidence for the importance of engaging men in conversations on gender and violence and also for having sensitizing experiences to expose men to the importance of eliminating IPV. Although these studies have shown some success with engaging men and boys, the research evidence for this is limited. Therefore, this study focuses on how men think about masculinity, their personal experiences of violence and their awareness of IPV. It will contribute to the evidence base in this area and advance understanding of how men's adherence to certain masculine behaviors may influence their use of violence in intimate relationships. To address this aim, I used a multiple method qualitative approach that involved the integration of a sensitizing video and one on one interviews. Furthermore, this approach was used to develop a deeper understanding of the link between gender and violence and how men conceptualize these concepts, and to conduct more open ended and in depth conversations with men. The video and interviews will act as a sensitizing experience for men to become more aware of issues surrounding IPV. Interviews will allow for participants to think about and reflect on their experiences in new ways and will be used to help gain a deeper understanding of how men think about and perceive gender and IPV.

Chapter 4: Methods & Data

This research included two stages: an in-depth qualitative content analysis of White Ribbon's "Boys Don't Cry" video (White Ribbon, 2019) and virtual interviews with young men to view and discuss the video using a qualitative descriptive approach and answer questions relating to IPV, masculinity and gender. The themes that resulted from the content analysis of the video were used to guide and develop the interview questions.

The study used a visual method to begin discussions in the interviews and generate rich data. Based on evidence that visual methods such as videos, images and other visual representations can stimulate reflection on how participants feel or think about an issue or subject (Holtmann et al., 2016), I used the video as a starting point or "sensitizing activity" to provide a foundation for one on one interviews with men. Chapman et al. (2014) used photographs to initiate discussions with teachers to increase awareness and empathy for immigrant Latina/Latino students in their classrooms. The photographs featuring students in their homes with members of their families prompted teachers to be more open in the interviews and the discussions involved more personal disclosures from teachers, suggesting that the photographs motivated teachers to revisit their own lives and experiences that were similar to the scenes or situations shown in the photographs. When visual images, especially those including people, are used to prompt difficult conversations, the desired goal is to have viewers create new meaning from the images, ask questions and discuss their thoughts and feelings about the images.

In a similar study using videos, Paek et al. (2011) examined students' responses and awareness towards child abuse by asking participants to view three different public service announcement videos on child abuse and answer questions. Paek et al. (2011)

evaluated the effectiveness of the videos by examining the relationship between students' emotional reaction to the videos and their motivation to engage in action or facilitate change. When students were emotionally engaged in the messages, and the videos helped them feel sadness or empathy towards children who were abused, students were more likely to report that the messages were persuasive and convincing and that they would intervene to help a child who is experiencing abuse (Paek et al., 2011). Hadfield and Haw (2012) found videos can be used for multiple purposes and to reach different research goals or outcomes, such as initiating personal reflection, creating new knowledge or understanding, and having participants critically examine their opinions towards the issue the video represents.

The "Boys Don't Cry" video was used in this study to help initiate conversations with research participants about masculinity, gender and IPV. Use of the video was intended to prompt participants to reflect on their own experiences of masculinity, gender and violence and to think more deeply about how these experiences have impacted them. I chose to use the "Boys Don't Cry" video to elicit discussions in the interviews because the video uses actors to show ideas and actions associated with hegemonic masculinity and violence in the different scenes. The video showed boys at different life stages, instead of focusing on just children or adults. I felt that this would make it easier for the participants to relate to and discuss the video, as they would be able to draw on examples from different stages of their lives. I also chose to use the "Boys Don't Cry" video because it depicts masculinity in different contexts, such as the home, sports and at school. Lastly, I wanted to use a video that also focused on IPV. However, since IPV is considered a sensitive topic, I was concerned that a video only on IPV would be too uncomfortable to discuss and the

men would have difficulties relating to the video. While IPV is not explicitly shown in the “Boys Don’t Cry” video, it is implied in different scenes that IPV is being used. I also chose this video because of its depiction of how masculinity is connected to violence and IPV.

Stage 1: Content Analysis of the “Boys Don’t Cry” video

Qualitative content analysis is a technique for gathering and analyzing the content of text, with content referring to words, meanings, pictures, ideas, themes or messages that can be communicated (Neuman, 2006, p. 322). The method of content analysis is used to study the larger context of the content’s creation, distribution and reception (Neuman, 2006). Content analysis involves reviewing and analyzing content to discover deeper meaning behind the reasons the content was created and how it can be used and interpreted. In line with typical approaches to content analysis of film, I viewed the “Boys Don’t Cry” video multiple times and took notes during each viewing (van den Hoonaard, 2015). I then transcribed my notes and coded them for themes aligned with theory and research evidence related to gender and violence. I analyzed the implicit or hidden meanings of the content, what is not shown or discussed but rather what is suggested or interpreted from viewing the video, and how the video can have multiple purposes or be used in different contexts or situations. Content analysis added context and background to my study and provided reflection and enhanced understanding for why the video was made, and how it can be critiqued. Content analysis was necessary for my study as it helped me to develop a deeper understanding of the video and guided my development and analysis of the interviews.

The White Ribbon Campaign began in Toronto in 1991 and aims to engage men and boys in the prevention of GBV by transforming social norms (Seymour, 2018). The White Ribbon Campaign works to support men and boys to promote gender equity, healthy relationships and healthy masculinity. While the White Ribbon Campaign has grown over the years to become the “world’s largest movement of men and boys working to end violence against women and girls,” there has also been criticism against the White Ribbon, mainly against the White Ribbon Australia (WRA) campaign (Seymour, 2018, p. 3). Criticism of WRA has centered on unclear ideas and messages on gender and gender inequality, definitions of masculinity and “being a man,” as well as the lack of recognition towards diversity and the need for change at the structural level (Seymour, 2018). Critics argue that the WRA’s definition of masculinity is too vague, and reflects a binary approach to gender, suggesting that to be masculine, one must have a male body. In their critique of WRA, Seymour (2018) found that the WRA did not acknowledge the connection between masculinity and broader structural conditions such as social class, culture and ethnicity, and WRA’s membership did not include many men from different ethnic backgrounds or social classes.

The “Boys Don’t Cry” video was created in 2019 by the Canadian White Ribbon Campaign as part of a social media campaign to teach men how they can have a positive role in promoting healthy masculinity and gender equality. The Canadian White Ribbon Campaign’s intention for creating the “Boys Don’t Cry” video is to bring more attention to promoting healthy masculinity and the video is used as a public service announcement to draw attention to the impact of rigid gender stereotypes and masculinity on boys

throughout the life cycle. The video also shows ways that parents, peers, communities and institutions socialize boys to perform masculinity in certain ways from a young age.

Stage 2: Virtual interviews with participants

The second stage of the study involved one on one interviews with young men between the ages of 19 and 25 who viewed the video and answered questions about the video and their thoughts and experiences related to IPV and masculinity. Interviews allow for individuals to explain their experiences, attitudes, feelings or definitions of a situation in their own terms and in ways that are meaningful to them (van den Hoonaard, 2015). Interviews create opportunities for research participants to think about their experiences in new ways and to formulate new ideas and opinions that they did not have prior to being interviewed (van den Hoonaard, 2015). Ethics approval was received from the University of New Brunswick Research Ethics Board, and the study was on file as REB 2021-030 (See Appendix A for the ethics approval email).

Recruitment and Sample

I chose to recruit men between the ages of 19 and 25 because I felt that young adult men would be able to speak to a wide range of experiences from childhood through to young adulthood. In addition, since men begin to enter into more serious relationships as young adults, I felt that recruiting from this age group would result in more diversity in experience with intimate relationships.

Recruitment was done electronically using email and electronic newsletter invitations that were sent to students at the University of New Brunswick. Advertisements were also posted weekly on a university student news blog, and were shared on Facebook,

Twitter and LinkedIn. Most of the participants were recruited from the emails, electronic newsletters or blog posts, however, one participant stated that they learned about the study after another student shared the advertisement on Facebook (See Appendix B for the recruitment script).

Sixteen men between the ages of 19 and 25 years (Mean=21.8) participated in the study. Interviews were conducted between April 2021 and July 2021. 13 participants identified as White, one identified as Black, one identified as Asian, and one participant identified as mixed-race (White and South-Asian) (See Table 1 for the demographics of the study sample).

Table 1*Demographics of the study sample*

Participant ¹	Age	Ethnicity	Education (at time of study)
Andrew	25	White	Graduate Student
Anthony	23	White	4 th year university
Brian	21	White	4 th year university
Connor	19	South Asian/White	2 nd year university
Derek	21	White	3 rd year university
Eric	21	White	3 rd year university
Farid	20	Asian	3 rd year university
Greg	21	White	3 rd year university
Henry	23	White	4 th year university
Johnathan	21	White	3 rd year university
Kevin	23	Black	4 th year university
Mike	22	White	4 th year university
Neil	22	White	4 th year university
Ted	20	White	3 rd year university
Tom	24	White	4 th year university
William	23	White	4 th year university

Interview Procedure

Prior to participating in the interviews, participants were sent an invitation letter outlining the details and purpose of the study, as well as what will be required of them by participating and the data that will be collected (See Appendix C for the invitation letter). The participants were also required to sign consent forms (See Appendix D for the consent form).

Due to the sensitive nature of the study focus, it was important for the purpose and nature of the study to be clearly articulated in the recruitment advertisements and the invitation letter, so individuals could determine whether they wanted to participate. I

¹ All of the names are pseudonyms in order to protect the identity of participants.

informed participants prior to beginning the interview that they did not have to share anything they were not comfortable sharing and they could refuse to answer any questions. Participants were also notified that they could take breaks at any time during the interview, to briefly step away from the conversation, collect their thoughts or take care of any personal needs.

The consent form stated that all information would be kept private and confidential, names would be removed and replaced with pseudonyms in the thesis, and that the participants were able to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. The consent forms outlined that the interviews would be video-recorded, and by signing the form, participants were agreeing to being recorded. The participants were asked to give verbal consent to being video-recorded prior to beginning the interview. The consent forms were sent as Word files to the participants by email before the interview. Participants signed the consent form using the electronic signature feature in Word or by printing out the form and then sending back a scanned copy or photograph with their signature. The consent forms, video-recordings and transcripts were stored on a password protected computer.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, all 16 interviews were conducted virtually using video conferencing software (Microsoft Teams and Zoom). Web links to the Zoom meetings were password protected and participants were sent an invitation by email with a code to access the meeting. Once the interviews were complete, I downloaded the video-recordings from the Zoom account onto my personal computer, so I was the only one with access to the recordings, and so Zoom did not create copies of the discussions. The participants were given the option to turn on their cameras or leave their cameras off during the interview. Most of the participants chose to turn their cameras on, however, due to

technical difficulties with Zoom, two participants chose to keep their cameras off during the interview.

Each semi-structured, one on one interview began with showing the participants the “Boys Don’t Cry” video. After the participants shared their initial thoughts on the video, I proceeded to asking questions (See Appendix E for the Interview Questionnaire). As reflected in the questionnaire, prompts were informed by the themes from the content analysis of the video and were organized to generate natural conversation and limit feelings of being interrogated or ‘put on the spot.’ Following key themes from content analysis of the video, questions focused on masculinity, gender relations, patterns of gender interaction and IPV. I also asked questions related to the people and scenes in the video and about the dialogue/narration in the video. The interviews lasted roughly one hour.

Semi-structured interviews allow for participants to be able discuss topics they feel are relevant to the study, which can be useful to the researcher if the topics were not included in the questions (van den Hoonaard, 2015). In the interviews, I encouraged the participants to discuss topics they felt were related to issues of gender and masculinity that were not shown in the video and to share personal stories or experiences. At the end of each interview, I asked the participant if there was anything else they wanted to discuss, therefore allowing them the opportunity talk about other subjects that were not included in my questions but that they felt were relevant to the study. I also offered participants the opportunity to go back through the questions at the end of the interview to add to their answers. The interviews were video-recorded using Zoom and Microsoft Teams. I downloaded the recordings onto my computer and transcribed each interview into a Word file by listening to the recordings again and typing out the participant’s responses verbatim.

Electronic files of the interview transcripts were then imported into a software program called NVivo.

I began the thematic analysis by reading through each transcript and coding the responses line by line for themes. Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 79) define thematic analysis as “a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data.” According to Braun and Clarke (2006), a theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research questions and represents some level of meaning within the data. The themes identified in the analysis of the video and interview transcripts were guided by the research questions and the theoretical framework. Therefore, the thematic analysis of the video and interview transcripts was conducted using a theoretical or deductive approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Connell’s theory of hegemonic masculinity guided my analysis in order to capture how the participants understood masculinity as a social construct, how they observed masculinity in gender interactions, and how masculinity influenced their experiences of violent behavior. Subthemes were inductively derived from the main themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Braun and Clarke (2006) and van den Hoonaard (2015) argue that individual extracts of data should be coded into multiple themes. Therefore, once each line of text had been coded into one theme, I read through each line of text again and coded them for evidence of other themes. For example, some lines coded for themes of masculinity also included references to gender or femininity. These lines were coded again as evidence of a second theme. This technique also allowed me to identify where themes overlapped with each other and where there was evidence of relationships between themes. While conducting the thematic analysis, I also attended regular meetings with my supervisor to

discuss the themes and the data. These meetings helped me to think more deeply about my data and to organize and refine my analysis and coding of themes and subthemes.

Before beginning my research, I was aware of how my gender and position as a researcher may influence my data collection and analysis. As such, I incorporated strategies for maintaining rigour and protecting against bias into my study. These strategies involved asking participants to provide details for certain concepts, so I did not make assumptions about what they meant, taking detailed notes of my own interpretations when reviewing transcripts and where these interpretations may have impacted responses, and recording notes during the research process to document when personal biases or knowledge may have impacted the data.

This chapter described the two methods that were used in the study: qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis of qualitative, semi-structured interviews. The study was conducted in two stages. The first stage was a content analysis of the “Boys Don’t Cry” video created by the Canadian White Ribbon Campaign promoting healthy masculinity for men and young boys. The findings from the content analysis of the video was used in the construction of the interview questionnaires. The second stage of the study involved conducting virtual one on one interviews with men. The video was used to begin interview conversations on masculinity and IPV, as these topics are often considered to be “controversial” or difficult to discuss. The video helped the participants to think more deeply about their own experiences or experiences they had that were similar to the boy’s experiences shown in the video. Once the interviews were completed, the recordings were transcribed and thematic analysis guided by the research questions and the theory was

conducted. The results of the content analysis and the analysis of the interviews are described in the following chapters.

Chapter 5: Content Analysis Findings

In this chapter, I present my analysis of the video content. Four main themes will be described: gender relations, embodied masculinity, patterns of gender interaction, and IPV after a detailed description of the video.

Description of the “Boys don’t Cry” video

To provide context for content analysis of the “Boys Don’t Cry” video, the following is a detailed description of scenes and design with reference to visuals and sound. The video is 2 minutes and 44 seconds long and is publicly available: <https://www.whiteribbon.ca/boysdontcry>. The video opens with a crying baby being soothed and comforted by a mother. The mother is shown rocking the baby and telling it not to cry. In the next scene, the baby is now a young boy, and is shown playing with a truck with his parents. The boy receives verbal encouragement from his father and is told to, “Pick it up with your big strong muscles.” Moments later, the boy is shown with his parents playing in the backyard with a pile of leaves, he is told by his father to “run faster.” The next scene appears to be the first day of school, and the boy is standing in front of the school with his backpack on. He is told by his mother to, “Be brave!” In the next scene, the boy is playing alone in the classroom, and then shown sitting alone on the floor in the hallway. The boy is then shown back at home after school, where he is sitting at the table with his parents. He is crying and his father asks, “Why are you crying?” and his mother says, “Boys don’t cry, right honey? Be a big boy please.” The boy is then shown at school again, this time in the locker room with other boys and he is seen taking off his shirt. In the following scene, he is back at home doing push-ups in his room. In the next scene, the same

boy is shown to be an adolescent and is at a party with other boys and girls, where a girl kisses him on the cheek. The boy is then shown back at school, where he is in the classroom looking at his science project, a poster and diorama of a volcano. There are clapping sounds in the background and the boy is smiling. In the next scene, the boy is leaving the school carrying his volcano diorama when another boy runs up behind him and pushes him, causing him to drop his science project. The other boy yells, "Loser!" The boy is then shown looking at himself in the mirror. In the next scene, the boy is at home again, sitting on the couch in the living room. Slightly blurred in the background behind the boy, his father is shown and heard yelling at his mother in the kitchen and his mother is yelling back. It is not shown, but there are sounds of plates or dishes smashing, suggesting that the father or mother were throwing them. The father is then shown entering the living room after the fight and sitting down on the couch next to the boy. The camera goes to the father, and it is shown that his fist is clenched (it is very brief, however, when the camera zooms in on the father's clenched fist, it also appears that the boy is looking at his fist). In the next scene, the boy is back at school, he is shown leaving the building and going out onto the playground towards another group of boys. He goes up to one of the boys (the boy who pushed him in the earlier scene) and he pushes him down onto the ground. The boy then begins punching and hitting the other boy. The scene following shows the boy and his father sitting in an office at the school with the principal. The father says, "I don't understand what the big deal is. I mean, isn't this just boys being boys?" Afterwards, the boy is sitting in the car with his father and is crying. His father looks at him for a moment before saying, "Alright," and gets out of the car. The camera is on the boy's face for a second, before the scene changes to show that the boy is older and is now a young adult

(the music also becomes louder and faster at this time). The boy is shown doing push-ups in his bedroom again, and in the next scene when he takes off his shirt in the locker room, he appears more muscular. In the next scene, the boy is shown with other boys in a parking lot at night, and one boy is starting fires with a lighter and a can of hairspray. The next scene shows the boy, at his high school, standing at his locker watching another boy talk to a girl. The boy is then shown in his bedroom at night, he is looking at his phone and is shown putting the word “slut” over the girl’s photo on social media. The next scene shows the boy in the same parking lot from the earlier scene, and he is fighting with another boy while the other boys watch. In the next scene, the boy is at a house party with his friends and boys and girls are shown drinking from red plastic cups (perhaps suggesting they are drinking alcohol). The boy is shown watching another girl in the room take a drink. The boy’s friend is standing next to him and sees that he is watching the girl, the friend then gives the boy a quick smile of encouragement. In the next scene the boy is shown leading the girl from the room and up the stairs. The girl appears drunk and does not react to being led by the boy. In the final scene of the video, the boy leads the girl into a bedroom and closes the door behind them. The video fades to a black screen and the words, “Boy will be boys...” appear in white, before fading to add, “Or they could be so much more.”

Content analysis of the “Boys Don’t Cry” video

Throughout the video, a boy’s voice can be heard narrating different variations of the phrases “boys can be...” or “boys can’t be....” The narration includes stereotypical words to describe boys, yet also mixes in words that are not usually used to describe boys. The use of a young boy’s voice for the narration shows how boys are exposed to behaviors

and ideas that reflect hegemonic views of masculinity at an early age and they continue to be exposed to these views of masculinity over the course of their lives.

