Like an Oak Tree He Survived
An Analysis of Masculinity Norms in Post-War Namibia
Abstract

During the last decades, international organisations have worked hard to implement a gender awareness in their peace- and development programs. Many organizations, however, fail to include an awareness of masculinity construction, and gender has become synonymous with women. This is despite the fact that throughout history, key actors in armed conflicts have been men. Understanding how masculinity is constructed in relation to armed-conflicts can therefore be beneficial to achieve a lasting peace. Thus, the aim of this thesis is to examine how masculinity norms are expressed among Namibians after the Namibian war of independence, and how these norms have developed during the post-war era. By conducting a mixed-method of content and discourse analysis, this study investigates how the hegemonic masculinity is constructed by the citizens of Namibia through the “letters to the editor”-section in the national newspaper *The Namibian*. All letters published during 1991, 1992, 2002 and 2003 were analysed to achieve an understanding of how the masculinity norms had developed. The study found that the hegemonic masculinity in the earlier years consisted of a strong and honourable man, with a high education and the possibility to independently take care of his family. The hegemonic masculinity had in the later years developed into a more caring and compassionate man, who supported his working wife. The study also found that some aspects of the hegemonic masculinity had remained the same, such as heterosexuality and monogamy. The study encourages further research on the development of masculinity norms in a post-conflict setting, and how these norms may hinder or encourage a lasting peace.

**Keywords:** hegemonic masculinity, post-conflict, Namibia, gender norms
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1. Introduction

In 1995, the United Nations declared the policy of “gender mainstreaming” as crucial in establishing gender equality. Gender mainstreaming can be defined as a strategy for integrating men and women’s concerns in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of projects in all areas of the society (UN Women, nd). This is imperative to ensure that women as well as men benefit from development processes, and to achieve a sustainable gender equality. In the last decades, the UN has taken great measures to ensure a gender awareness and mainstreaming in their work (King, 2001). However, the concept of gender has become synonymous with women, and gender mainstreaming has been criticized for only focusing on women (Moran, 2010:262). This becomes problematic when considering the fact that the vast majority of the combatants in conflicts are men. In several countries, women are not allowed to work within the military organisation, and even more countries do not allow women in military combat roles (Fisher, 2013). Female combatants are more likely to be involved in irregular forces, such as guerrilla and militia groups, than in national armies. However, they are still a vast minority to men (Goldstein, 2012). Moran argues that giving sufficient attention to all gender aspects can generate a greater understanding for how a society transition from conflict to lasting peace, and can give an understanding for how militarism can be reversed (Moran, 2010:269).

Raewyn Connell is seen as one of the leading theoreticians in gender research, and her theory on masculinity has been highly acclaimed (Demetriou, 2001:337; Hollander, 2014:423). With masculinities being a relatively new field of research, Connell’s concept of hegemonic masculinity has contributed to the fast expansion of the field. Since Connell’s initial introduction of the concept in the 1990s, hegemonic masculinity has been used in several research areas, ranging from sexuality studies to criminology (Demetriou, 2001:337). However, studies on hegemonic masculinity have been criticized for focusing on the difference between genders, contrary to focusing on the variations within the sexes (Petersen, 2003:58). In the context of conflict and peacebuilding, the research on hegemonic masculinity is still largely unexplored (Hamber, 2015:10). Even though several scholars recognize the importance of understanding how both men and women are affected by conflict, studies tend to prioritize the focus on women. There is a need to conduct research to understand how institutions such as education, media and transnational corporations reinforce masculinity norms among the citizens and masculine forms of power. There is also a need to develop how masculinity is
constructed through the relationship between men, and how these masculinities are expressed (ibid: 30)

Central to this thesis will be the Southern African country Namibia. Namibia was a German colony from the late nineteenth century until the end of the First World War, when administration of the country was taken over by South Africa (Landguiden 2016). In 1966, the South West African People’s Organisation (SWAPO) began an armed struggle against the government of South Africa, with the goal of the then named South West Africa to become independent. The armed conflict continued for over two decades, and would come to involve both Zambia and Angola through their support of SWAPO (UCDP, 2018). The conflict came to an end in 1989 and Namibia officially became an independent state in 1990 (Richard, 2014).