There is very little dialogue from the characters in the video, however it is very direct and spoken by either the boy's mother or father. I found having less dialogue in the video was impactful, as it allowed for me to focus more on the narration and what was shown in each scene. A main focus of my analysis was to examine the messages and meanings linked to key components in the video including scene locations, dialogue, and the characters in each scene (i.e. the father or mother and the boy, or the boy and his peers.)

Gender relations

At the beginning of the opening scene where the mother is shown soothing the crying baby, it is unclear if the baby is a boy or a girl (0:01-0:03).² This quickly changes once it is shown in the next scene that the baby is a boy, and he is shown playing with trucks and is being told by his father to show off his muscles and run fast (0:09-0:16). These first few scenes illustrate how expectations linked to binary ideas of what it means to be a boy/man or girl/woman can be established and reinforced early in life within the context of the family. The boy learned these ideas and behaviors from observing and interacting with his mother and father. These scenes also show how power relations exist between men and women, and reflect stereotypes associated with being a man or a woman, specifically, how women need to take care of the children and act more gently, and how men need to be strong and fast.

² Time stamp for when the scene is shown in the video.

Patterns of gender interaction

The boy observed behaviors associated with hegemonic masculinity from gendered interactions with other men and women. In addition to observing masculinity from gendered interactions, the boy was also exposed to violent gendered interactions at home and also with his peers. These interactions showed him that violence is acceptable behavior.

In the video, the boy was exposed to behaviors associated with what it means to be a man from his father. From observing his father use violence and aggression, the boy learned that violence can be used to gain power and control over others. The boy then used violence in school to get back at the other boy who bullied him, as is shown in the scene with the fight on the playground (1:16).

The scenes of violence in the home are important to the analysis of the school fight scene. The video depicts two institutional contexts which contribute to the structure hegemonic masculinity: school and the family. The boy observed how men have and use power in both contexts. After the school fight scene, the boy is shown sitting in the principal's office with his father (1:33). When he used violence at school he learned from the principal that the behavior is not acceptable and he was punished for his actions. The boy learned conflicting ideas of masculinity and violence within the educational context. He learned in the classroom that behaviors such as working hard would be praised, as is shown when he wins a prize for his science project, and aggressive or violent behaviors would be punished. However, the boy also learned that certain behaviors, including doing well in school, would be seen as "uncool" by his male peers, when he is pushed over and bullied by other boys. While the boy was taught at school by the principal that violence is

not acceptable behavior, he was still being exposed to violence and bullying within this context.

Later, when the boy is a young adult, he is shown spending more time with other boys. This is shown in two scenes in the video where the boy is with other boys in a parking lot at night. In the first scene, the boy is watching another boy start a fire with a lighter and a can of hairspray (1:51). The second time this setting is shown, the boy is running across the parking lot and getting into a fight with another boy (2:11). These two scenes show that male peer groups can have an influence on men and boy's behaviors. They depict examples of how boys learn to engage in violence or deviant behaviors from gendered interactions with their peers. Furthermore, the video provides an example of how engaging in violence or dangerous behaviors is a way for boys to gain approval from their peers. This is a media representation of a "hostile pathway" influencing boys' use of violence (Anderson & Anderson, 2008).

Another means of gaining approval from male peers is depicted in one of the final scenes in the video, when the boy receives encouragement from his friend while he is watching the girl at the party (2:24). In the scene that follows, the boy is leading the girl upstairs and into a bedroom (2:33). The boy responds to pressure by his peer to hook-up with a girl at the party. The video shows how boys and men use certain behaviors to perform masculinity, such as getting into fights, using violence, and having sex with women. This reflects the research literature on how men are represented in stereotypically masculine ways in the media (Dill & Thill, 2007; Aley & Hahn, 2020). The boy learns that men must have sex to be seen as manly by other men.

Embodied masculinity

The “Boys Don’t Cry” video illustrates various examples of how masculinity is represented in media. Moreover, the video shows how physical actions and embodied practices, such as fighting and working out can be associated with performing masculinity.

The boy is shown at two different times changing in the locker room at school with other boys. In the first locker room scene the boy is an adolescent, he is smaller and appears to be shy and nervous around the other boys (0:43). When the setting is shown again, the boy is a young adult. He is bigger, more muscular, and appears to be more confident in the locker room (1:45). These two variations of the same scene occur before and after the scenes where the boy is doing push-ups in his room (0:48, 1:50) demonstrating that he began working out in order to appear stronger and more manly, and thus gaining physical power over other boys who are less strong. This scene is an example of how power relations can be established between men. The boy began working out and engaging in other behaviors, such as fighting, in order to show his strength and gain dominance over the other boys.

The “Boys Don’t Cry” video also illustrates how emotions are an embodied practice. There are multiple scenes where the boy is shown crying. Crying is a physical action that is performed through the body. With the exception of the opening scene where the boy is a baby, the first scene where the boy is crying, he is at home with his parents after his first day at school (0:35). His father asks him why he is crying and his mother adds that “Boys don’t cry, right honey?” (0:35-0:41). In this scene, the boy’s parents are asking the boy to confirm what he has been taught does not align with their expectations of him as a boy. The dialogue in this scene is evidence for how masculinity is often

represented in the media. The video is showing how some boys are told to be tough and not show weakness around others, even those they are close to. After the meeting in the principal's office (1:37), the boy is shown sitting in the car with his father, there are tears on his face and it appears that he is trying to hold them back. The father says "alright" and gets out of the car. In this scene, the boy is emotional, however, he receives no support or comfort from his father, and there is no discussion about the violence or bullying. This scene shows how some men and boys learn not to express or talk about their emotions or feelings, especially around other men. The boy in the video could not show his emotions, or show that he was upset or angry about his parents fighting, so he chose instead to express these emotions through violence. In addition, the boy used violence to gain power in another context after watching his parents fight at home.

Lastly, the fight scenes in the video show evidence of how media is used to portray the theme of embodied masculinity. Violence and aggression are harmful behaviors and are embodied strategies for establishing and maintaining power over women and other men. After the scene with the parents fighting in the kitchen, the father comes into the living room and sits down on the couch next to the boy. The camera briefly shows the boy looking at his father and his clenched fist. The father's clenched fist represents how masculinity can be embodied through physical violence.

Violence and IPV

The video depicts various scenes of violence and potential abuse. The placement of scenes of violence is strategic. A scene in which the boy beats up the other boy after he pushed him, causing him to drop and break his science project (1:16) follows several scenes

of the boy at home. First, he is shown sitting in the living room while his parents are yelling at each other in the background in the kitchen (1:06). Interestingly, the focus of this scene is on the boy, as the parents arguing is slightly blurred in the background. This visual technique emphasizes the boy, suggesting that he is exposed to fighting or verbal abuse. The violence between his parents impacts the boy's cognitive and emotional state given his sullen response to the situation. The focus of the camera is kept on the boy in order to show how IPV in the home impacts a child's development. Observing violent patterns of gender interaction in the family has a negative impact on the boy and his behaviors. In the next scene, the father enters the living room and sits down on the couch next to the boy (1:11). There are no words spoken between the father and the boy, however, the camera focuses briefly on the father and the boy is looking at his clenched fist. This scene suggests a lot about IPV, in particular that IPV can be learned through gender interactions in families.

The final scene in the video depicts potential violence as illustrated by the boy leading the girl upstairs. The girl was shown drinking alcohol and appears intoxicated. The boy takes her into a bedroom before closing the door. While the video does not show what happens in the bedroom, it is inferred that the boy sexually assaults the girl. There are two noteworthy prior scenes in the video that depict the nature of the boy's relationship with the girl, which provide viewers with hints as to why he may have sexually assaulted her. In one scene the boy is standing at his locker at school and watching the girl talk to another boy (1:58). The other scene occurs after school and shows the boy looking at his cell phone in his room at night. The boy adds the word "slut" to the girl's photo, potentially to share on social media (2:04). This scene is suggestive of cyber violence. Viewers are led to

believe that the boy likes the girl and gets angry when she does not notice him. The creators of the video are suggesting in these scenes that the boy used violence to get what he wanted from the girl, after observing violent patterns of gender interaction at home and being subjected to pressure from his male peer.

This chapter described the findings from the content analysis of the “Boys Don’t Cry” video. Following a detailed description of the video, four themes were used to describe the messages represented in the video. Firstly, the boy observed binary ideas of what it means to be a boy/man or girl/woman in the relationship between his mother and father. Secondly, the boy observed behaviors associated with hegemonic masculinity from gendered interactions with men and women and was exposed to violent gendered interactions in the home, with his peers, and at school. Thirdly, the film depicted the inability for some men and boys to physically express emotions and using violence as two behaviors associated with the embodiment of masculinity. Fourth and finally, the video shows various scenes of IPV, violence and suggestive of sexual abuse. These four themes were used to inform other components of the study, including the development and organization of the interview questions. The themes also helped to guide the analysis of the data from the interviews.

Chapter 6: Interview Findings

The findings from the interviews are organized into four sections that correspond to the themes that guided the analysis. These themes, derived from the content analysis of the video, are masculinity, gender relations, patterns of gender interaction and IPV. Each section includes various subsections which highlight empirical data that illustrate subthemes of the main theme.

Masculinity

The theme of masculinity was defined in the analysis as the ideas described by the participants surrounding the concept and what it looks like, and how masculinity and masculine behaviors are described. When analyzing the interview data for evidence of this theme, two subthemes were identified: thinking about masculinity, and individual changes in perceptions of masculinity over the life course. The evidence in this section highlights the local construction of hegemonic masculinity. According to Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), local hegemonic masculinities are constructed within families, organizations and immediate communities. Lastly, this section examines the participant's individual changes in their understanding and participation in behaviors that support hegemonic masculinity over time.

Thinking about masculinity

Many of the participants used the term “toxic masculinity” when referring to ideas of masculinity that do not align with their own views and expressions of masculinity. In the responses, when the participants described ideas or behaviors as “toxic masculinity” or

as being “toxic”, their descriptions aligned with some descriptions in research or publications on hegemonic masculinity that emphasize harmful attitudes and behaviors. When the participants were asked “what does it mean to you to be masculine?” many of them gave two definitions. The first was a broad definition, which often included more of the harmful behaviors or ideas of hegemonic masculinity reflected in the research literature, and which aligns with current harmful social norms and expectations for what it means to be a man. The second was a personal definition of what the term means to them and how they choose to define it. This idea of two definitions is shown in the response given by William:

I think there's almost two definitions. One's like the definition that's kind of being spoken of in the video, like how guys have to be super tough, can't shed a tear, can't show emotions, that kind of stuff. Um, and I think that's stereotypical masculinity...

William continued his response by describing his personal idea of being masculine:

[B]ut I don't really subscribe to that, like I don't think that's really what being masculine or being a man is about, I think masculinity can [be] showing your emotions, you're like strong enough to be honest with a person, when it comes time to, I think that speaks more to masculinity in my mind, the way I define it I guess, as opposed to just being tough, being a macho man, and not being able to express your emotions.

Participants also included examples of masculine stereotypes in their responses, such as being aggressive, strong and protective of women or a provider for the family. Other masculine stereotypes identified by the participants included references to physical attributes such as having large muscles, being tall and having a beard. Some of these masculine stereotypes described by participants reinforce the harmful behaviors or ideas.

The participants listed various ideas or behaviors they felt described a more “positive masculinity,” the kind of masculinity they want to embody and incorporate into

their identity. Expressions of this more helpful view of masculinity included caring for others, being able to show emotions, and being a leader and role model. These positive behaviors or ideas are identified in this response from Johnathan:

I mean there's the divide between toxic and positive masculinity right? In terms of toxic masculinity, I would think of pretty much all of the things in that video, you know, having to defend your honor against someone, having to try to hurt in order to be seen or to be heard, having to generally feel like you have to force yourself upon others in order to be a presence in the world, but then there's positive masculinity, which I think is caring about people and wanting to protect them, not in a violent or dangerous way, but wanting to make others feel safe.

Johnathan describing using force and hurting others in order to “be seen or to be heard,” shows that he understands that there is a connection between violence and the need for power and control.

Other patterns of behaviors associated with positive outcomes were being a good leader and role model. This quality was recognized by Mike, who described being masculine as follows:

Like a strong, respectable figure, who people admire and can respect and look up to, like a leader almost, someone who's always reliable and the kind of person that you want to tell your kids, oh, yeah, be like them, look up to them, follow them because, you know, they're on the right path and they know how to act in society and how to be a good guy, how to be a good man, I guess. Uh, yeah, so I mean in terms of what I think about masculinity, I don't really think about it in the traditional sense, of like, you know, big biceps and a lot of money, cause there's more to it than just that...

Rather than focusing on the physical attributes associated with masculinity, Mike suggested that masculine men are those people can look up to and aspire to be like.

Similar to Johnathan, who described masculinity as wanting to care for and protect others, Ted described being masculine as being supportive of others, and as someone who

takes care of himself and is enjoyable to be around. Ted also went on to say that he tries not to have “superficial” ideas of masculinity, however, he recognizes that it can also be difficult to ignore these ideas when he has been raised to understand and recognize them as masculine.

What comes to mind...umm, when I think of the word masculine, umm, you know a guy who is there to support his loved ones, his friends and who is able to sort of take care of himself and just be generally sort of, you know when there's some people who you just like when you're around them you enjoy sort of that time? Almost like that a little bit, where you know, being masculine is sort of when other people are around him, he's bringing them up, and he's making their lives a bit better, and supporting them or um, just having a good time. And you know, I try not to sort of associate it with being some sort of lumberjack or something like that, but it is, like to be honest, it is something that is hard not to think about, just because you're brought up with that, you need to have a big voice and a big beard and be tall and have big muscles, but um, I think that's sort of a superficial idea of what masculinity is, um and it even might just be the wrong idea.

The “Boys Don’t Cry” video provided some of the participants in the study with a way to discuss and think about their masculinity. Many of the participants felt that the video portrayed masculinity in ways they did not agree with. Furthermore, some of the participants did not identify with the representations of men and boys in the video, as they felt that their upbringing and ideas of masculinity were different. Consider the following response from Tom,

[M]y first knee-jerk reaction to that video is I do not identify with that. I think in that moment I sort of perceived like a, or at least what I felt was a dissimilarity, um, yeah, you know, my sort of upbringing experience did not involve that sort of, I don't know, violent perception of masculinity, like I think I looked at that boy as he was starting to get older, and in the video it's hard to anticipate, but it's almost disturbing in a way, watching this boy's psychology kind of be morphed into this like aggressive person who looked dangerous, I think a little intimidating in a way, and dangerous and I don't want to be around him, and I think that I would sort of want to

understand my masculinity in terms of being someone who is approachable and friendly.

While many participants included examples of harmful expressions or ideas of masculinity in their answers, some participants were quick to add on to their answers to say that they did not agree with or ascribe to these ideas and that at times they believed these ideas to be wrong or unhealthy. In addition, many participants went on to identify that these harmful ideas are not the only ideas that define masculinity and that it is a fluid concept and depends on the person describing the term and the context in which it is used. Some participants described how masculinity exists on a spectrum, and that individuals will have different ideas of masculinity. These responses show how some individual men in New Brunswick ascribe to healthy or helpful ideas and behaviors associated with masculinity. The participants' individual identities are dynamic and they adopt or drop certain masculine behaviors over time and in response to particular contexts.

Brian described how his interests differ from his father's, someone he perceives as being masculine:

[S]o I actually thought about this quite a bit, I think because growing up my dad was quite a manly man, he does construction, [he] builds houses for living, [so] growing up he always wanted me to like those things too, which is understandable, 'I want my son to like the things I like...', but I never really took to it... So I kind of understand that preconceived [idea] it's really manly and masculine to build things, be strong, be a provider, I think that's the big takeaway, but I'm really different from that, so I think for me it's about just being like the best me I can be, this is how I want it...

Brian is familiar with the ideas and expressions associated with masculinity from observing his father, however, he does not ascribe to them. Brian was not interested in doing construction work and he likes to paint his nails, behaviors which are not mutually exclusive yet he does not believe he can do both. He described "being the best me I can

be” as having confidence and not caring what others think or trying to please them. He does not attribute confidence to masculinity, but rather feels that having confidence is something all individuals should strive for.

Tom described how watching videos on YouTube on masculinity and manliness caused him to think more deeply about his idea of masculinity:

Yeah, so I actually, I kind of wonder this. I've been wondering about this recently, in that, like, sometimes I want to associate particular values with masculinity, but then I wouldn't want to kind of reduce those values, um, such that they're exclusively masculine, I think it would be more, insofar as I'm a man, I would realize and interpret these values. So I follow a YouTube channel called The Art of Manliness, and the focus that I seem to find, or at least the stuff I look at, is an emphasis on developing good habits, which is pretty universal, um, but it kind of gives me sort of an ideal to just sort of look at, so if I identify as a man, and I want to identify as masculine, then developing you know, good routines, I feel like that's kind of a goal that I would have, instead of letting my day be defined by you know, whatever I feel like doing in the particular moment...

Tom associated masculinity with values. The videos described by Tom provide instructions on “manly” behaviors such as exercising, investing or saving money, and being brave and assertive. They reinforce hegemonic masculinity through their promotion of middle-class values, good habits and routines.

Some participants stated that they do not think about their masculinity, or they have not had to think about it. One such participant is Eric:

I really don't think about it that much! Like, uh, I don't really think about being masculine or being feminine much, like I just think you are who you are, and that's that. Like I don't really think you have to live up to, or conform to certain genders or like if you're male, you don't have to conform to being masculine, you know what I mean? Yeah, I feel like when you phrase it, like oh, I got to talk to this person, I got to be masculine, like it just seems subconscious, but I think, what does it mean to be masculine? Um, ok, I don't really know...I just don't know if I've thought about it before, um, I can list like normal stereotypes, but I just don't think of that

when I think of masculinity, I guess like if I think of masculinity, I think like oh, you're a guy, and that's about it, I don't think of anything associated with that.

Comments such as “you are who you are” and “it just seems subconscious” are evidence that Eric has not experienced resistance to his masculinity or the privilege that comes with being male. Eric also mentioned stereotypes in his response. Stereotypes support and reinforce hegemonic masculinity, yet he is not aware of how they influence his masculinity.

In a similar response, Mike stated: *I don't really, I rarely even think about masculinity or roles or whatever, I just kind of see people and then they have X or Y chromosomes or whatever...* Mike went on to describe how he chooses to focus on men's personality and who they are as a person.

I value kind of like the merit of a person a lot more than what their attributes and skill sets are, I value what kind of person you are more than your equipment as a human, or you know, the size or your biceps, the size of your legs, or whatever, if you're a woman. I don't know, I just kind of focus on who they are as a person as opposed to what defines them as being the person they are, kind of thing. Like it doesn't matter if the guy's like very traditionally masculine, like, I'll still think about [that] first, instead of like oh, that guy is six foot four and huge, I'll think but oh, he's kind of a crappy person. So, like I won't subjectively place him higher in social standings just because of his attributes, I'll still, I'll judge him basically on his attributes as a person, instead of just him being a guy and being tall, that's kind of what I placed my understanding on.

Another reason given for not thinking about masculinity was how the term does not have any meaning. Kevin stated: *I don't really think it means anything to me to be masculine, I don't think being masculine is really a thing.* Similar to Eric and Mike, this quote suggests that Kevin has not had to think about his masculinity because of the privileges and advantages associated with being male. Alternatively, Kevin may be rejecting the concept of masculinity. Some participants saw masculinity as having limited

meaning because being male has never been considered an advantage or disadvantage to them. However, it is likely that the participants have male privileges that have not impacted their ideas of masculinity. Examples of privilege from the data included being heterosexual, being white (for most participants), and having access to higher education and employment. In addition, being able to play sports is an example of male privilege. Participants who possess these privileges perform hegemonic masculinity because of their position within the structures of class, race and sexuality.

Individual changes in perceptions of masculinity over the life course

The analysis showed individual changes in perceptions of masculinity at different times in the participant's lives. This subsection describes these changes, as well as the reasons for these changes identified by the participants, including university/change in education, and job/career change.

University/change in education

The most frequently mentioned reason for changes in perceptions of masculinity recognized by the participants was a change in education, specifically from high school to university, and being exposed to new ideas during higher education. The participants attributed their change in perception to meeting new people, taking courses on gender studies or philosophy and being in a new and larger environment with more opportunities for new interactions and relationships. The participants also described university as the time where they were able to learn more about themselves, explore new interests and engage in deeper conversations with their peers or colleagues. One of the participants who

described the transition from high school to university as a reason for changing his perception of masculinity was Johnathan, who stated:

I think I had a pretty big change in my idea of masculinity from high school to university. And that might have just been being exposed to a larger social group, a less rural social group, I went to school in a place that had 500 students, and you know that was from a large area, I live in a rural area, I guess you could say, and I think a lot of people in this sort of area do see masculinity solely as that toxic kind that was shown in the video, they do believe that defending your honor is the highest form of being a man, and after, you know a year or two of university, and having classes with a lot of different people, I don't think that's really what it means, and I don't think that's what it should mean.

Similarly, Neil stated: *[I]n university, I wasn't surrounded by the people I grew up with, I was surrounded by a different kind of masculinity, a more learned masculinity, like from professors.* Both Johnathan and Neil discussed how moving out of a rural area to attend university introduced them to new people and ideas of masculinity, resulting in a change in their view on how one deals with and assesses the impact of its harmful attributes.

Anthony described university as a time when he began to feel more comfortable with himself and his idea of masculinity, and less inclined to change this perception or idea to fit or model other's perceptions of the concept. Anthony described this change as follows:

I noticed a big change in university, like looking back now, you see how masculinity has functioned at various ages, and in different settings, so yeah, that's how [I see it]. And I think the older you get, the more mature you get, the more education, the more open-minded you are, and more open to interpretation, and just acceptance, or not really caring what others think.

It is possible that the participants did not experience as much pressure to perform behaviors associated with hegemonic masculinity in university as they may have earlier on in their education. Education is a social context where hegemonic masculinity is learned, observed,

and performed at school or in the classroom. Getting into fights or playing sports, are perceived as aligning with hegemonic masculine ideals. These behaviors may have been perceived as masculine by participants during their early education, however, university exposed them to new people and learning opportunities that allowed them to change and expand their ideas of masculinity. Because all of the participants in my study were attending or had graduated from university, the study cannot provide evidence of how men's perceptions of masculinity change for those who choose not to pursue post-secondary education.

Job/career change

Farid described changing his perception of masculinity when he entered a new job in childcare. Farid was also a member of two clubs led by women. Farid stated:

I recently started working among women a lot, like I work in childcare, so I'm the only man, and the other women, at the two clubs, the clubs I'm a member of, they are women's clubs, like headed by women. So yeah, that's impacted how my masculinity has changed over time, I never thought women could be masculine, but, yeah, when I think about it now, yeah, it's all fluid constructs, anyone can bear or uphold...but yeah, working among women, it remodels how you think about yourself and the constructs you've been through, I guess, yeah, I think that's what maybe changed.

From working in a predominantly female environment, Farid described changing his perception of masculinity to recognize that women can also perform behaviors associated with masculinity and masculinity is a fluid construct. Childcare is associated with femininity, and women are more likely to work in professions or environments involving children than men. The gendered division of labor has influenced Farid's ideas of masculinity and femininity and these ideas were challenged once he began working in a new environment with more women than men.

Gender Relations

The second theme in the analysis is gender relations. The theoretical framework describes gender as being relational. As such, hegemonic masculinity is examined in relation to emphasized femininity and subordinate masculinities. Two subthemes are described in the analysis: masculinity and femininity and male peer pressure.

Masculinity and Femininity

After being asked about their thoughts on masculinity, the participants were asked to describe what the term femininity means to them. Many participants had difficulty and felt they could not (or did not want to) talk about something that does not include them as men. The participants' responses included references to stereotypical traits of femininity, including being soft and delicate, and more emotional and caring. They were uncomfortable challenging the concept of femininity and chose instead to discuss traits associated with femininity that are more common or familiar in society. There is evidence that many of the participants found femininity and being feminine to be ideas that can only be applied to women. This discomfort and unfamiliarity with femininity was expressed by Neil:

So, ok, this is a little more classic I guess, more nurturing, better at listening, more understanding of situations, more exact, whether it be exactness with words or exactness, like a steady hand. This one is a little more tricky, because I don't think about it as often, because it's not really my lane, I as an individual do not want to contribute to the defining of something that does not actually involve me, I guess, so I tend to stay away from, I can speak on masculinity all day long cause that's something I can talk about, but femininity, now that's harder.

Neil recognized that his ideas of femininity are more “classic” and may reflect a stereotypical view. He prefaced his response by saying that he has some discomfort with

this and with defining a concept he feels as a man does not involve him. Neil's comment on how he wants to "stay away" from femininity also suggests that he is unaware how hegemonic masculinity and femininity are relational and how they influence each other.

Another participant who expressed difficulties with discussing femininity was William, who responded:

I haven't thought about it, I feel like I talk more about masculinity just because I am a guy, uh, so I have more to say about that, which I don't know is a good thing or bad thing. Uh, but for femininity, I would say like being motherly, like your stereotypical definition, like if you're being feminine, you're being soft, emotional, more susceptible to cry I guess, [or] it could be more alluring, like sexy...

Similar to Neil, William had difficulty defining femininity. William's response shows how stereotypical ideas of femininity means being beautiful and attractive to men.

While some of the participants stated in the previous section on masculinity that being masculine includes caring for others and being supportive, some of the participants chose to associate these behaviors with femininity, especially after observing their mother perform these behaviors to take care of them and their family. Consider the following response from Ted:

Um, yeah, I don't know, I see, like when I think of someone being feminine, I see my mother, how she's able to take care of the whole family, and she's always there for us, and she's able to um, console me when things aren't going right, or if I am feeling emotional or something like that, it's sort of a person or a place I can go to let that out, that might not be what it means to be feminine, but that's just sort of what I envision, um, what I imagine when I think of what it means to be feminine...

Eric also referenced his mother when describing his ideas of femininity, and how he perceives certain behaviors as being feminine, such as wearing makeup, from observing his mother.

I don't really think about it that much, um, but sometimes if I am thinking of feminine I'll think of my mom, and just like something she'll do, like I don't know, she'll put on makeup when she goes out, she has longer hair...

Some of the men in this study recognized that their personal definitions of masculinity were similar to their definitions of femininity. When describing his thoughts on the concept of femininity, Ted recognized the possibility for similarities and added on to his response: *I guess what I said about being masculine can absolutely be applied to being feminine as well.* In his response on masculinity, Ted described behaviors such as being supportive and caring for others. This highlights the problem of a binary understanding of gender wherein particular behaviors are associated with different genders. Being caring and supportive can be perceived as helpful expressions of hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity. Another participant who recognized possible similarities or overlap between the two concepts was Greg, who suggested that being strong and brave (two traits that were frequently used in responses to describe masculinity), can also be used to describe femininity.

[I]t's more of a grey area, we kind of overlap a lot more than we are given credit for. And just because you're feminine, doesn't mean you're not strong or brave, right? I guess I would always separate those words and you can't associate them with being masculine and feminine, but sure you can.

Some of the participants used analogies to depict this idea of a gender relationship between masculinity and femininity. Farid used his personal interest in superhero movies and comics to compare masculinity and femininity to a popular superhero and the idea of yin and yang:

I'm a huge X-Men/Marvel fan and in that movie, Wolverine, who's one of the most masculine superheroes ever, and Wolverine's daughter, has a different type of claws, she has some kind of different shaped claws, and in

the movie Charles Xavier says something like “Have you seen the feminine version of yourself?” So masculine could be someone who attacks someone, and the feminine version could be something different, so its yin and yang, so, yeah, that’s the best way I can put it. Like if you take the whole structure of yin and yang, it will be 90% white and 10% black, and on the other end it will be 10% white and 90% black. And in that sense, 90% of testosterone and 10% estrogen and 90% estrogen and 10% testosterone. Even in that sense, it matches.

Farid’s examples suggest that masculinity and femininity are different, but also balanced.

He associates biological sex differences with a binary understanding of gender.

In a unique example, Mike described masculinity and femininity as follows: *[K]ind of if you want to put it in meat terms, say like, like masculine is being well-done and feminine is you know, medium-rare, or whatever, it’s kind of the same thing, just different consistencies.* When Mike provided this analogy in his response, it was given in a joking tone, using a silly analogy to help make sense of something he found unfamiliar and difficult to discuss. The participants describing how masculinity and femininity are similar or will overlap is an example of how hegemonic masculinity can be challenged and changed. Additionally, this suggests that not all individuals conceptualize gender in ways that reflect a gender binary. While men experience pressures to live up to hegemonic masculine ideals, very few men are able to achieve these ideals, and in reality will express themselves in a range of ways. The relationship between masculinity and femininity was evident in the responses from the participants, specifically when describing interactions, they observed or experienced with other men and women, such as their parents or with intimate partners.

Eric grew up in a single parent household where his mother taught him how to cook and help with the housework.

[M]y mom, ever since [I was] young, was like “OK, do the dishes and you’ve got to cook for yourself,” like I have tons of friends now, like both guys and girls, but a lot of guys, who don’t know how to cook for themselves or clean or anything, like their parents always did it for them, um, but since I lived in a single mom household, I always had to do that too, so all my friends love me because I cook a lot, and they’re like “Oh, you’re a great cook!” And my mom taught me how to cook growing up, so that was definitely not a stereotype, like the guy doesn’t do the cooking kind of thing...

Since Eric’s father was not present, he did not observe a gender hierarchy in the home. Similar to the examples given by Greg and Farid, Eric’s example with his mother shows how women can influence men’s ideas of what it means to be a man.

In addition to observing masculinity and femininity in the home from their mothers and fathers, the relationship between masculinity and femininity was also evident in the participant’s intimate relationships with women. The participants described situations where they wished to initiate a relationship with a woman or in their current intimate relationships with women where they experienced expectations or pressure from others to be the provider in the relationship. The stereotype that men need to be the provider in the relationship with women reinforces emphasized femininity and presents evidence for experiences of a gender hierarchy between men and women.

Consider the following quote from Brian, who discussed how he feels his personal ideas of masculinity create difficulties in initiating intimate relationships with women:

I think it makes finding like any kind of intimate relationship way more difficult just because I feel like I don't always fit like the idea of like what people want in a boyfriend per say just because of how I see these things so I find myself like I would talk to someone for like a month, two months, and we would hang out a few times, but then it wouldn't work, and I think more so because of how I view things, if that makes sense. I think the way I view things makes it harder for me to kind of fill these like boyfriend roles of an

intimate relationship, because I don't understand like, I don't see the masculine or feminine side of the relationship, I just see the relationship. So I think that makes it a little harder.

Brian's experience suggests that men's performance of masculinity can create difficulties when entering into relationships where hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity are desired and valued. Brian's example highlights how expectations and pressure for men to perform hegemonic masculinity also come from women.

While Brian expressed difficulties with establishing intimate relationships, some of the participants described difficulties during their current or past relationships. Andrew described learning from his church to take on the role of the provider in his relationship:

I was going to a more conservative church at the time, and feeling like there was a nobility to it, like yeah, of course you need to be able to financially provide for a woman, it's like a kind thing, it's like I'm going to make sure that you have everything sort of settled, like you're good and you're not going to have to worry about anything. To me, that felt like taking on responsibility, and like showing kindness and being a provider and then as more time went by, [I] thought about what kind of a life is that? And I don't think I ever took it as far as like I'm not going to expect my partner to work, kind of thing, like at one point I told my partner, when we first started dating, if we get married, I sort of want to be able to earn enough so you won't have to work if you don't want to, and I don't think I ever had a malice in my intention, but like, I think that like one, people don't work solely for that, and also, like I think now, I think I realize that as much I wanted [it] to be like a kindness, I was sort of imposing a passivity on my partner, where if I take on all of the responsibility, and I'm being like the hero in the relationship, who has to provide for, protect and save the partner, and by definition, where we both provide for each other, and we're both solving things together, it sort of implies that there's less agency or responsibility on my partner's side.

Andrew felt he had to protect and provide for his partner and these behaviors would show kindness and caring. However, he began to recognize that he was placing a passive and dependent role onto his partner and how this could cause the relationship to be unfair. This

example shows evidence of a change in how he perceived and understood masculinity and recognized its role in gender inequality.

Derek wanted to be open and vulnerable with his girlfriend, because he felt he could not express his emotions openly with his family or peers. However, his girlfriend eventually ended the relationship.

I noticed we were starting to become a bit more distant, and I didn't think much of it at the time, and she didn't outright say it, until after we broke up, um, but we were just becoming more distant, we weren't having our moments where we hung out as much, or where we talked as much... and it was less than two weeks later, when she kind of dropped the bombshell on me, and that did a number on me, it took a long time to heal [from that], but then the way she explained it afterwards, was there was a sort of dependency, and there was a grain of truth to what she was saying, and I don't know if the way to say it was she was becoming a therapist more than a girlfriend, which was not at all my intention, but it just felt like there's no place at home, and if I've got to be a man or whatever, I have to do that at home, I have to do that when I go to class, other than basically when I'm with friends, and half of the time when I'm with them, it was drinking, the only other place where I felt like I could be myself was with her, and I guess there was a bit of an imbalance, and I say I guess, and it's not to be passive-aggressive, but it's more that things weren't really clear, that there was an imbalance there, or that there's a dysfunction, until for me at least, it was too late. And just from the way she phrased some of the things before we had our parting words, was that if I had manned up or grown up or whatever, had been a big strong man, then the problem she would have had, that wouldn't have been the case...

Derek's relationship ended because his girlfriend felt that he was too emotionally dependent on her. Derek believed he was being open and vulnerable with his girlfriend at the time, however she felt like a "therapist," indicating unequal expectations for doing emotional work and conflicting expectations for the sharing of power in the relationship.

Some of the participants were able to identify how the video showed how men and women are socialized differently because of their gender. Consider the following quote from Henry:

I guess for me, the big thing, at the very start, the first couple of seconds in the video where you kind of have this stereotypical mother kind of holding the baby and the father, or it might have been the mother too, saying “oh, well, don’t cry,” and I just remember thinking “ok, it’s just a baby,” but they’re going to show how women are going to be socialized one way and boys or men are going to be socialized another way, so like right off the bat, you’re seeing that dichotomy...

Henry describes anticipating that the video would show gender stereotypes and socialization. He found certain scenes in the video to be very relatable, suggesting that he had also been socialized to view masculinity and femininity as dichotomies.

The participants’ interactions with other men and/or women show that there is a relationship between hegemonic masculinity and femininity and women can influence men’s ideas of hegemonic masculinity. The relationship between masculinity and femininity that most of the participants observed in the home from their parents, or in their intimate relationships show evidence of a gender hierarchy between men and women. Nevertheless, the participant raised by a single mother was exposed to patterns of behaviors that resisted the gender hierarchy.

Male peer pressure

Pressures or expectations to perform masculinity are created by structures. During the interviews, the participants listed various times in their lives where they felt pressure or an expectation to perform certain behaviors to be perceived as masculine by other men,

such as their peers. The structuring of gender includes the actions of people and the behaviors and ideas that are reinforced in peer groups.

Many participants felt pressured to perform certain tasks or behaviors to not be seen as weak or “unmanly.” Consider this example from Johnathan, who described feeling pressured not to say no when he was asked to help move heavy tables at school:

I always used to get taken out of class, in middle school, to go pick up heavy tables, and bring them into rooms, or whatever, to move heavy objects, whereas no girls were ever taken out of class to do that, I guess I felt pressured to accept on the grounds that if I didn't I would look weak...

Greg could not think of a specific incident where he felt pressured to do something in order to avoid being seen as weak, however, he provided an example of the response he would receive if he refused: *[I]t would sound like, “Can you do this for me?” And I don't really want to, but it's like “Ah, you're a big strong man! You a wimp or something?” Something like that.* Some participants feel pressured to perform tasks that involve manual labor or strength, such as moving heavy objects. Johnathan and Greg discussed the negative consequences that may occur if they say no to performing these tasks. Pressure from peers reinforce hegemonic masculinity and the idea that men need to be strong to be masculine.

Neil described situations where he was the one who had to deal with a problem and described that he felt he had to do certain things or solve problems because he was “the guy.”

There are certainly situations where I approached people who were causing a ruckus and I had to approach them because I was the guy, I don't know, part of this seems so silly because it doesn't matter, but I did end up doing it because I was the guy, because I was the masculine one, like going out at one in the morning because there was a bump outside, you know, “What's that? Oh, I'm the one going out because I'm the guy,” situations such as that...

Neil was unsure whether he felt pressured in situations where he had to approach other people who were causing a problem, or if he felt because he is a man he was expected to be more comfortable and experienced with confrontation. The structuring of masculinity is experienced as external and internal pressure. Neil continued,

I certainly think I have gotten favorable outcomes because I'm a guy, like I'm certain, if like people are being loud and chirpy, like if my girlfriend went over there and told them to be quiet, I'd doubt that the same response would happen if I went over there and I told them to be quiet. I mean, now whether I'm a bigger guy, I'm bigger than her, sure, I'm louder than her, sure, but I'm also more experienced with confrontation than her as well, and I think that does have something to do with masculinity. You're supposed to act, kind of thing, you're supposed to take care of situations that get out of hand, etc. I do think there were different outcomes/consequences of situations because I was a guy.