Namibia has been chosen in this study due to their relatively recent experience of armed conflict, as well as their high rates of civil liberties such as freedom of expression. These civil liberties assure people’s right to express themselves and their views, without fearing any repercussions (Freedom House, 2019). This is important since this study will focus on the citizens of Namibia attitudes as they are expressed in the newspaper The Namibian. Further explanation for Namibia as a good case for the studies of how masculinities develop after an intrastate conflict can be found under the heading “Choice of Case”.

1.1 Aim and Research Question

The aim of this thesis is to study how masculinity develops in a post-conflict setting, such as after a war of independence. The study will focus on Namibia, which in 1990 gained independence from South Africa after decades of war (UCDP, 2018), and how masculinity norms have developed among the people during a thirteen-year period after the conflict. Therefore, the research question for this thesis is

What kind of masculinity norms are expressed among Namibians in the post-war era? And how have they developed over the time-period 1991 to 2003?

The research questions focus on how norms are expressed among the people of Namibia, and therefore material which reflects the attitudes among the population is preferable. This study is not interested in how the state or media reinforce or attempt to change masculinity ideals of the people, this would however be interesting for a future study. The research questions will be answered through a combination of content and discourse analysis of the “letters to the editor” section within the newspaper The Namibian. This section consists of letters that readers of the
newspaper send in and can be of any topic that the readers choose. Anyone who wants to send in a letter is able to do so, and this section can therefore be seen as a good outlet for the Namibian people’s thoughts and attitudes. To get a sufficient understanding of how masculinity norms have changed since the conflict, the analysis will cover newspapers from 1991 to 2003. The analysis will include “letters to the editor” from 1991, 1992, 2002 and 2003 to get a sufficient understanding of how norms have changed during this period.

According to Patricia Justino (2018), armed conflict should be expected to have an impact on gender norms in society. While men are enrolled in the military, women have to take on more responsibility and have an income to support the family. This leads to a shift in traditional gender roles. Justino also notes, however, that there is not enough evidence to support the idea that increased female participation in the labour market leads to a lasting female empowerment. A clear example of this is the women in Germany after the Second World War, who returned to their traditional gender roles (Justino, 2018:76-80). Therefore, the research question for this study is divided into two, since we cannot expect a change in the gender norms of Namibia after the conflict. However, if the findings of this study are that no development of the masculinity norms can be traced, the study still maps out how these norms are expressed after the conflict. Therefore, the study has still contributed to the field of masculinity and post-conflict societies.

According to Freedom House, the Constitution of Namibia guarantees civil rights such as free speech and a free press. These rights are often respected by the Namibian government, but 2003 reports stated that state-run media experienced pressure to avoid controversial topics in their reports (Freedom House, 2003). However, this should not have affected *The Namibian* since it is an independent newspaper (The Namibian, 2010). Therefore, Namibia can be justified as an interesting case for this study since their civil liberties combined with the “letters to the editor” section present an opportunity for the people to express their opinions freely. Further motivation for the case of Namibia can be found under the heading “Choice of Case”.

1.2 Outline and Results
The thesis will hereafter consist of a section accounting for previous research that is relevant for this thesis. Following will be a presentation of the theoretical framework, which will consist of a discussion of Connell’s concept of hegemonic masculinity. This will be complemented by Yvonne Hirdman’s gender system theory and a discussion on homophobia. This will be followed by a presentation of Brannon’s masculinity themes, which the analytical framework will be based upon. After this, a presentation of the method and design of the analysis will be
presented as well as a presentation of the selected material. Finally, an analysis will be conducted which will end with a conclusion of the study’s findings.