In the above quotes, the participants described situations where they felt pressured to perform certain tasks or behaviors, including the use of force, in order to avoid potential negative consequences. On the other hand, some participants described situations where they felt pressured to behave in certain ways to gain positive outcomes. One of these participants was Kevin, who reflected on his interactions with his male peers in high school when he felt pressured to have sex and to talk about having sex:

[W]hen I was in high school, and there were kind of all those talks about you know, within the friend group, when we started getting interested in sex and having sex with people, and all of that, I felt, especially at that time, the pressure to be unemotional, like say in a specific context, like I had a girlfriend, and I felt like I couldn't show to my friends or like talk about it, whenever we talked about it, that I actually liked her, or loved her at that point, it was more oh, I should act like I'm only having sex with her, even though you know, we had been together for X amount of time, so I think at that point I wasn't a boy anymore, I was a man, and I didn't care about her it was only about sex, and I enjoyed sex, and I just had sex and all of that. And I think that's the first example that comes to mind, at least when I was in high school yeah, I felt like I had to behave as kind of the tough guy, that doesn't care about things, doesn't have feelings, you know just has sex because he wants to, not because he likes the person.

When asked if he experienced any positive or negative consequences from these interactions with his peers, he responded:

I think it was a lot more kind of, in that particular scenario, more kind of approval, subdued approval, it was kind of a nod or we agree with you, yeah it was kind of social approval, it was like ok, I'm like you guys, and it's like, ok, you can be part of our group, something like that. I think the pay-off is I was seen as one of them and like them, somebody who doesn't care...

Rather than showing that he cared about his girlfriend, Kevin felt pressured to be accepted by his male peers. He wanted to gain their approval and be perceived as being manly. Kevin's example provides evidence for how men perform certain masculine behaviors to be accepted by their male peers, behaviors that can include objectifying or harming women. Although Kevin did not disclose if there was any violence in his sexual relationship, his feelings of being pressured by his male peers increased the risk for sexual violence because he "did not care about her".

Tom described feeling pressured to be the "hero" in a situation where a problem occurs. Similar to Neil's example of feeling pressured to solve problems, Tom described how this pressure is connected to his idea of masculinity:

I think maybe in times where like if I'm with a group of people and like if we're driving somewhere, and the car breaks down, or something, I think I internally sort of want to or feel pressure to sort of restore the situation. So I have this idea of like being a man or being masculine is associated with kind of like leadership, and again maybe that sort of like mechanical, you know, it would be cool to open up the hood and be like "Ah! There's the thing, you know, I fixed it! I am the masculine hero!" Yeah, so I think that there are sort of situations where I do feel oh, there's this masculine leadership role that you know, would be, yeah, I think in any case where something goes wrong, you know, you're the one whose able to fix it, it feels good. I think that might be a masculinity sort of situation.

Tom went on to describe this feeling as being “pretty strong and deep-rooted,” and expressed how if a situation occurred where he was able to solve the problem and feel masculine, he would feel good and heroic afterwards.

Participants felt pressure to behave in certain ways in situations or environments where stereotypical ideas of masculinity were valued, such as when a problem occurs that must be solved with strength or when interacting with other men. These stereotypes included being strong or tough, unemotional, heroic and only interested in women for sex or perceiving women as objects of sexual desire.

Patterns of gender interaction

The theme of patterns of gender interaction includes references to interactions the men experienced that exposed them to performances of masculinity, and how different social contexts influence masculinity. Two subthemes that were identified based on the analysis were: learning and observing masculinity, and the influence of social contexts on masculinity and violence.

Learning and observing masculinity

Participants described learning and observing masculinity in interactions with different individuals in different social contexts. When asked from whom they learned what it means to be masculine, the most frequent response was fathers. They described how their father taught them being masculine means being a good father and husband. Furthermore, some participants credited their personal definitions of masculinity to observing their fathers engaging in behaviors that fit with these definitions. This was evident in the response given by William:

I would say for sure, when I first heard the word [masculine], the snap picture in my mind was my dad, absolutely no question... and I think that's where I get the idea of masculinity as a person who can still be open with their emotions, cause my dad's definitely one of those people. Um, 'cause he's a carpenter, so he's like a tough guy, he has tough hands, but he's also like a teddy bear, like whenever we watch a sad movie, he's like, he'll cry. Um, yeah, I'd say my dad, I kind of emulate him in terms of masculinity...

This example demonstrates how there is variation among men for how masculinity is expressed and men will display a range of behaviors that can be interpreted as being both masculine and feminine.

Participants described observing masculinity mostly from their fathers, however, other male family members, such as grandfathers, brothers and cousins were also influential. Participants also described observing masculinity with other men in their lives outside of their family, including male friends, roommates, teammates, coaches and professors. Interestingly, when discussing observations about masculinity from interactions with other men who were not family members, a similar pattern regarding age emerged from the participant's responses. Male non-family members were usually older.

Consider this example from Greg, who described aspiring to be like his roommate:

[H]e's quite a bit older than me, he's five years older than me, he's 26, he's older, he's wiser and he's been through all of the stuff I've been through, so he's a good person to watch and learn from, and I guess the more I hang out with him, and the more I see him do stuff that I like to do the more I say, hey, and when I think about my old teammates, and they would always be like reacting differently and more like little boys and my roommate, he'll react in a different way, without all the bad stuff that comes after, you know? He's quite pure, he doesn't do a lot of bad stuff, like if he does something bad, he'll say it's like a silly mistake or something, like nothing is done potentially subconsciously.

Similarly, Andrew stated:

I learned a bunch from, like since coming to college, like I got some very good friends, and I think that was really helpful as I was coming into

adulthood, that some friends were a couple years older than me, to see what like a young man should be...

While most of the participants in the study observed masculine patterns of interaction from male figures in their lives, some participants listed various female figures of influence in their lives, such as mothers. Mike responded:

I kind of grew up with a distant father figure, he was always around and he was always present in my life, but he wasn't really that connected with me, per say, so I grew up with a sister and a mom, who were kind of a lot closer, so I grew up in like a women-dominated kind of family circle, and I kind of was removed from like being taught how to be a man. So there wasn't really any like archetype of this is the person you have to be, this is what a man needs to be, it was always just like my mom and sister were there, and I understood what I have to do has to reflect you know, giving them the best and treating them well, making sure they're ok, cause eventually it will be a wife, it will be a girlfriend, it will be my daughter, and that's kind of how I base my, I guess, philosophy about it.

Some participants discussed learning masculinity in their relationship with their girlfriend or female partner. One of these participants was Andrew, who responded as follows:

[A] person I learned a lot from for what it means to be masculine is my partner, as we've sort of continued in our relationship, she's been someone I've sort of grown up with, being an 18-19 year old sort of fresh adult into a 25 year old man, I was sort of becoming a man at that time, and she's one of the people I'm closest to, and I think she was really helpful and challenging, like what is unhealthy about what other people are saying masculinity is and how can I define it in a way that will align more with the person I want to be?

Mike and Andrew described identifying responsibilities for becoming good men from women, such as taking care of others, looking out for their family and maintaining healthy relationships. Moreover, through developing close relationships with women in their lives, they were able to learn how to treat other women in the future.

Many of the participants discussed observing patterns of gender interaction from various media sources, including movies, TV shows and video games. The participants felt

that the media they consumed growing up had more of an impact on the ideas of masculinity they had as children or adolescents than as adults. Some participants described observing more exaggerated or dramatic ideas of masculinity from the media as young boys, and then learning later as adults that these ideas are fictional and unrealistic. Henry responded:

[I]f we're trying to play up kind of like the more dramatic aspects of it [masculinity], I can definitely say movies or TV shows, like I thought I was going to be Danny Ocean from like Ocean's 11 or something you know, this like really smart man that has it all figured out, and all the little working pieces of it put together, so that's kind of for me, those kind of archetypes, are what I tried to align with the most, but then you have the like really exaggerated ideas of it, like John Rambo. . .

Eric shared this example from when he was younger:

[W]hen I was a kid, like, I don't know, watching movies and stuff, and like the prince has to go save the princess, like some Disney movies, like Beauty and the Beast, and it was like oh, when you get older you have to be like the prince or whatever, uh, that's definitely not the case now, and I just think that's changed over time...but I definitely, as a little kid, had like a fantasy, watch the movies and be like oh, yeah, the prince has to go save the princess...

Observing patterns of gender interaction from prince and princess characters in movies, the participants were observing stereotypes about masculinity and femininity from the media, absorbing ideas that men must be heroic and have power over women who are weak and in need of protection.

Another example where the participants observed patterns of gendered interactions was in their peer groups. Consider this response from Greg regarding an interaction involving his female friend and a camping trip:

[T]here's like four or five of us guys and one girl in our group and um, and I guess, in the past couple of years, I wouldn't have thought twice about her comfort level and how she's feeling around us, but just this summer I've

asked her a couple of times, like, "Hey, do you feel comfortable?" This past weekend we all slept in tents together, and I was like, "Hey, do you feel comfortable with us here?" And she's like "Oh, yeah, for sure!" But I feel like it's definitely my feelings of masculinity, it's really brought that out over the past few years and just instead of having like, being aware that some people might not have the same visions of masculinity that you do and like my vision has changed, so I'm no longer less protective of everyone you know? It's more, "Do you feel safe? Are you comfortable?" It's not about me, it's about all of us, and so it's kind of made me less selfish. [S]o it's more just "Are you comfortable in this situation?" Yeah, we're more open about it now, we have conversations around this in our group, "Are you ok? Is this comfortable for you?" So that's come from more learning about masculinity, and changes in my perception, less to objectify.

This example shows how Greg has become more protective of everyone, not just women, and he has become aware that a woman may feel unsafe and uncomfortable sleeping in a tent with other men. Greg changed from being unaware of his female friend's safety to being concerned for the safety of all others. At the end of his response, he realized his female friend is a subject, not an object of male desire.

Neil is an example of someone who observed patterns of gender interaction everywhere:

Ah, ok well, this one's everything! 'Cause the answer is like everybody, you can see a guy walking down the street who does something you don't like and you might blame it on that or explain that by the fact that he's a man, and then I can then learn that that is not what it's like to be masculine, no, no, no, he's wrong there.

Participants who observed gender from "everything," also evaluated what they observed from individuals or sources and engaged in critical thinking to decide if these behaviors are healthy. The evaluation other men's behaviors was presented in a response given by Ted:

[G]rowing up you um, get used to what other men sort of do and how they react or how they behave and stuff like that, and you can make your own

decisions about if that's good or not. But, um, it absolutely has an effect, like on whether, like I wasn't taught explicitly what it means to be masculine, and my answer could be wrong or right, but it depends on the person or the situation, but it is something I think you just pick up over the years, and you can start to make your own ideas and do some critical thinking, and decide what it means to be masculine for yourself.

Ted's idea of wanting to evaluate what he observed from other men and engaging in critical thinking also relates back to the ideas shared by the participants regarding changing their ideas of what it means to be a man during university. Critical thinking can be learned in higher education. Critical thinking involves thinking about things that are normally not thought about or discussed, or re-evaluating how you think about things (Roohr et al., 2019). Ted's comment about masculinity as something "you just pick up over the years," shows evidence of hegemonic masculinity, and how it is internalized. It was not until Ted began to think critically about his masculinity that he realized he has choices in how he performs masculinity.

While the participants in the study described observing masculinity from other men in their lives that they are close to, some participants emphasized how observing other men engage in harmful or unhealthy behaviors showed them what masculinity is not. Participants observed other men their age engage in behaviors they felt were unhealthy or inappropriate expressed disgust or disagreement with these behaviors, stating they do not view these men as role models or as being masculine. These feelings of disagreement were displayed in an example given by Brian:

I think I learned from how they behaved a lot of the time, what it's like to be masculine growing up, they were very loud, couldn't sit still. There's one story, we were in science class in grade 10, and our teacher was a bit of a pushover, and they would just do whatever they wanted, so they were like taking crumpled up paper and a textbook and they were playing baseball in class with this paper and I'm like, "What are you doing?"

But they just did what they wanted, and wanted everyone to know what they were doing, even at the expense of other people, cause during that, one of them pulled the textbook back and threw it by accident and it hit a girl in the face. They disregarded other people, and I think that's where I learned a lot of that from. I don't think I agreed with a lot of it, but that's just where I observed a lot of it.

Brian observed these behaviors from his male peers at school and learned that they were acceptable and even dismissed, however, he felt these behaviors were unhealthy and at times even harmful. In a similar example, Johnathan discussed being in contact with men who he observed as having unhealthy attitudes or beliefs about women and using violence. Johnathan described his distaste with these men as follows: *[I]t leads to them being insufferable, they believed they could say whatever they wanted about women, and anyone who is being uncomfortable is just being whiny, they believe violence is the answer to problems.*

Both Brian and Johnathan found that these behaviors and beliefs about women were uncharacteristic of their personal definitions of masculinity and what it means to be a man.

Influence of social contexts

In addition to observing masculinity from interactions with other individuals, many of the participants also discussed social contexts where they were exposed to patterns of gender interaction. Furthermore, there are also different institutional contexts where hegemonic masculinity is learned and observed. Two institutions that were discussed in the interviews with the participants were education (school) and sports. The following subsections on emotions, sports, and violence also present evidence for how the ideals associated with hegemonic masculinity are emphasized within these institutional contexts.

Emotions

I have been told not to cry, and I took it to heart, and I do not, I cannot tell you the last time I did (Neil). Like Neil, many participants identified feeling like they could not cry or talk about their feelings with others or around other men. The participants learned they must hide or suppress certain emotions and show that nothing is wrong.

Ted shared this example from when he was younger:

I just remember I was in the car and I was talking to someone and they said something that sort of made me emotional and for some reason, I'm not sure why it did, but I remember trying to suppress those emotions, and I didn't really want to talk about them at all, and I think that's probably due to just growing up in society and hearing that boys aren't supposed to cry, and when I got home, I was still emotional so I was crying that night and I wasn't very happy with myself, I was sort of thinking, why am I crying over this? So I think, I might not have been pressured, but I might have been conditioned to react that way or feel that way, in that situation.

Ted described that he may have been taught or “conditioned” by society that crying was inappropriate. Ted’s example is evidence that men feel they cannot show or talk about certain emotions, and instead must suppress or hide them. Johnathan shared this story with his girlfriend:

[O]nce with my girlfriend, I realized I was feeling sad about something she did, and it was such a big thing to me because it was just so new, so out of the ordinary, for me when I said I feel bad about this thing you did, and she didn't just go, “So? Get over it.” She like actually, you know, made an effort to care, and change what she did and apologize, and that felt out of the ordinary...

Johnathan said he was reminded of this incident while watching the video. Johnathan’s story is noteworthy in that when he chose to tell his girlfriend how he felt sad about her

actions, rather than suppress his feelings, he was surprised when she apologized and acknowledged his feelings.

I just didn't think there was a way I could be [taken seriously], so that was like a huge surprise for me, when that happened, and I felt like that would never work, that idea of being taken seriously when I just expressed it casually, and I think that stopped me from expressing emotions like that in the past, and probably still will into the future, it's a learned habit.

Johnathan may have felt willing to tell his girlfriend that he was sad because he felt more comfortable opening up to a woman about his emotions than a man. In addition, hiding and suppressing certain emotions are behaviors associated with hegemonic masculinity. In order for men to be perceived as aligning with hegemonic masculine ideals, they must appear as if nothing is wrong.

Consider this quote from Kevin:

[B]ecause even though like my closest friends, my closest male friends, I'm so close to them but I still feel like there's a barrier, an emotional barrier that's difficult to cross, in the sense of I still have this reflex of telling myself oh, if I show certain emotions or say certain things, they will think less of me because of that, or, so even though I'm aware that this is not the right way to go about it, perhaps they even wouldn't care or think less of me, I still kind of, I don't always say what I want to say or express how I feel in certain situations because I'm like oh, like they're going to think differently of me as a man, and in that case I don't want that to happen, even though in my head it's like it doesn't change anything, but I feel like for a lot of people I know, it's difficult to kind of have those emotional conversations, even though it's weird, because one of my friends recently, I think it was last year, we had a discussion with his girlfriend, about how we can't cry in front of each other, me and him, we're roommates, and we kind of acknowledged in front of each other that we wouldn't cry in front of each other, even though we're that close. And it's not even that we don't trust each other, it's just that I feel like it's almost like we physically can't, like I can't let myself go in front of other men, and when we had this discussion, we kind of realized, we're really close and it made me realize how much you know, how internalized all this was, because even though we're that close, we know that we could cry in front of each other, we wouldn't do it.

If I were to talk about my emotions, it would be with a woman, and not like with my closest friend that I've known since I was a kid, who I've known for like 15 years, I wouldn't say that to them, but I would say that to a woman that I've known for like a year. I think I would be more willing, more open to talk about difficult situations in my life with a woman than I would be with a man.

Kevin's comment how he "physically can't" cry in front of his roommate shows how emotions are an embodied practice. Being willing and able to open up to women about their emotions is a result of what is observed about patterns of gender interactions in the expression of emotions. Johnathan and Kevin's difficulties with showing emotion around other men, but not women, suggests that there are social contexts where showing emotions is more acceptable than others. In contexts where women are present, it is acceptable (or even encouraged) to show emotions, whereas in social contexts with other men it is unacceptable.

The participants described consequences for being told to "bottle things up or toughen up," with regards to mental health. Connor spoke about his experiences with therapy and how he avoided going to therapy because he was taught that men cannot talk about their feelings or emotions and he was afraid of the potential stigma surrounding mental illness and masculinity.

Back in high school, like late high school, early university maybe, I want to say, I had a lot of negative stigma against going to therapy, cause, like I said, masculinity, like we're not supposed to talk about our feelings or our emotions, or anything personal like that, you're just sort of expected to bottle it up, just kind of tough through it. But it was getting to a point where it was affecting my day-to-day living, like I have anxiety, or it's sort of like a phobia, I guess, and I felt pressured to not talk to anyone about it, and then my girlfriend was around me a lot, obviously, and she was saying, "This is ridiculous, just like what's going on? Like why are you not wanting to do these things? What's happening?" And I just felt like I couldn't, I was so embarrassed, to tell her what was going on, and I would definitely say I

felt pressured to not show this weakness, or what I considered to be a weakness at the time, and not go to therapy...

For many men, opening up about their emotional struggles is perceived as a sign of weakness. Connor chose instead to hide or suppress his feelings, until these feelings began to cause difficulties in his daily routines and relationships. Connor's girlfriend told him she would not see him as weak if he went to therapy and that therapy would help him to feel better and strengthen his relationships with others. Connor describes having conversations around mental health with his male peers:

I realized it wasn't that serious, and I became more open to talking about it with my friends, who are also [dealing with things like this], like I have a friend whose dealing with severe depression and severe anxiety, and he's been open about that with us, since the beginning, and having him in my very close friend group also helps, to bring it forward, 'cause I knew I wasn't the only one, going through these things.

Connor was open to talking about his mental health and going to therapy with his peers because discussing mental health is becoming more acceptable in the Canadian context through media campaigns like Bell's "Let's Talk." Individuals are encouraged to speak out about their experiences with mental health problems and certain institutional contexts, such as universities, provide resources for these conversations by providing free counseling services for students. Changes in how mental health is perceived and discussed has an impact on hegemonic masculinity. Men and boys being encouraged to talk about their mental health challenges ideas of hegemonic masculinity that men need to be tough or unemotional (McQueen, 2017; Marasco, 2018).

In a similar example, Anthony discussed how as a man, there is pressure to appear tough and to show that nothing is wrong. However, this could also lead to men lashing out

emotionally or using violence, or it could lead to inappropriate coping mechanisms, such as drugs or alcohol.

[I]f you're battling some type of health issue or diagnosis, and I've experienced this myself with multiple diagnoses back to back unfortunately, where you know, if you try to be Mr. Tough Guy or Mr. Invincible, you know, it doesn't have any mental weight, physical weight, whatever, like on the mind or on the body. The longer you hold that in, and you don't express those emotions or you don't talk to someone about them, the worse you feel internally, and I would say that would lead to inappropriate behavior, like outbursts or possibly even physical violence, like I think of all of the, like when people are just drunk right? Or high on drugs, and how they act.

Anthony's response suggests that men may feel external pressure to appear strong and unemotional and this could lead to internal pressure that they release through violence. Anthony also referenced drugs and alcohol in his response, suggesting that drugs and alcohol can serve as a coping mechanism and may assist in releasing the pressure through violent behavior.

Sports

If you look for masculinity, you look for it on a sports team (William). Sports are a social context which contributes to the structuring and performance of hegemonic masculinity. Many participants observed the physical attributes commonly associated with manliness in sports. For some of the participants, playing sports was the first time they remembered experiencing insecurities with their body and described wanting to gain strength or muscle in order to better perform in sports and compete with their teammates. In addition, some of the participants described learning through participation in sports that acquiring more strength and muscle and being the strongest or biggest player on the team would lead to more approval from teammates and coaches. Interestingly, when the

participants discussed their desire to gain muscle and become stronger, they discussed wanting to do so for sports, and to perform better at the sports they participated in, rather than just to appear more masculine or manly.

Sports were contexts where acts of violent aggression were most commonly witnessed or experienced by the participants. They observed their teammates engage in fights and described times when they participated in fights with other players. The most popular sport mentioned during the interviews where fighting took place was hockey. Hockey was *[V]ery much a boy's sport, there was locker room talk and it was a very quote unquote masculine atmosphere...* (Derek) where fighting was seen as normal and at times even encouraged. According to the participants, fighting in hockey was a way to “let off steam” or resolve an ongoing conflict between players. Furthermore, some participants described how fighting was used to gain dominance or control over other players or to maintain status amongst the team. Anthony explained:

[M]ales, at a young age, who are playing hockey for example, want to be that number one, want to be that captain on the team who's the most aggressive for example or the most intimidating to others, and the rough housing, the trying to show their dominance to others, fighting in the dressing room or on the ice even, to maintain that stature, because if they feel they lose that stature, then they're less masculine right? They're losing that persona of it, or it might diminish.

In a similar response, Neil described the explicit purpose of players who use violence for the team: *[O]n a well-made hockey team, you're going to have a guy out there who's called an enforcer, and his job is to beat the piss out of the opposing team when they do something you don't agree with.*

While the research participants learned how sports can create opportunities to observe and use aggression and violence, some also discussed how they did not share this

desire to dominate others or engage in fights. Rather, they wanted to play sports to maintain fitness and because they enjoyed the sport. In a follow up to his response, Anthony explained:

I was never into the idea of working out when I was five or six years old every day, or going downstairs and practicing a certain sport for two or three hours until you get to the next level, or beating my friends to try to be the number one. I just never had that connection, you know? I enjoyed the sport because I enjoyed it, and to maintain health, right?

Some participants went on to discuss how they did not enjoy fighting in sports and did not strive to be the most aggressive player on the team. This was stated by Derek: *I wasn't the type to go and start fights.* Derek credited much of his learning about masculinity to hockey and described how fighting in hockey followed a “code of honor” where certain fights were viewed as honorable and acceptable in hockey.

[M]ost fights in hockey don't come out of nowhere, it's an understood, you know, you did something I don't like, I'm mad at you for that, and I guess when they decide to go at it, it's consensual in a very weird way, so in that respect, there's an honor to it, and at the end, they've blown off steam, good fight, good show, they go to the penalty box and serve their five minutes, typically that's the end of it, that they've blown off their steam, they've sorted out their frustrations and they play the rest of the game.

Derek connected these types of fights to being representative of a healthy or “positive” masculinity, where the fight served to defend a player’s honor and solve a problem with another player. However, Derek also described how certain fights in hockey are seen as being dishonorable.

And then the flip side to that is when it's more negative or toxic...when somebody insists that this is a frustration that we're going to solve by fighting... sometimes it boils over and that's when things such as kicking, when the guy's down, which is especially bad with skates on, or you know, slashing, high sticking, hitting somebody in the face, and there were a couple of guys I played with locally who were notorious for that, and they would get suspended time and time again, and really there was no

punishment for it, beyond just being violent or whatever, they were generally a danger to the other players and I guess to their credit, some of these guys really didn't care...just if they were mad at you, they were going to let you know, but the way they let you know, there was really no honor to it, it was just kind of an emotional lash out, and that was the bad side, where I guess you get that primal instinct, to hunt or whatever, I'm not sure what really comes over them.

Although fighting was common and encouraged in sports, especially hockey, the participants stated that they did not want to engage in fights. Yet they observed fighting to be an acceptable behavior associated with performing masculinity. Fighting was a way to exert dominance and strength over others and to maintain a status among men, and sports were an acceptable context for violence.

Violence

Many of the participants observed through sports that using violence to solve problems with other players would be met with approval from men and would help to gain status among their teammates. They did not experience similar reactions when they used violence at school. Schools (or education) are an institutional context that discourages the use of violence, and some participants described getting into trouble for fighting at school.

Consider the following example from Farid:

I've been in fights, when I was in middle school. So I was really big in my class, and so was [another] boy, so we had this, I don't know, internal conflict over who was the alpha male, I'm not saying this was conscious, we had more this unconscious thought of us as social animals, we might have had the thought of who's the alpha male? Or whatever, who's the strongest? And we had so many fights [over this], we were both strong, tall, like he bullied me, and I bullied him back sometimes, I guess. Yeah, and we fought, and remember that, but nobody justified that by saying "boys will be boys," I got punished for my actions.

Farid was reminded of these fights after watching the boy in the video get into a fight at school. Farid felt that he had to fight and bully the other boy in order to prove his strength and dominance at school. This finding suggests that some boys are exposed to patterns of gender interaction in which fighting is an appropriate behavior for boys and men.

Andrew also expressed that he shared a similar experience as the boy in the video and he shared how watching his parents fight and go through a divorce caused him to feel a lot of anger.

But like, those scenes [in the video] that stuck out to me, like I'm fairly certain at some point, that, happened, I witnessed my parents fighting, I wasn't abused, or hit, but I witnessed my parents fighting and they got divorced, and I carried a lot of that anger and frustration, and I didn't know what to do with it, so I went to school, and I remember like, and this is probably one of the things that most disappointed me about myself, but I knocked a kid to the pavement, and like hit him a bunch of times, and then I took his head and I started hitting his head against the pavement, and then someone stopped me, of course, and then they're like "Why did you do that?" and then I remember being stunned and sort of terrified, cause I have no idea why I just did that, like either I thought that was fun or I just was doing it, and I was like, in retrospect, I could have really hurt that kid, and like seriously injured him, and I had no idea what was going on.

After the fight, Andrew did not know why he hurt the other boy, and he assumes that it was because he thought it was fun. Some men and boys use violence to gain power and dominance in certain contexts, when they cannot feel powerful in others (Connell, 1993; Bell & Naugle, 2008; Kaufman, 1993; Giordano et al., 2016). This desire to dominate others and feel powerful aligns with ideals associated with hegemonic masculinity, but the decision to use violence to show power over a kid involves additional factors. In Andrew's case, a peer stepped in to stop the violence, showing that it was not peer pressure but rather an internal factor such as stress that Andrew responded to.

Andrew expressed that he felt terrified, and disappointed in himself for hurting another boy. While his violence may have provided temporary physical relief from his embodied feelings of frustration with his parents, it stirred up more difficult emotions. Men may not want to use violence, however they have been exposed to fighting as way to perform masculinity. The use of violence provided feelings of physical power, and violence was used to gain status at school or among peers. The participants did not want to use violence to cause harm, however, they understood that violent behaviors would be rewarded by other men.

The participants described getting into fights at school with other boys, however, they also described getting into trouble or being punished for using violence. This suggests that while men observed through patterns of gender interaction that they must be aggressive and they can solve problems with violence, they learned in school contexts that aggressive behaviors would not always be met with approval from people in positions of power.

Experiencing negative consequences for using violence was perceived as a dissimilarity between the participants in the study and the boy in the video. While some of the participants described getting into fights with other boys as the most noticeable similarity between themselves and the boy in the video, they described that they did not have these behaviors reinforced by others or by other men. Many of the participants in the study were quick to identify that the boy's violent behaviors were being reinforced by his father, who was violent. This idea was described by Greg:

I would say [the scene that stood out to me the most] it's after the kid has a fight at school, and they're in the principal's office. In this scene the father is just like "I don't understand what's going on" and that's just interesting, you can understand where this is coming from, it's clearly from home, and you can definitely see that, and that's a red flag to me.

Johnathan responded that the scene with the parents fighting while the boy listens from the next room stood out to him the most. He describes how the boy using violence against another boy at school is connected to him observing his parents fight and use violence.

I thought it was interesting that it wasn't just that he saw it, then obviously he had to go hit a kid, he saw that that was a solution to being upset by something, 'cause he didn't just hit a kid that was a random kid on the playground, he went and hit the kid that knocked over his science project. So, he didn't just observe the fact that hitting is good, he observed the fact that hitting is a solution, and that it's a solution that works for boys, and then he was rewarded for that, in the next scene where the boy's father is with the principal and him, they're talking about the fight, he was immediately rewarded by his father affirming his actions, I guess, I thought that was striking.

In his response, Johnathan recognized that the boy observed violence as a solution to problems after seeing his father use violence against his mother. Many of the participants also referenced the scene with the boy and his father in the principal's office. The participants recognized there is a conflict between what the boy learned at home, and what he learned from being punished at school. The video showed how violence was acceptable in one institutional context (the family) and unacceptable in another (school).

Social contexts influence hegemonic masculinity, and the participants observed different ideas or behaviors associated with masculinity from interactions in different contexts and got conflicting messages about violence. The participants observed how in sports, violence would be encouraged and even rewarded, while in school they were discouraged from using violence and punished for their behavior.

IPV

The final theme from the analysis is IPV. The theme of IPV was defined in the analysis as the participant's understanding of violence in intimate relationships, what they learned about IPV, and their awareness of IPV. The theme includes analysis of the participant's individual choices to use or not use IPV. This theme includes three subthemes: perceptions of IPV, learning about IPV, and responding to IPV.

Perceptions of IPV

The discussion on IPV began with asking the research participants to describe what comes to mind for them when they hear the term IPV. Immediately, many of the participants responded by listing various types of IPV, with the most frequently mentioned type being physical, specifically hitting or punching. While most of the participants only described physical violence in their responses, some participants identified other types of IPV, including verbal abuse, sexual violence (rape or sexual assault), and harassment. Consider the following response from Kevin:

I think, the first thing that comes to mind obviously is hitting, violence, physical violence against a partner, and like, I think over the years, I've come to include like the other forms of violence, emotional, mental, social abuse, but the first thing that comes to mind is really physical violence between two partners and the toxicity of it, yeah, I think that's the first thing that comes to mind.

While some of the participants were familiar with the various types of IPV and recognize that IPV can take multiple forms, physical violence (someone physically hurting their partner), was the most common or familiar idea of IPV. This was also shown in the brief response given by Johnathan: *[I think of a] person hitting their partner, I guess I also immediately think of sexual assault.*

When discussing IPV, some of the participants referenced different types of relationships in their responses. They recognized that IPV can occur between partners who are married or dating and between same-sex couples. Some of the participants recognized that in situations of IPV, the man can use violence against the woman or the woman can use violence against the man. Mike described how he felt IPV can be “gender neutral,” and stated: *[I]t could go either way, in terms of you know, the male perpetrator or the female perpetrator, it can definitely go either way.* Similarly, Andrew responded:

I’ve learned a bit more about how some of the interactions, how often times, you know, most of the time it’s men abusing women, but, you know, a lot of the time it goes the other way, and there’s differences and same-sex couples as well, and obviously in those cases, IPV can look different than sort of the traditional drunk man beats his wife.

Through taking courses in university on IPV, Andrew learned that IPV can occur in all types of relationships and how IPV can look different in different situations with different individuals. Yet he does not acknowledge that women are more likely than men to be the victims of IPV and that the consequences of IPV are more severe for women than for men (Cotter, 2021).

While some of the participants identified that men and women can use violence in a relationship, some of the responses from the participants showed that when they think about the term IPV, their initial idea is of a man using violence against a woman, or of violence occurring in a heterosexual relationship. This finding highlights that IPV is linked to patterns of gender interaction and connects to feminist theory and related assertions that men use IPV to maintain power and control over the woman (Ali & Naylor, 2013; Bell & Naugle, 2008; Giordano et al., 2016).

One of the participants discussed how he realized IPV can occur in families after watching the parents and the boy in the video. This realization was expressed in a response from William: *I was expecting, I guess, because it was intimate partner violence for the study, that it was going to be a bit more between a guy and his girlfriend, but I wasn't expecting that it was like family-related...* William's response shows that he learned that IPV between parents can have an impact on their children.

Learning about IPV

Participants in the study described learning about IPV from formal sources such as public education, university, service providers and informal sources including family and friends. Some of the participants had not learned about IPV during their education or from informal sources.

Formal learning

When the participants responded that they had learned about IPV during their formal education, many described learning about IPV early on in their education, for example in health class or sexual education during elementary or middle school. For other participants, they did not learn about IPV until high school or university. In addition, some participants responded that they learned about IPV as part of a lesson on other topics around personal or physical health, such as drugs and alcohol, maintaining healthy relationships and personal safety. Neil described learning about IPV in relation to substance abuse and how the police were involved in these lessons.

[T]he police started coming, late elementary school, they started coming around grade 7 or 8, to talk about stuff like this, I think it was kind of tied in with D.A.R.E., drugs and stuff, I think that was when they started talking about stuff like that, you know drugs are bad, alcohol is bad, don't do this

stuff and also, like there's issues with, you know you can't go beat up people at home and here are some resources kind of thing, but it wasn't, as people in elementary school, we didn't give a shit, it was high school where we kind of like "Oh, this is some serious stuff, ah ok, we'll listen up."

Neil did not feel that he took the lessons about drugs, alcohol and violence as seriously as he did when he learned about them again in high school. His personal relationships were not intimate until he was a young adult. Children exposed to IPV in their homes are likely to experience difficulties responding to and expressing emotions (Brendgen et al., 2002, Sabina & Ho, 2014). Suppressing emotions can lead to using violence or substances to cope (Harris, 2009; Hong, 2000). Children have difficulties relating to substance abuse and criminal violence, but they are able to relate to experiencing difficulties expressing emotional pain. This was reflected in the responses from the men, as is shown in Neil's response. Although Neil experienced difficulties relating to these topics as a child, he was still able to describe his emotions and reactions to these lessons.

I think it just becomes more real, you're more mature, you know, you're not teaching elementary kids about all these crazy, violent things, and these ideas that they can't actually get their heads around, you know you're not teaching people in grade 8 like bio-chem because, I think it's just something they're not ready for yet, they don't have the foundation, once you get into high school, and there's more people around you, people are more mature, there's more consequences for your actions, you're more part of your community, in high school you're going out for lunch with your friends, you're going shopping, these are the friends you're going to spend the rest of your life with in some cases, you're just more mature, I think that's why, you understand more what a relationship actually is.

Neil perceived the lessons as developmentally inappropriate because he may not have had any life experiences that exposed him to violence. However, young children are exposed to IPV and other forms of violence and would be able to relate to this content based on their experiences.

Henry described how he remembered learning about IPV during a leadership course in high school, but the topic was only discussed at a broad level.

I feel like it might have been discussed at some level in a high school course, umm, I forget what the course was called, umm, I think it might have been a leadership course, or something, but it was just discussing [it] at a very broad level, how to have like good relationships, but yeah, I don't think this is something that is front page news for a lot of men and boys...

Henry and Neil's responses suggest that while IPV was included in different courses or lessons on healthy relationships and personal health and safety, it was only discussed at a broad level and they did not have meaningful conversations specifically on IPV during their public school education.

Some of the participants discussed learning about IPV while taking courses centered on IPV during university. The participants described learning about IPV while taking courses in psychology, sociology, criminology or political science and described how these courses gave them a better and deeper understanding of IPV. Brian described how taking a course on IPV during his final year of university showed him that IPV can take many different forms:

We talked about coercive control, like being very controlling and like micromanaging, things like that, so it kind of ties in. I guess I kind of knew about some of the concepts but I never really attributed them to like intimate partner relationships until this course. I would only attribute physical violence, not like a lot of the psychological damage. I also think that kind of stems from like me being somebody that isn't in a lot of relationships, I don't experience a lot you know in terms of intimate partner relationships so I've never seen firsthand how things can go wrong so this course kind of opened up my eyes to that, it taught me a lot.

Brian's comment suggests that being exposed to different patterns of gender interaction in intimate relationships will impact an individual's understanding and awareness of IPV.

However, learning about IPV in university helped expand his understanding of IPV beyond physical violence.

Kevin described how he only became familiar with the topic once he took a course where IPV was the main focus:

I think it was my first year [of university], first or second year, and I had a class...and that was a big topic in the class, I think that was kind of the first time I was exposed to it,...and then I think that was the first time, in an education setting, and other than that it would have been on my own terms, using the internet or reading different books, different articles, but in school I maybe learned about it in one or two classes, I would rarely hear about it in other contexts than ones dedicated to it specifically, I would never hear about it in other classes, that discussed this or used it as an example, or talked about it openly, I usually heard about it when that was kind of the subject of the class...I did hear about it in other courses, where it's something like, I don't know, sometimes you would hear it for example, during World War II, or in different classes, or contexts, it would be referenced or talked about, but it was only touched on or mentioned in other kinds of contexts...

When the participants took a course where IPV was the main focus, they became more familiar with the different types of IPV and also the complexities or potential difficulties surrounding IPV. The participants in the study who took a course specifically focused on IPV also responded with the most familiarity with the term, the different types of violence and also the common terminology used in research (i.e. coercive control).