This study finds that the hegemonic masculinity in Namibia has developed over the years that the study was conducted. The topics that the writers were discussing changed, where the frequency of homosexuality being discussed increased and the man as the breadwinner decreased in the later years. The hegemonic masculinity has changed from a tough and brave family man, to a more compassionate, gender-equal man who has the role of an empathetic leader. To be healthy and monogamous is important for the hegemonic masculinity in both periods.
2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Previous Research

Research on masculinities is a relatively new field, and as previously mentioned, Connell’s concept of hegemonic masculinity was introduced during the 1990s. Despite this, there is a large body of research on masculinity in relation to other research areas (Demetriou, 2001:337). The following section will attempt to present a portion of this research, with a focus on studies that are relevant for this thesis.

In recent years, several studies have focused on the relation between gender and armed conflict. One of these is the study by Patricia Justino on the impact of armed conflict on the gendered division of the labour market (Justino, 2018) which findings have already been discussed in relation to the research question above. Another study is the one by Hughes and Tripp (2015), which argues that the decline of war and the increase of political representation of women is casually related. They claim that civil war causes women to take on new roles in the society that have previously been occupied by men. Civil war also legitimatize women’s political involvement due to them not being perceived as being involved in the armed conflict. They conclude that women’s representation in the legislative assembly is more likely in countries that have experiences more intense conflicts (Hughes & Tripp, 2015:1516). This raises the question how civil war affects the social structure of masculinity. If women are entering the roles that have previously been occupied by men, does that cause a change in what is seen as traditionally masculine?

There have also been several studies conducted on how a societal crisis might affect the hegemonic masculinity. Hollander (2014) studied how the hegemonic masculinity was reconstructed in a small town in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where a sugarcane factory was forced to close down due to an outbreak of war. The study found that the original hegemonic masculinity became unobtainable due to the high unemployment, which led to a new construction of masculinity norms. This was done in different ways, with some men identifying themselves as victims and becoming more violent, while others accepted their lower status and their wives as income earners (Hollander, 2015:418, 434-435). Hollander’s research shows that a crisis within a society can force the development of masculinity norms. What is particularly noteworthy is the fact that men can handle this change in different ways; they can both be regressive and progressive. This is relevant for my thesis, since my study might find
different attitudes and desires. It should not be expected that all Namibians share the same views on the ideal masculinity.

Namibia, which is the country in focus for this thesis, has been the subject of several studies. Since the introduction of hegemonic masculinity, studies have been conducted on how the construction of masculinity has been affected by the experience as a veteran in Namibia (Gibson, 2010), as well as how the construction of masculinity is related to HIV/AIDS within an ethnic group in Namibia (Brown et al, 2005). The latter will work as an inspiration to the analytical framework of this thesis, since the study found that having several sexual (female) partners and having HIV/AIDS was an important part of the hegemonic masculinity in this ethnic group (ibid: 589). The ethnic group, the Owambo, is a large part of the Namibian population (NE, nd). Therefore, the study of this thesis might result in similar findings.

**2.2 Hegemonic Masculinity**

Central to this study is the concept of hegemonic masculinity. According to Connell’s theory of masculinity, masculinity consists of a hierarchy that subordinates some men while elevating others. In the top of this hierarchy is the hegemonic masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity is the type of masculinity that all men strives towards but only a few can achieve (Connell, 1995:77); it is seen as the most desirable but least obtainable of masculinities. Hegemonic masculinity also allows men to continue their dominance over women, and acts as an ideological legitimacy of the subordination of women (Connell & Messerschimdt, 2005:832). For this masculinity to be established, there needs to be some coherence between individual or collective institutional power and cultural ideals. Therefore, which masculinity that is seen as hegemonic will be determined by the relevant context and can change over time. The categories are not fixed (Connell, 1995:77-78). Only a few men can take part of the hegemonic masculinity, and it relies on others to recognize its hegemony. Women are also important actors in the maintenance of the hegemonic masculinity, especially heterosexual women. They help to affirm the hegemonic masculinity by idealizing and romanticizing it (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005:832). Attributes that are often ascribed to hegemonic masculinity, especially in a war-like or military setting, are bravery, honour, self-discipline and dutifulness (Gibson, 2014:615).