Some of the participants felt they had not learned about IPV in university because they were in a different field where courses on IPV are not available to them. One of the participants who described this reason was Greg: *I've never been approached and told, like, "Hey, you need to watch this video or attend this session on IPV for your education."* Another participant who responded that he had not learned about IPV during his education was Mike: *[N]ope. Just 'cause I'm in Engineering, so I haven't even heard the acronym*

until [now].... Mike's example also shows how gendered patterns of interaction exist within education. Men are more likely to study math and sciences, whereas there are more women studying the social sciences, arts or humanities (Steele et al., 2002). In addition, it is possible that IPV is not incorporated into courses not specifically focused on the topic because it is not perceived as being related to other topics. IPV may also be excluded from courses because it is perceived as a sensitive or controversial topic.

I asked Mike to share why he chose to participate and he responded:

[I]t's a topic that I was curious about, I just wanted to know what the kind of current day research studies are like, on it, just cause I don't really know much about it, so it was just kind of a leap of faith more than anything. I find myself wanting to reach out more, into like the social sciences, now that I've done a lot of technical kind of math and stuff. It makes me want to branch out and kind of get into the social problems and social, you know, the talking points of today and kind of what goes on, and this just kind of piqued my interest.

Mike saw the study as an opportunity to learn more about a topic he was unfamiliar with and is evidence that there is interest among men to learn more about IPV.

Informal learning

For two of the participants in the study, Eric and Derek, IPV was a personal topic because they had witnessed IPV between their parents.

When Eric was younger, his father abused his mother.

[D]efinitely my mom, growing up we were in a pretty bad situation, with my father, and got out of that situation, thankfully, like my mom is definitely someone I know whose had an experience of IPV, in terms of my definition, it wasn't as much physical abuse, initially, it was like more harassment, stalking, that kind of stuff.

Witnessing abuse influenced Eric's understanding of IPV, which he described as a man using physical violence against a woman, because of his family situation. Furthermore,

Eric is familiar with stalking and harassment as types of IPV, from experiencing these types of abuse. While Neil may not have had a frame of reference for education about violence, Eric had personal experience and he interpreted lessons or conversations about violence differently.

Eric went on to describe how growing up in a situation with IPV impacted how he perceived relationships.

[A]nd I think just seeing that, had a big impact on me, seeing like how there could be violence in a relationship, and how much of a lasting impact it has on people, and like still has on people, and like my father still harasses my mom and I, which is quite difficult sometimes, and I think like, just seeing that, opens my eyes to how people can be different in society than they are in a relationship, and I just think it showed me how this kind of toxic masculinity, it's just like they try to enclose this side of being more violent...

Many of the participants wanted to avoid actions that cause harm. Eric is one of the few participants in the study who did not describe his father as someone he learned masculinity from, rather, Eric does not want to treat people he cares about the way his father treated him and his mother.

I'm just thinking about growing up, and our situation, always having to be conscious of my father, he might like come around and do something, kind of taught me a lot about like, when I get older, I don't want to treat someone the same way he's treating me and my mom, it kind of opened my eyes to that, like I'm definitely not going to be like that, and it just taught me how much of an impact it could have on my mom and I. But I don't think we had like this is IPV, and here's [what it looks like], like a formal definition of it and everything, but seeing her experience and seeing her have to go to court and her and I used to go to counselling sessions together, because of the trauma my father put on us, just like going through that whole experience, we went to a psychologist, just because of the impact my father had on both of us, and just having those conversations really showed me, like helped me see like how I didn't want to be like my father, and the impact that can have on people...and it made me realize that I don't want to be like that.

Professional conversations with a psychologist provided Eric with opportunities to make sense of his experiences and learn about IPV from a formal source. Eric was able to identify his experiences as IPV from attending counseling sessions and these sessions offered him strategies to not become like his father.

Another participant who had a personal experience with IPV was Derek. When asked if he knew anyone who experienced IPV, he quickly responded:

Oh, boy, do I. [T]hat's part of the household I grew up with, um, and that's just the reality, it was a daily thing, not so much with my brother and I, but you know, more than once I've seen my parents get rough with each other, and I don't know how much substances were involved in any of that, that's one of the things we talked about, and we've moved past that, we've grown since then, and we've talked about it since then, that's just how reality is, and I've talked about it with my mom and according to her, that's one of the things that she grew up with, was her parents would get rough and they would fight and sometimes, they would get a little rambunctious shall we say. I haven't had any of my friends explicitly tell me that their parents have been violent or that they've you know... err, actually, I think I've had one of my friends be in a not so great relationship, to put it that way, but I've had several, just in my circles, I don't know, just the way they've explained about some of their home life, it's a topic where I wouldn't be surprised if they've had to deal with it...[S]o, it's really across the board for me, but to answer the question broadly, oh, yeah, I know many friends and family, they've had to deal with it, and I guess I've had to deal with it myself.

Derek witnessed his parents fight and be physically aggressive with each other and noted that in certain incidences substances may have been involved. He felt that many of his friends may have also had experiences with IPV at home.

Derek was told by his parents to deal with it, and the fighting was “just how reality is.” Growing up, Derek learned from his parents that fighting is normal and it occurred regularly in his home. Derek noticed that the boy in the video was impacted by the parents

fighting and discussed how he felt his being told to toughen up and deal with the fighting was similar to seeing the boy being told by his parents not to cry and to be brave.

I guess the sequence that kind of stuck out to me the most was the entire interaction between you know, be brave, boys don't cry, [his] parents are sitting down [and] talking to him about [how] boys don't cry, and then they cut to the next scene and it shows them really going at it in the kitchen while he's in the next room losing his mind, and the reason that sticks out to me, that was a very common thing, basically that entire sequence was a very common thing for me growing up, like some people call that the one thing that tore the family apart, to me that was Tuesday, and to that end, don't get me wrong, there's a lot my parents did to help me, there's a lot that they were very supportive about, but one of the things that we've gone back to talk about since then was some of the toxicity in the house when I was growing up, and that approach that they had was kind of how we dealt with it, and not necessarily man up, they weren't very gendered about it, but it was just kind of toughen up, this is the real world, this is how adults work, don't like it? Deal with it. Tough shit. Um, or grow up was the other one I heard sometimes when I felt at my absolute breaking point, it wasn't "hey, what's wrong?" It was "grow up, deal with it." So it's almost there's more human reactions or emotions of this isn't ok, it's not ok, and I don't feel ok about this, they really do get pushed out of you, for me it was trying to tell my parents stop fighting, be that I'm trying to study or I'm tired of hearing you guys cuss at each other, you know, it was just deal with it, and I'm very fortunate that in recent years especially it's gotten better, they've been much more understanding of my issues with that, but as a kid it was just you know, grow up, like you know, this is life. That's one that I felt more of a personal connection to, that's one that I guess stuck with me a little bit more, compared to others, because that's one that I've lived through.

Derek's responses are noteworthy in that he chose to identify his parents fighting as a personal experience of IPV, and when he identified the impact their actions had on him, they told him to "deal with it". He experienced difficulties describing these situations as IPV, as is shown in his response when he did not use the term explicitly, but rather described his parents as "getting rough." Derek experienced difficulties identifying these

situations as IPV because his family was not always violent, and because he also had a good relationship with his parents.

Eric and Derek's examples can be recognized as sensitizing experiences to IPV. Their firsthand experiences sensitized them to the negative consequences of IPV. Eric and Derek's personal experiences also serve as evidence for IPV's impact on children. IPV is a pattern of gender interaction yet their responses show how it is not inevitable for someone who was exposed to violence to become violent, and boys who are exposed to violence in the home can later choose not to be violent themselves. Eric and Derek described not wanting to use violence or be like the people who caused them harm.

Responding to IPV

Most of the participants in the present study did not have a personal experience of IPV and did not know anyone who had experienced IPV. However, when asked to discuss ways that men could help or support women or victims of IPV, there was a variety of responses and ideas around how men can provide help or support.

Ideas given by the participants for providing support included talking to the victim and listening to and believing them if they disclosed violence. Some suggested that listening and believing were the first and most important steps for providing support. It was noted that if the victim feels they will be believed, they will be more comfortable and willing to open up about their experiences. Others suggested that the first, and possibly simplest way men can help women or victims is to not use violence themselves.

Some of the participants also suggested that one of the ways men can help women is by holding other men accountable for their harmful behaviors or attitudes towards women. Consider the following quote from Brian:

I think it kind of goes to like “boys will be boys,” and a lot of people are criticizing that and you should like teach boys how to be respectful, so I want to say that men can definitely hold each other accountable, to help support women and victims, cause if they hold each other accountable there would be less [violence] right? That’s what I want to think..., if you can hold each other accountable you can prevent things from happening...

Discussions around holding men accountable for using or condoning violence also included having conversations with other men. In his response, Henry listed some ways to provide support to the individual before suggesting that men need to have conversations on IPV with men.

[H]aving real people that you know discuss their experiences of IPV and trust is definitely important too, [and] letting that person know that they want to be heard, and then I guess just listening to them and letting them know that they’re not alone. But just in terms of how to practically go about it, and reporting these people, and aside from just listening to women or victims, um, would probably be having conversations, meaningful conversations in masculine social circles, and trying to figure this out, you know what I mean? Like I think that’s where the greatest change would be reflected...

Henry’s response is similar to Brian’s as both participants expressed that it is important to provide immediate support to individual victims and to prevent IPV through conversations with other men before it occurs.

Greg’s response included references to both calling out other men who support violence and holding them accountable as well as having conversations with men. Interestingly, Greg suggested that men calling out other men for using or condoning violence could lead to conversations around IPV and more education on IPV.

[O]ther men can be more vigilant, with other men, like make sure they call out this kind of bad behavior or if they're being discriminatory towards women, or saying stuff, like "Aw, man, smack that bitch," or something like that, and that's when you need to be like, "Hey, that's not cool, and you shouldn't talk like that." I think more men need to do that, and then maybe it wouldn't happen as much, and then it could prompt a conversation, like "Hey, why can't you say that?" And then maybe someone could be educated and could think "Oh, I'm somebody who used to say that," and they could understand the impression they were giving off. Yeah, so I guess the two things I can think of are listening to women and victims and you can also help stop it by calling out that behavior when you see it. Which is also a very tough thing to do, I know, it's not really IPV, but I have some friends, or maybe they're not really my friends now, but there's this one guy I knew, he would always kind of dismiss or put down one of my female friends, like I noticed it but I was too hesitant to say anything, and later I would talk to that female friend and I would say, "hey, was Matt being mean? Or did I misread that?" And I thought it was mean, and I think I actually should have said something. And yeah, it's a hard thing to do to start a conversation, but I think it needs to be done, and yeah, I've learned from that, I know now to at least try. And men should be taught to stand up and say something when you see that behavior, like that's not cool. That's needs to become the norm.

Greg's response suggests that he is making a connection between gender inequality and IPV and that men could learn from conversations that their sexist behaviors are harmful. He recognizes the difficulty in starting conversations, but that they are necessary and he would "at least try" suggests that he learned from this experience. Although some of the participants referenced calling out other men and holding them accountable for using violence as a way to prevent IPV and help women or victims, Johnathan found difficulties with this and described how men calling out other men is not something that he experiences.

Something that I think is really important is, but I'm trying to work on myself, I think is more difficult than just believing and trying to care for someone whose been a victim, is trying to call out your friends for doing stuff that supports violence, or this idea of toxic masculinity. I think that's

really difficult because, I'm scared of being the downer of the group, being somebody who bucks the trend, and then being bucked from the group, and my experience isn't that people call out others for engaging in behaviors that support violence and misogyny, so I guess that's something that everyone, myself included, needs to work on, is calling out others, even when it's not an immediate situation that your trying to stop, it's just like those small things that people think they can say or do, like "boys will be boys."

Johnathan is afraid of the possible consequences of calling out his friends, namely being shunned or excluded from the group. Johnathan shared a personal example of one of his male peers, and how he feels conflict in his relationship with this male friend who used (or is using) behavior he feels is harmful or inappropriate.

One of my oldest friends, I know exactly what I need to talk to him about, but I feel like, I think, logically, if I did bring it up, he would immediately apologize, and realize it was wrong, but um, it's just so hard to even bring up the idea, cause what if it goes wrong and he stands by those beliefs? And then I don't have a friend anymore... but at this point, it's making me feel nervous to even see him, so I might be losing him as a friend anyway, I don't know...I think there's definitely conflict in that situation, at first there's the self-conflict of being friends with someone you know engages in these activities, and what that says about you, I mean that's what I'm in now, but you know, then I'm scared of the bigger conflict, the interpersonal conflict, that may occur, if I actually bring it up.

By not saying anything to his friend, Johnathan is supporting the harmful behavior, yet by saying something critical, he risks losing his friend. Johnathan described these feelings as self-conflict in relation to being upset by being friends with someone who uses violence, but also not wanting to lose a friend.

For many of the participants in the study, difficulties discussing ways to support victims of IPV are an indication of a lack of collective responses to the widespread problem of the use of IPV by men to gain power and control over women. None of the participants described being members of an anti-male violence movement or group.

The participants in the study provided an extensive and diverse range of responses on their thoughts and definition of masculinity, which provided evidence that masculinity is a complex and fluid construct and that men have different ideas of what is to be a man. The participants also recognized that there are both helpful and harmful ideas and behaviors associated with masculinity. They used the term “toxic masculinity” to refer to the harmful ideas or behaviors associated with masculinity (Waling, 2019). When describing their ideas of masculinity, some participants also referred to the video to contrast between helpful and harmful ideas or behaviors, as they felt that the video portrayed harmful ideas of masculinity. The helpful ideas or behaviors of masculinity described by the participants included: being a role model and leader, caring for and protecting others and having confidence. Many of the participants referenced stereotypes when describing harmful ideas or behaviors of masculinity. These stereotypes included physical attributes such as having large muscles or a beard, being aggressive or violent, and being the provider in the family.

Some of the participants described not thinking about their masculinity. These participants are unaware of how male privilege impacts their ideas of masculinity. Examples of privilege identified in the data included being white (for most participants), being heterosexual, playing sports, and having access to higher education and employment. The participants in the study who possessed these privileges are able to perform hegemonic masculinity because of their position within structures of class, race and sexuality.

Ideas and behaviors associated with masculinity are dynamic, and the participants recognized that they can adopt or drop certain ideas or behaviors. However, none of them rejected normative gender ideals. The participants experienced individual changes in their perception of masculinity at different stages of their lives. For many of the participants, a

change in perception occurred during university. The participants were exposed to new ideas of masculinity from being in a new social context and university/higher education encouraged them to engage in critical thinking. Critical thinking allowed the participants to think differently about masculinity. Working in a new social context with women changed one participant's binary perceptions of gender and his ideas of masculinity and femininity.

In contrast to masculinity, the participants expressed difficulties and discomfort when discussing their ideas of femininity. Some of the participants were unaware of the relationship between masculinity and femininity. Other participants suggested that masculinity and femininity are similar and the helpful ideas they used to describe masculinity can also describe femininity. The participants observing similarities or overlap between masculinity and femininity provide an example of how hegemonic masculinity has been challenged.

The participants observed a relationship between masculinity and femininity in the home, from gendered interactions between their mother and father, and from interactions with their partners in intimate relationships. They observed stereotypes associated with masculinity and femininity from these interactions and a gender hierarchy between men and women. One participant observed a different pattern of gender interaction where a single mother was the leader in the home.

The participants experienced pressures or expectations to behave in ways that align with hegemonic masculinity. Many of these pressures came from their male peers. The participants described feeling pressured to not be seen as weak or unmanly, and they

engaged in behaviors, such as using violence and having sex with women, in order to gain approval from other men.

The participants learned and observed masculinity from patterns of gendered interaction in different social contexts from different individuals, including fathers, coaches, professors, mothers, and intimate women partners. The participants observed masculinity from the media, and from everywhere or everyone around them. Some of them engaged in critical thinking to decide if the behaviors they observed are aligned with the desired ideas of masculinity.

The two institutional contexts identified as influencing the participant's understanding of embodied masculinity and violence were education and sports. They learned that performing honorable violence is encouraged and rewarded in sports, but some violence is discouraged and punished at school. In addition, the participants learned that they cannot show or talk about certain emotions in certain social contexts, specifically in contexts with other men.

Finally, findings for the theme of IPV showed that the participants were more familiar with the term when they had learned about IPV from personal experiences or during their formal education. However, learning about IPV through education does not necessarily mean that men are less likely to commit IPV. Participants who identified experiencing IPV in their homes made conscious choices not to use IPV, and their responses show it is not inevitable that children who are exposed to violence will become violent.

Most of the participants in the study did not have a personal experience of IPV and did not know anyone close to them who had experienced IPV. As such, they expressed

difficulties when asked to discuss ways to help or support women or victims of IPV. Some of the participants suggested that in order to help women and victims and create meaningful change, men need to hold other men accountable for their harmful attitudes about women and their violent against them.

The participants constructed ideas of masculinity that do not involve violence. Rather, they constructed masculinities they perceived as being representative of a more helpful or healthy masculinity, one that they learned and observed from patterns of gender interaction and that encompasses ideas of masculinity they want to embody and incorporate into their lives.

Chapter 7: Discussion

This chapter includes a discussion of the main findings of the study in relation to research literature and theorizing on hegemonic masculinity. The findings are organized into five areas: the participants' understanding of masculinity, their understanding of femininity and evidence for emphasized femininity, the influence of social contexts on their masculinity, pressure to perform masculinity, and sensitizing experiences of IPV. These five areas are discussed in relation to the theory and the literature.

The participants understood that expressions of masculinity can include both helpful and harmful ideas and behaviors. Helpful ideas and behaviors associated with masculinity included being a leader and role model for others and having confidence. Harmful ideas and behaviors included physical attributes, such as being strong and having big muscles, being aggressive, and using violence to hurt and control others. Some of the participants felt that the video portrayed harmful ideas of masculinity. This finding contrasts with Connell and Messerschmidt's (2005) and Messerschmidt's (2019) definition of hegemonic masculinity as being an unequal gender relationship, rather than a specific set of behaviors or traits. The participants were not able to identify that masculinity is a pattern of practices, rather than just characteristics or behaviors of the individual. However, the participants recognizing that masculinity does not just include behaviors or ideas they perceived as stereotypes aligns with the literature that suggests masculinities do not need to include these ideas to become hegemonic.

The participants avoided expressions of masculinity that reflected stereotypes, such as being tough and aggressive, or having big muscles or a beard. In addition, using violence to be perceived as masculine was identified as being a stereotype of masculinity. Some

participants recognized a connection between violence and the need to have power and control over others. This finding aligns with Connell and Messerschmidt's (2005) argument that in the hierarchy of masculinities, some masculinities ensure male power and authority within institutions. However, "the hierarchy of masculinities is a pattern of hegemony, not a pattern of simple domination based on force" or violence (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 846-848).