Due to limitations in time, this thesis will only focus on the hegemonic masculinity. It is, however, important to know that Connell presents other forms of masculinities as well. These include a complicit masculinity, which benefits from the hegemonic masculinity since it helps assure all men’s domination over women. There is also a subordinate masculinity, which is
seen as unwanted. Throughout history, this has often been ascribed to homosexual men (Connell, 1995:78-79)

Connell also claim that in most societies, the dominant gender is the holder of violence. For instance, men are more likely to bear arms, and women have historically been forbidden to use weapons. This has two effects on the pattern of violence in society; the use of violence to maintain dominance and the importance of violence in gender politics. Men can use an array of methods, ranging from wolf-whistling to rape, to sustain their dominance over women. Here, Connell states that it is important to underline that all men do not use violence against women, but those who do, feel justified in their actions. The second pattern focuses on violence as transactions between men. Terror can be used to draw boundaries between groups and exclude people from their own group. Within group struggles, violence can be used as a tool to claim one’s masculinity (Ibid: 83).

Connell’s theory of hegemonic masculinity may be seen as one of the most influential contributions on how gender hierarchy can be constructed but have nonetheless received its fair share of critique. According to Alan Petersen (2003), hegemonic masculinity tends to make scholars view masculine characteristics as essentialist and unitary, contrary to their fluid reality. Research tends to focus too much on the differences between men and women, instead of focusing on the variations within the sexes (Petersen, 2003:58). Patricia Martin (1998) also criticizes Connell’s concept by claiming that it leads to inconsistent applications, and by claiming that Connell herself is inconsistent with her use of the concept. Martin states that Connell often emphasises hegemonic masculinity as dependent on the relevant context and as influenced by culture, that she also implies that a dominance-oriented, competitive hegemony is the most prominent around the world. This causes an inconsistency that leads to confusion (Martin, 1998:473).

2.2.1 Gender System Theory

To complement the concept of hegemonic masculinity, Yvonne Hirdman’s theory of the gender system will be included in the analysis. The gender system is, according to Hirdman, the fundamental organizational mechanism behind all other systems in society. The system organizes men and women through two basic rules; the rule of distinctive separation and the rule of the male norm. The rule of distinctive separation is the fact that essentially all areas of life is divided between categories of male and female. This gendered division is done in three
ways: physical (places where the different sexes can exist), psychological (typical gendered attributes) and through the division of labour. The male norm regards the idea that everything that is categorized as masculine is seen as more valuable, by both men and women. These rules are relying on two important notions: The biological difference between men and women, where men are unable to conceive a child, and a dichotomisation where the two genders are seen as complete opposites. If the rule of difference is unable to be upheld, due to an ideological or economic crisis, the male norm is threatened (Hirdman, 1988). Hirdman’s theory of the gender system will help make the concept of hegemonic masculinity more applicable to the material. By including women in the analysis, and the construction of their separation and subordination to men, a more sufficient understanding of the construction of masculinities can be achieved.

2.2.2 Homophobia as Masculinity

An important aspect of traditional norms of masculinity is the rejection of everything that is considered feminine (Falomir-Pichastor et al., 2019:208; Hirdman, 1988). A strategy for men to maintain their masculinity is thereby to distance themselves from what is typically seen as feminine behaviour, traits and roles. On the contrary, homosexual men are often perceived as embracing feminine personality traits and behaviour. Thereby, homosexuality is often viewed negatively since it defies what can be called the “anti-femininity norm”. Heterosexuality can therefore be seen as an important element of hegemonic masculinity, since men often tend to defend their heterosexuality while simultaneously distance themselves from feminine behaviour to assert their masculinity (Falomir-Pichastor et al., 2019:208). The concept of homophobia as strategy to maintain masculinity will also work to make Connell’s hegemonic masculinity more comprehensible.