Some participants did not think about masculinity. These men have not experienced any resistance to their performance of masculinity or the privilege that comes with being male. Examples of privilege included being heterosexual, being white (for some participants), having access to higher education and employment and being able to play sports. These privileges are because of the men's position within the structures of class, race, and sexual relations. This aligns with Messerschmidt's (2005) argument that men's positions within structures of class, race and sexual relations impact their ability to perform hegemonic masculinity. The participants who possess these privileges are able to occupy a dominant position within these structures and they are largely unaware of or have not reflected on their privileges.

While the participants recognized stereotypes of masculinity, they did not engage in challenging these stereotypes. None of the participants were involved in an anti-violence initiative or movement that challenges hegemonic masculinity. According to Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) men who perform complicit masculinity receive the benefits of patriarchy and being male. The participants did not engage in harmful masculine behaviors however, they still experience benefits or privileges because they are men and thus perform complicit masculinities. One participant worked in childcare, a profession dominated by

women. This job gave him the opportunity to recognize that gender is a fluid social construct and can be expressed in ways beyond the masculine and feminine binary. He changed his ideas of gender from this workplace experience in which women exercised leadership and caring behaviors were valued. This example shows evidence of hegemonic masculinity being challenged and is an example of hybrid masculinity. Bridges and Pascoe (2018) identified hybrid masculinities as behaviors and attitudes that incorporate characteristics of marginalized masculinities and femininity.

The participant was working in a caring profession that is more associated with women and he worked with women leaders. He experienced leadership as a feminine behavior. The participant changed his ideas of masculinity from this experience and was able to incorporate behaviors that are associated with femininity into his ideas of masculinity and behaviors as a man. This finding aligns with Connell and Messerschmidt's (2005) argument that women's practices will influence how men construct gender and hegemonic masculinity. The men were more familiar and comfortable discussing masculinity than femininity. Some participants did not want to talk about femininity because they believed it does not involve them as men even though they had relationships with women. Hegemonic masculinity is relational and influences how men construct femininity (Connell 1995). Some participants were unaware of this relationship and how emphasized femininity influences their ideas of masculinity.

The participants observed the relationship between masculinity and femininity from gendered interactions between their parents in their homes. For example, one participant observed that his father does not do certain tasks in the home because they were the responsibilities of the woman. Other participants experienced difficulties in intimate

relationships that were influenced by hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity. They were expected to be the provider or the “strong one” in the relationship and this created conflicting expectations for how power was shared in the relationship. This finding aligns with Connell’s (1987) work, and how men need to hold positions of power over women in different institutional contexts. The participants observed stereotypes associated with masculinity and femininity from these interactions and a gender hierarchy between men and women. As discussed above, the findings show that women’s practices can influence ideas of masculinity. The participants experiencing difficulties in intimate relationships also shows how women challenge hegemonic masculinity in intimate relationships. These findings align with Connell and Messerschmidt’s (2005) argument that women and men in subordinate groups can challenge hegemonic masculinity.

The participants recognized differences in how emotions are expressed and perceived between men and women. They felt more comfortable showing or talking about their emotions with a woman rather than with another man. This is similar to findings from McQueen’s (2017) study, in which young men identified that they wanted to be more emotionally open but felt they could only share their feelings with women, such as their intimate partners. Furthermore, Marasco (2018) found in their study that men associated emotional expression with femininity and emotional restriction with masculinity. The men would hide or suppress certain emotions around their male peers or other men, and they were afraid of being labelled feminine if they were too emotional. Similarly, the participants in this study identified being emotional as a characteristic of femininity and they discussed not being able to show or discuss their emotions around other men or their peers. Hiding or suppressing emotions is recognized as a currently accepted way of being

a man. Marasco (2018) identified emotional restriction as one of the main behaviors associated with hegemonic masculinity.

The participants observed and experienced patterns of gendered interaction in their families or with other men, such as peers, coaches and professors, and with women, such as girlfriends or mothers, that influenced their ideas of masculinity. Two participants were exposed to violent patterns of gendered interaction in the home, which later influenced their decisions to not use violence as adults. Brendgen et al. (2002) and Sabina and Ho (2014) found that children's exposure to violence in the home or in other social contexts, such as peer groups, influenced their decisions to use violence as adults. The "Boys Don't Cry" video was effective in prompting conversations about how violence is observed and learned from different gendered interactions. The participants were reminded of different personal influences on their ideas of masculinity from watching the video. Participants who had not experienced violence firsthand described interactions with men who used (or condoned) violence against women. They identified that they did not want to be like them. They also experienced similar interactions like the boy in the video, such as being told not to cry.

The participants were aware that violence is a learned behavior. Research on IPV shows that violence is learned and reinforced when children observe the behaviors of their parents or other family members (Dardis et al., 2015; Ali & Naylor, 2013). The men also made the connection between observing violence in the home and using violence against others at school, as shown in the video.

Researchers found that men and boys learn about masculinity from observing patterns of gendered interactions in different social contexts (Brendgen et al., 2002;

Giordano et al., 2006). The social context most frequently referenced by the participants was sports. Many of the participants played and watched hockey. Some described how hockey taught them the harmful behaviors associated with masculinity, such as strength, competitiveness and aggression. In her research on Canadian male hockey players, Allain (2008, p. 463) describes hockey as “hegemonically masculine” and as a “training ground” for masculinity. Allain (2021, p. 3) argues when boys and young men play hockey, they learn the rules of hockey or “hockey culture,” which dictates how hockey games are played and how rivalries and conflicts are solved. Some of the participants described hockey culture and its code of honor. The culture taught them that certain types of violence are acceptable and honorable and fights that do not follow the code are dishonorable.

Some of the participants played hockey (and other sports) to make friends and to maintain their physical health. Literature on sports shows that when men choose not to use violence, they experience negative consequences and are often ridiculed by their teammates or coaches for being weak (Allain, 2008, 2021; Messner, 2007). Interestingly, some participants identified that they did not want to be the most aggressive player on the team, they did not reference any negative reactions from other players or coaches. None of the men went on to play hockey at the university or elite levels. Allain (2008; 2021) found when male hockey players do not use violence, they do not receive as many opportunities as their more aggressive teammates to play at the professional level.

Another social context that influenced the participants’ ideas of masculinity and violence was education. Some participants got into fights with other boys at school. They used violence at school to be seen as tough or strong. This is similar to the findings from Dalley-Trim’s (2007) research with adolescent boys who used certain bodily practices such

as fighting in order to perform hegemonic masculinity at school. When the boys got into fights at school or in the classroom, they occupied a dominant position within the classroom. In a similar study by Renold (2010), playing sports, not caring about grades and getting into fights in the classroom were associated with being “cool” and masculine.

The men’s experiences in sports and education showed them that violence can be used to perform masculinity and obtain dominance over others. This aligns with Messerschmidt’s (2005) research with violent and non-violent boys in school. Masculinity is embodied and some men use physical violence strategically to gain power over others. Interestingly, the participants described differences in how their violence was received in these two institutional contexts. Violence was encouraged and rewarded in sports, however at school sometimes they were punished for their violent behavior. Some participants learned different ideas of masculinity in university, and these ideas challenged what they had previously learned or observed.

The education context provided some of the men with opportunities for sensitizing experiences to IPV, either through learning about IPV in a course or through using violence at school and experiencing negative consequences. However, not all participants had these experiences, or if they did have an experience of violence, they reported that they did not have opportunities to reflect on the experience, what they learned, and how they felt about it. The educational context has been recognized as a violent environment for men and boys (Dalley-Trim, 2007; Renold, 2010; Wagner, 2015).

The participants described situations where they felt pressured to behave in ways that aligned with harmful ideas or behaviors associated with hegemonic masculinity, including doing tasks that require physical strength, taking leadership to solve problems,

and avoiding behaviors in intimate relationships or among their peers. This finding aligns closely with Hong's (2000) and Harris's (2009) studies that found that men feel pressured to perform harmful behaviors associated with hegemonic masculinity when around other men or their peers. Most often the men felt pressured to behave in certain ways to avoid being called weak or a "wimp" by other men.

Findings from this study show that the participants were more familiar with IPV when they had learned about IPV from personal experiences or during their formal education. Most of the participants learned about IPV from courses focused on IPV or personal health and safety, yet some had not heard the term until participating in the study. Two participants learned about IPV from personal experiences. In their study on men's reasons for involvement in anti-violence initiatives, Casey and Smith (2010) found personal experiences, such as witnessing violence as a child or listening to a female friend or family member disclose their experiences, sensitized the men to the issue of IPV. Having a personal experience of IPV taught two men that using IPV leads to negative consequences. These participants had been exposed to IPV in their homes and were able to learn from this sensitizing experience and chose not to use IPV. One of the research participants who experienced IPV went to therapy. Therapy is a form of education and can help individual men learn not to use violence (Augusta-Scott, 2022; Marasco, 2018). Therapy helped the participant to process his feelings and provided a language for his experiences.

While most of the participants did not describe experiencing IPV firsthand, some still had sensitizing experiences in the form of learning about IPV during their education or having a female friend or family member disclose their experience to them. Similarly,

Casey and Smith (2010) identified that sensitizing experiences can also include learning opportunities such as presentations and courses or hearing stories of violence from women. This suggests that men do not need to experience IPV firsthand to have a sensitizing experience. The key to a sensitizing experience involves the opportunity for reflecting on information about IPV in a relationship to their personal experiences as men.

The two participants who experienced IPV also described how they do not want to use violence and they do not want to be like the people who hurt them. One participant identified that he does not want other people he cares about to experience the violence and abuse that he experienced. Augusta-Scott (2022) found that traumatic experiences, such as violence, influence men's ideas of masculinity and gender. In therapeutic work with men who have used and experienced violence, some men learn that they have choices for how they treat others, and for how they want their relationships with their partners to be. Similar to these findings, the participants in my study identified that they want to have healthy, non-violent relationships with others. Stigma and lack of awareness around IPV may have also prevented some of the men from disclosing their experiences of IPV. Findings from Mullaney (2007) showed that male privilege and lack of awareness will act as barriers to men recognizing or disclosing their experiences of IPV.

Some of the participants described that they stopped getting into fights once they realized that they hurt others and fighting did not fit with their ideas of masculinity. This is another example of a sensitizing experience. These participants were exposed to violence in the home, and they learned that IPV can be used to gain power over others. However, they did not experience similar outcomes when they used violence at school. Experiencing consequences for using violence sensitized the participants to the negative impacts that

violence can have on others, and they learned that they will not always receive the outcomes they want by using violence.

The participants recognized the importance of talking about masculinity and IPV with other men. However, they do not have any safe opportunities to have these discussions, and initiating discussions is difficult and could lead to negative outcomes, such as being shunned or made fun of by their peers. Some participants expressed a desire to confront other men who use violence, however, were reluctant to due to worries about being ignored, denying the behavior, or becoming angry or confrontational. Discussions on masculinity and IPV can serve as sensitizing experiences for men. These discussions need to take place in safe spaces and men need to be able to openly share their thoughts and feelings on violence and masculinity. Having opportunities for safe discussions with other men will allow for men to reflect on their experiences of masculinity and violence and how they are connected.

Research on men's involvement in antiviolence initiatives found that men having discussions with other men in safe environments leads to increased awareness and future involvement (Casey et al., 2012; Funk, 2008; McMahon & Dick, 2011). In their study with men in a court mandated batterer intervention program, Silvergleid and Mankowski (2007) found when the men had discussions with other men in the program, they learned how their abusive behaviors caused harm to others, and they were able to receive support and encouragement from other men to change their behaviors.

This study reveals the importance for men of talking about masculinity and IPV. Men need to have more opportunities to talk openly about these issues. While many of the participants had thought about their masculinity, they did not report having opportunities

to discuss it openly and safely with others. Findings from this study show that masculinity and its relationship with IPV are not familiar topics or concepts to men and having more discussions on issues related to these concepts could lead to more awareness. Men want more opportunities to discuss and reflect on how their experiences have influenced their ideas about masculinity and their choices not to use violence. Using a visual medium such as a video was useful for starting these discussions.

The study results are summarized in five points: the participant's understanding of masculinity, their understanding of femininity, pressure to perform masculinity, contextual influences on masculinity and sensitizing experiences of IPV.

The participants recognized that some expressions and patterns of gender interaction associated with hegemonic masculinity can result in harm, while others can be helpful. Some participants recognized the relationship between violence and masculinity and how violence is used to gain power and control over others. Some participants were unaware of how male privilege within structures of class, race and sexuality influence their ideas and performance of masculinity.

Some participants were unaware that a relationship exists between masculinity and femininity and how femininity influenced their ideas of masculinity. Some participants were able to recognize that ideas and behaviors associated with femininity can influence or change their ideas of masculinity. Interactions with women, such as working in a profession dominated by women and intimate relationships, changed these participants' ideas of masculinity. No one in the study was involved in a group or social movement to challenge hegemonic masculinity.

The participants felt pressured by their male peers to behave in ways that align with the ideals of hegemonic masculinity. Some men had used violence and had sex with women to gain approval from their peers and avoid being seen as weak or unmanly. At the time of the study, these men had generally constructed ideas of masculinity that do not include violence, and despite previous use of or exposure to violence, their ideas of masculinity had evolved in ways that included a desire to not use violence as a form of gender expression.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

This research set out to answer the following questions:

1. How do social constructions of gender and masculinity influence men's use of IPV?

2. Based on their exposure to patterns of gender interaction, how do men learn and internalize processes that inhibit or encourage using IPV?

The social construction of hegemonic masculinity had an influence on the participants' ideas of masculinity and their actions. They understood that masculinity can be expressed through both harmful and helpful ideas and behaviors and they described wanting to avoid behaviors they saw as harmful, such as using violence, and replace them with behaviors they perceived as more helpful, such as having confidence, being a leader, and taking care of others. The harmful ideas or behaviors identified by the men also included references to stereotypes of masculinity. These stereotypes included physical attributes such as being tall and having large muscles, being tough, and using violence and reflect the ideas and behaviors associated with hegemonic masculinity that are discussed in the literature. Although the men were aware of harmful ideas and stereotypes of masculinity, they were not publicly challenging these stereotypes. Rather, they made individual choices to incorporate ideas and behaviors associated with masculinity into their lives that they saw as helpful and reject harmful ideas or stereotypes.

The participants were not challenging hegemonic masculinity in any structural ways in their lives. The men were not involved in antiviolence initiatives aimed at challenging hegemonic masculinity. As such, the study identifies complicit masculinity and that hegemonic masculinity is largely being supported. This was most evident from the men who did not think about their masculinity. They have not experienced any resistance to their performance of masculinity or the privileges they possess because they are male. This finding implies that men may not always be aware of when they may be reinforcing hegemonic masculine ideals.

The participants were familiar with the relationship between masculinity and violence. Furthermore, they recognized that violence is an acceptable masculine behavior in certain social contexts, such as sports or at school. They identified that men are perceived as masculine by other men in these contexts if they use violence. Men who are able to align with hegemonic masculine ideals tend to hold the more power and authority in institutions and in relation to women and men in marginalized groups. From witnessing or experiencing violent gendered interactions, the participants learned that violence is used to gain power and control over women.

Although this study did not focus on men who have used IPV and none of the participants discussed using IPV, some of the participants' ideas of masculinity influenced their decisions to not use IPV. The participants generally constructed masculinity as ideas of men who care for others and are leaders, and these constructions supported their decisions to not use violence. Furthermore, by focusing my research on IPV, I found that the participant's experiences of different types of violence, including exposure to IPV for some, were associated with their perceptions of masculinity. While the first research question is narrower, it was also expanded by the video and the men's personal experiences. The men incorporated their thoughts on the video as well as personal experiences into their responses, which created more meaningful and rich data for the analysis and research questions.

This study provides evidence that men can learn not to use violence after witnessing or experiencing violence in the home. Witnessing their fathers use violence against their mothers sensitized two men in the study to the harm caused by IPV. They do not want to be like their fathers and understand that using violence is not healthy masculine behavior.

From these sensitizing experiences, the men learned that using IPV led to negative outcomes for themselves and the people they love and care about. For one participant, attending therapy offered him the opportunity to reflect on his experiences of IPV.

The participants experienced both formal and informal education on IPV. Formal education included courses on IPV in university or learning about violence and other deviant behaviors in school. Informal education included witnessing IPV firsthand. Some of the men learned about IPV as a social problem during their university education. An implication that flows from this finding is the need for more courses focused on IPV and healthy relationships in all degree programs. Rather than having courses specifically focused on IPV or violence in the social sciences or humanities, adding in courses or lessons on IPV or violence to other disciplines may allow for more men to become familiar with the relationship between masculinity and violence during their education.

The study revealed complexities in the men's education on IPV and their experiences of violence in the educational context. While some participants had sensitizing experiences to violence and IPV, most did not. Those with sensitizing experiences chose to stop using violence after they realized the harm it caused. Causing harm to the people they care about did not fit with their ideas of masculinity. It is likely that most of the men experienced some form of violence in the educational context but it is equally likely that they did not reflect on or were not prompted to reflect on how the violence impacted them emotionally. An implication for this finding is there needs to be more opportunities within the educational context for men and boys to openly and safely discuss experiences of violence and reflect on their emotions surrounding these experiences. Furthermore,

findings from this study show the need for these opportunities to occur during early education as well as during post-secondary education.

There is pressure on men to perform hegemonic masculinity and men choosing to use or not use violence is influenced by social structures, attitudes, stress and personal choices. This study makes a unique contribution to the research on IPV and masculinity by showing that some men make conscious choices to not use violence. These men learned through sensitizing experiences based on gendered interactions with men and women that using violence leads to negative consequences for themselves and others.

An implication of this finding is that it would be beneficial for men to have opportunities to reflect on potential sensitizing experiences of violence and how these experiences impact their ideas of masculinity and IPV. Facilitated discussions with other men in safe spaces would allow for more opportunities to do this. Men will be able to open up around other men and discuss their feelings and emotions without fear of being judged or ridiculed as weak. Currently, the only men's group in Fredericton (known to the researcher) that facilitates these kinds of discussions is the White Ribbon Fredericton. However, as was previously discussed, there are criticisms against White Ribbon, namely that it does not critique hegemonic masculinity or how hegemonic masculinity reinforces structural gender inequality. In order for men to actively engage in anti-violence initiatives, they must challenge structural gender inequalities, and recognize that IPV is rooted in issues of power and control.

In addition to reflecting on the implications of the research findings, it is important to reflect on the influence of the research methods (visual methods and interviews) on the findings. The "Boys Don't Cry" video was effective in helping to initiate conversations

and helped the participants to think about their own masculinity and reflect on their current or past experiences of masculinity. The video helped the participants to identify the harmful ideas and associated with masculinity and begin discussions. The video acted as a visual aid to show how masculinity is performed in different ways in different social contexts. It also showed how masculinity can be learned through observing gender interactions in different social contexts from parents, teachers and peers. The use of a fictional story with the boy enabled the men to both identify with the video and also to critique it.

While the “Boys Don’t Cry” video was useful for starting discussions and in creating the interview questions, there were limitations to using this video. The “Boys Don’t Cry” video depicts ideas and behaviors associated with masculinity, however it does not show how hegemonic masculinity can be changed or challenged. In addition, the video does not show the structural problems of hegemonic masculinity. The intention of the White Ribbon Campaign in creating the video was to bring attention to promoting healthy masculinity, however, healthier alternatives are not shown in the video. Another limitation is the length of the video. The video is only two minutes long and only showed certain ideas or behaviors associated with masculinity. A longer video or film may have shown more ideas for how behaviors aligned with the ideals of hegemonic masculinity are performed, and how they can be challenged. Finally, a potential limitation to using the video to elicit conversations is the video may have led participants to discuss certain ideas or talk about masculinity in certain ways. The participants may have altered their responses to discuss something shown in the video, or they may have thought it was important because of the video.

While conducting sixteen interviews over virtual meeting software did present some challenges, I felt that virtual interviews created advantages for my study. Virtual interviews allowed for men in different parts of New Brunswick or outside the province to participate as travelling was not required. The share-screen feature in Zoom and Microsoft Teams enabled the participants to see the questions on their computer screen as they were responding. This technique may have helped the participants to focus more on their responses and not on remembering the question that was asked. Lastly, participating in an interview virtually, rather than in-person, may have helped the participants to feel less nervous or uncomfortable opening up about their experiences and they may have felt safer and more comfortable in their own home than in an unfamiliar environment or meeting room with an interviewer.

When I began this research, I was aware that my gender and position as a researcher may create issues around social desirability bias as well as maintaining rigour when conducting my analysis and interpreting my results. Social desirability bias refers to the tendency of participants to give socially desirable responses rather than choosing responses that are reflective of their true feelings or opinions (Stodel, 2015). In order to potentially lessen social desirability bias in my study, I conducted individual one-on-one interviews rather than focus groups with multiple participants. Individual interviews may have helped the men to feel less pressured to conform to group beliefs or respond in certain ways because they were alone with an interviewer rather than in a group with other men where they may have felt their responses were being judged. As the researcher, I am also aware that the men's responses only included specific experiences or examples and may not accurately reflect their day to day behaviors or ideas. The men may not have been fully

aware of their masculinity during the experiences they discussed and some men described not thinking about their masculinity or never thinking about it. They may not have been aware of times they may have been performing or reinforcing harmful ideas or behaviors associated with hegemonic masculinity. Furthermore, the participants may not be aware of how their masculinity influences their interactions with other men or women and how their actions and conceptualizations of masculinity may be potentially contributing to a gender order or hierarchy and patriarchy.

Mays and Pope (1995) recognized in order to maintain rigour, researchers must be conscious of their subject position at every stage of the study and specify when their own identity or role may have affected the data they collected. Since I am a woman, I was aware of how my gender may have impacted the responses the men gave me and how they may have talked to me differently because I am a woman rather than a man. However, while conducting interviews with the participants, I found that my gender also worked in my favor and created an advantage for my study that I had not previously expected. The participants may have been more willing and comfortable opening up about their feelings of masculinity and their experiences with masculinity or IPV because I am a woman. There is evidence for this in the findings as some of the participants admitted that they were more willing to open up or show their emotions to a woman rather than other men.

Petty, Thomson and Stew (2012) describe various criteria and strategies for maintaining rigour in qualitative research including transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Transferability refers to the extent to which findings can be applied in other contexts or with other participants. The “Boys Don’t Cry” video can be shown to different participants and the open-ended nature of the interview questions allows for the same

questions to be asked to boys or men in older or younger age groups and in different contexts. The possibility of conducting this study with different participants and in different contexts also shows evidence of dependability, or the extent to which the study can be replicated. Another strategy for maintaining rigour that was used during the interviews was asking for confirmation and further explanation. When the participants were discussing topics that I was not familiar with, I asked follow up questions or for more details. This strategy helped me to avoid making assumptions during the analysis about what was said by the participants, ensuring that the findings are the product of inquiry and not my personal bias. The strategy of triangulation helped me identify evidence of where the participant's ideas and experiences differed from one another's and from the video. Asking for further explanation from the participants helped me to see where the participant's ideas on masculinity and IPV contrasted with my expertise on the topics.

While virtual interviews and my gender acted as advantages for my study, there are still limitations to this study. Since this study is qualitative, it used a small sample size and cannot be generalized to the population. The level of education of the participants is also a limitation as all of the participants were in university or had recently completed university. Higher education may have given the men more familiarity with complex topics such as masculinity and violence. Another limitation in this study was how the questions surrounding gender were phrased. The interview questions focused only on masculinity and femininity and may have reinforced ideas of a gender binary among the participants. Lastly, this study only consisted of an interview at one time in each man's life, and therefore only represents a small part of the men's lives and experiences.

The research findings are valid because they are useful and can be used to make recommendations for future work with men and research on masculinity and IPV. Lather (1993) suggests that social research needs to focus on how the individuals being studied want their lives and futures to be improved and also on how individuals construct and experience their social worlds. The methodology used in this study was effective in maintaining validity. The video and interviews were effective for allowing the participants to open up in a safe and non-judgmental setting and to discuss masculinity and IPV, which are difficult and sensitive topics. Individual interviews allowed for the participants to discuss these topics in their own way, and at their own discretion without fear of being judged as weak. The open-ended nature of the interview questions allowed the participants to reflect on their own experiences. This research is also useful because the participants stated that the research is important. There are not many opportunities for men to participate in research on IPV and they wanted to learn more about the topic. Furthermore, some of the participants acknowledged the difficulty around having conversations on sensitive or “controversial” topics such as masculinity and IPV and they expressed their desire for more opportunities to openly discuss these topics in safe spaces such as interviews or focus groups.

Future research on masculinity and IPV should focus on creating more opportunities for men to have the open and safe conversations that they desire. Future research studies could use focus groups to begin conversations as they would allow for researchers to examine the impact of gendered interactions between men. Since I only conducted one interview with the participants, I was unable to observe how the presence of male peers may influence how men speak about masculinity and IPV. Focus groups can

also act as sensitizing experiences for men to gain more awareness of and reflect on their experiences of violence and its relationship to masculinity, and to discuss these experiences with other men in a safe space. In addition, future studies using a longitudinal method would allow for researchers to examine men's perspectives about masculinity and IPV at different times in their lives to see how they change over time. Longitudinal studies could track the men's lives over a longer period of time. Researchers would be able to follow up with men in their efforts to gain more knowledge and awareness of IPV, to become involved in antiviolence initiatives and IPV prevention, or to collectively challenge hegemonic masculinity. Longitudinal methods would also allow for researchers to examine if men who are not violent continue to not use violence.

Since the men in this study were predominantly white, university educated, heterosexual, and between the ages of 21 and 22, future research should broaden the sample by age, class, level of education, sexual diversity and ethnicity. Broadening the sample would allow for more diversity in responses and experiences around masculinity and violence. Future studies using a younger or older age group are recommended as younger or older men may have different attitudes towards masculinity and violence, and older men will have had more life experiences than younger men. In addition, broadening the sample by ethnicity would be helpful in better understanding the relationship between culture, context, masculinity and IPV. It is also important to note that the participants were all heterosexual cisgender men, and the study did not include interviews with gay or transgender men. Future research studies should involve interviews or discussions within non cisgender heterosexual contexts. Lastly, future research studies where the interviews or focus groups are conducted by male interviewers are also recommended.

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Appendix A: Ethics Approval Email

Alison Meng, Graduate Student
Department of Sociology
University of New Brunswick Fredericton

To Alison Meng,

As Chair of the Research Ethics Board (REB), I have reviewed your ethics application for the project entitled "The Social Construction of Masculinity and Intimate Partner Violence: Men taking responsibility for the violence" which has been assigned the file number REB #2021-030. On the basis of the review, I consider your project to be eligible for delegated review, since any risk to participants that might exist appears not to exceed the "minimal risk" outlined in the Tri-Council Policy Statement, 2nd edition (TCPS2). I am also pleased to inform you that, in my opinion, your project is in compliance with TCPS2 and the University Policy on Research Involving Humans (UPRIH). Accordingly, please consider this E-mail to represent official notification of REB approval of your project for a period of three years from the date of this E-mail.

NOTE 1: At the end of both your Invitation (Appendix A) and your Consent Form (Appendix B), would you please add our required phrase "This project has been reviewed by the UNB Research Ethics Board and is on file as REB 2021-030." Then, would you please email to me (cc to <ethics@unb.ca>) a copy of that modified Consent Form for our records? There is no need to send a revised version of the whole application.

NOTE 2: This approval is conditional on interviews, meetings and related activities being conducted ONLY either online or over the phone, depending on with whatever the interview participant is most comfortable. In the future, if you find that you must make any changes to your protocol, those changes must be considered and approved by the REB before they are implemented. To initiate changes, please submit the REB Case Modification Request form, available online through the Research Ethics page of the Office of the VP (Research). If you do wish to proceed with in-person interviews at a later date, you can request the Vice President (Research) <vpr@unb.ca> to grant permission to allow human participant research to proceed. For permission to be granted several criteria will need to be met. First, a rationale for why face-to-face contact is required and what the implications are if the research is not permitted to proceed. Second, a detailed operational plan (OP) that complies with public health advice (e.g., New Brunswick Public Health <https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/corporate/promo/covid-19/recovery.html>) will need to be developed and approved by the Vice President Research and EHS. Third,

after the OP is approved, approval for the research to proceed must be obtained from the REB and the REB will provide researchers with a special “informed consent form” to be signed by each participant prior to commencing the research. The Vice President Research will provide final approval for the research to begin.

Please note that, in the future, if you find that you must make any changes to your protocol, those changes must be considered and approved by the REB before they are implemented. Please submit the REB Case Modification Request form, available online through the Research Ethics page of the Office of the VP (Research).

Annual Reports for this project are due on the 15th of January each year, provided that this date is at least six months after the date of project approval. Final reports are due 90 days after project completion. Form templates for both of these reports can be found on our website at <https://www.unb.ca/research/vp/ethics.html>.

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research project.

— David

Appendix B: Recruitment Script

Invitation to participate in Sociology Research Study

My name is Alison Meng, and I am inviting young men (ages 19 to 25) in Atlantic Canada to participate in my research on masculinity, gender and intimate partner violence (IPV) for my Master's thesis in Sociology at the University of New Brunswick (UNB).

The purpose of this study is to examine how men think about and perceive IPV, how social constructions of masculinity and gender influence their thoughts, and how men learn to use or respond to IPV.

Participation in this study will consist of attending one virtual interview using Zoom.

Each interview will begin with a showing of a brief three (3) minute video, followed by questions.

Interviews will be conducted in English and will last roughly one (1) hour.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary and confidential. You may withdraw from this study at any time or refuse to answer any questions you do not wish to answer.

If you are interested in participating, or have any questions or concerns, please contact Alison Meng at ameng@unb.ca.

This project has been reviewed by the UNB Research Ethics Board and is on file as REB 2021-030.

Appendix C: Invitation Letter

Invitation to participate in research on masculinity, gender and Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

I am inviting young men (ages 19 to 25) in Atlantic Canada to participate in my research on masculinity, gender and intimate partner violence (IPV) for my Master's thesis in sociology at the University of New Brunswick (UNB).

The purpose of this study is to examine how men think about and perceive IPV, how social constructions of masculinity and gender influence these perceptions, and how men learn to use or respond to violence as a result of pressures created by masculinity and gender.

In addition, this study will provide men with an opportunity to discuss issues related IPV, masculinity and gender, and how social constructions of gender and masculinity influence how men use or think about violence. This study will also examine how men learn certain masculine behaviors from their peers or other influential role models (such as parents or coaches) and how men resist or feel pressured to conform to these behaviors.

Participation in this study will consist of attending one virtual one on one interview over Zoom. Due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and social distancing regulations instilled by New Brunswick Public Health, all interviews will be completed using virtual meeting software.

Each interview will begin with a showing of a brief 3 minute video on IPV, masculinity and gender, followed by questions.

The interviews will last roughly one (1) hour.

I recognize that IPV is a sensitive and controversial topic and could be potentially triggering for some participants. The video shows scenes of violence, and these scenes could be potentially triggering to individuals who have witnessed or experienced violence. Before beginning my interviews, I will be clear about these sensitive subjects and how they may create difficulties while participating. You are not obligated to share anything you do not feel comfortable sharing and you can refuse to answer any questions you do not wish to answer. I will also provide opportunities for breaks during the interviews if you need briefly step away from the conversation, collect your thoughts or take care of any personal needs.

The interview video meetings will be password protected and a personal invitation will be required in order to participate. High speed internet connection will also be required. A web link to join the interview and a password will be sent to you by email before the interview begins. During the interview, you will not be required to turn on your camera if you do not choose to do so.

The interviews will be video recorded using Zoom. The video recordings and transcripts will be stored on a password protected thumb drive and will only be accessible to myself and my supervisory committee. Your name and any names that could be traced to personal information about you will be removed from the interview transcripts and will be replaced with pseudonyms in my thesis. The video recordings and interview transcripts will be deleted after transcription, and other data collected will be deleted at the end of the research.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and confidential. You will be allowed to stop or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty, up until the final copy of the thesis has been submitted. If you choose to withdraw, the video recordings and transcripts will be deleted or destroyed and will not be used in the thesis or any subsequent publications or reports.

To obtain a summary of findings from this study, please email ameng@unb.ca. Complete copies of the thesis can also be made available upon request.

If you have any questions about the research, you can contact my supervisor, Dr. Cathy Holtmann, cathy.holtmann@unb.ca, 506-458-7442, or the chair of the Sociology department, Dr. Lucia Tramonte, lucia@unb.ca, 506-458-7257. The chair of the research ethics board at UNB, Dr. David Coleman, can be contacted at ethics@unb.ca or 506-453-5189. This project has been reviewed by the UNB Research Ethics Board and is on file as REB 2021-030.

Sincerely,

Alison Meng
Graduate student
Department of Sociology
University of New Brunswick (Fredericton)
ameng@unb.ca

Appendix D: Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a study on masculinity, gender and intimate partner violence (IPV).

The purpose of this study is to examine how men think about and perceive IPV, how social constructions of masculinity and gender influence these perceptions, and how men learn to use or respond to violence as a result of pressures created by masculinity and gender. In addition, this study will provide men with an opportunity to discuss issues related IPV, masculinity and gender, and how social constructions of gender and masculinity influence how men use or think about violence. This study will also examine how men learn certain masculine behaviors from their peers or other influential role models (such as parents or coaches) and how men resist or feel pressured to conform to these behaviors.

Each interview will begin with a showing of a brief 3 minute video on IPV, masculinity and gender, followed by questions.

The interviews will last roughly one (1) hour.

IPV is a sensitive and controversial topic and could be potentially triggering for some participants. The video shows scenes of violence, these scenes could be potentially triggering to individuals who have witnessed or experienced violence. You are not obligated to share anything you do not feel comfortable sharing and you can refuse to answer any questions you do not wish to answer. I will also provide opportunities for breaks during the interviews if you need briefly step away from the conversation, collect your thoughts or take care of any personal needs.

Before starting the interview, I will ask you to confirm that you are in a private room with the door closed in order ensure privacy. During the interview, you will not be required to turn on your video camera if you do not choose to do so.

Your name and any names that could be traced to personal information about you will be removed from the interview transcripts and will be replaced with pseudonyms in my thesis. The video recordings and transcripts will be stored on a password protected thumb drive and will only be accessible to myself and my supervisory committee. The video recordings and interview transcripts will be deleted after transcription, and other data collected will be deleted at the end of the research.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and confidential. You will be allowed to stop or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty, up until the final copy of the thesis has been submitted. If you choose to withdraw, the video recordings and transcripts will be deleted and will not be used in the thesis or any subsequent publications or reports.

To obtain of summary of findings from this study, please email ameng@unb.ca. Complete copies of the thesis can also be made available upon request.

If you have any questions about the research, you can contact my supervisor, Dr. Cathy Holtmann, cathy.holtmann@unb.ca, 506-458-7442, or the chair of the Sociology department, Dr. Lucia Tramonte, lucia@unb.ca, 506-458-7257. The chair of the research ethics board at UNB, Dr. David Coleman, can be contacted at ethics@unb.ca or 506-453-5189. This project has been reviewed by the UNB Research Ethics Board and is on file as REB 2021-030.

I _____ (please print) freely consent to participate in this study. I understand what is required of me by participating in this study, namely, I consent to being video-recorded and to having my responses be used in the thesis and any further reports or publications. I understand that I can refuse to answer any questions and that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty, up until the final copy of the thesis has been submitted. If I choose to withdraw, I understand that the video recordings and my responses/transcripts will be deleted or destroyed.

Signature:

Date:

Thank you for your time and participation

Alison Meng
Graduate student
Department of Sociology
University of New Brunswick (Fredericton)
ameng@unb.ca

Appendix E: Interview Questionnaire

1. What are your thoughts on the video?
2. What surprised you about the video?
3. Is there a scene/moment in the video that really stood out to you? Why?
4. What does it mean to you to be masculine?
5. What does it mean to you to be feminine?
6. From whom did you learn about what it means to be masculine?
7. Can you think of a way your attitude or perception towards masculinity might have changed over time?
8. Do your feelings of masculinity impact your relationships?
9. Can you give an example of a time you felt pressured to behave a certain way because of your gender?
10. What do you think of when you hear the term intimate partner violence?
11. Do you know of anyone among your friends or family who has had an experience of IPV?
12. Have you learned about IPV during your education?
13. The video depicts how masculinity impacts boys throughout their lives. Did you see any similarities between yourself and the boy in the video in terms of how masculinity has impacted you?
14. In the video, we hear (and see in the form of text) that “boys will be boys.” At the end of the video we hear (and see again as text) that “boys will be boys, or they could be so much more...”What does this phrase mean to you?
15. Who else should watch this video?

16. What are some ways men can help or support women/victims of IPV?

17. How old are you?

18. What is your ethnicity?

Curriculum Vitae

Education

Master of Arts, Sociology (Expected date of graduation: May 2024)

University of New Brunswick

Bachelor of Arts, Psychology (2013-2018)

University of New Brunswick

Conference Presentations

Meng, A. (2021). *The Social Construction of Masculinity and Intimate Partner Violence: Understanding men's perspectives on violence*. Paper presented at the University of New Brunswick Graduate Research Conference, Fredericton, NB.

Meng, A. (2019). *Starting the Conversation: A Content Analysis of the Discussion Guides for the Film A Better Man*. Paper presented at the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research Conference on Gender-Based Violence, Fredericton, NB.

Meng, A. (2019). *Taking Responsibility for the Violence: A Qualitative Content Analysis of the film A Better Man*. Paper presented at the Qualitatives 2019 conference, Fredericton, NB.

Awards

UNB Graduate Research Conference: 3rd place winner for best presentation (Arts/Humanities stream) (2021)

New Brunswick Innovation Fund (NBIF) Award (2019)

Dean's List (2016, 2017, 2018)

Edwin Jacob Special University Scholarship (2017-2018)