2.2.3 Brannon’s Masculinity Themes

Connell’s concept of hegemonic masculinity may be praised by several scholars, but it is also criticized for being difficult to translate into an actual analytical tool. This leads to an inconsistency in implementation (Martin, 1998:473). To manage this problem, this thesis will draw on the Brannon Masculinity Scale when creating the analytical framework. The Brannon Masculinity Scale is used in several studies to measure masculinity norms among individuals, and is often used to operationalize hegemonic masculinity (Springer & Mouzon 2019; Weinstein et al, 1995). The scale consists of four themes, which the analytical framework will be inspired by. These themes are No Sissy Stuff, which regards the avoiding of all things
feminine and concealing one’s emotions. The Big Wheel refers to the man being the main income earner in the family, as well as being well respected. The sturdy Oak regards men radiating toughness, independence and confidence. Finally, Give ‘Em Hell! Concerns men’s willingness to engage in violence and risky behaviour (Springer & Mouzon 2019:186; Weinstein et al, 1995:832-833).

2.3 Analytical Framework

In this section, the analytical framework of the analysis will be presented. This framework is divided into two parts; the coding scheme of the content analysis and the analytic questions of the discourse analysis. Both of these will be based on Brannon’s Masculinity Scale. A further discussion of the content and discourse analysis can be found under the heading “Discourse Analysis and Content Analysis”.

In the following section, the coding scheme will be presented, which will be the analytical tool of the content analysis. The scheme is divided into four main categories, which are each divided into further sub-categories. The main categories are Brannon’s four themes of masculinity, and the sub-categories are based on previous research and theoretical findings.

The main category of No Sissy Stuff is divided into three sub-categories: “homosexuality”, “several sexual partners”, and “responsibility of HIV and AIDS”. “Homosexuality” is chosen due to homophobia as a strategy for maintaining masculinity (Falomir-Pichastor et al., 2019:208) and it being a common form of subordinate masculinity (Connell, 1995:78). Homosexuality can be ascribed the value negative or positive, depending on how the topic is described in the actual letter. A positive depiction could be a letter demanding marriage equality, and a negative depiction could be describing homosexuality as unnatural. If homosexuality is mentioned but not valued, it will still be noted in the scheme but will not be ascribed any value. “Several sexual partners” is based upon previous findings suggesting that having sexual partners is an important element of masculinity among Owambo men in Namibia. HIV and AIDS are in the same study also found to be important for the masculinity of Owambo men (Brown et al., 2015:589-594). The coding scheme also includes who is responsible for spreading and preventing HIV and AIDS, and if the topic is mentioned without discussing responsibility, it will be noted in the coding scheme.

The category The Big Wheel is divided into four sub-categories: “Importance of education”, “Male breadwinner”, “Attitudes toward female politicians” and “Responsibility of the domestic
Importance of education is chosen due to findings of the study on the Owambo people, where education was seen as important for men to increase their chance of getting a high-status job (Brown et al., 2015:589-594). The variable can be ascribed the value of female or male, which indicates if education is seen as important for men or for women. If education is mentioned without being referred to a specific gender, or seen as important for both genders, it will still be noted in the scheme. To know if education is important for the construction of masculinity, I first have to know if education is important in society over all. The importance of education can take the form of someone encouraging the youth to educate themselves, but also in the form of people being outraged at the lack of properly educated teachers or inadequate school budgets. “Male breadwinner” refers to men being the primary income earner of the family, and can either be seen as positive or negative by the writer. “Attitudes toward female politicians” can also be either negative and positive, and refer to how the writer views women’s increasing political representation. This is based on women and men being held separated in division of labour, and women being systematically subordinate to men (Hirdman, 1988). Politics is often male dominated (UN Women, 2019), and attitudes toward female politicians can be an indication of how gender roles are changing as well as how these changes are responded to. Finally, the sub-category “Responsibility for the home” regards to who is seen as responsible of domestic chores such as cooking and taking care of the children. This is based on research showing that the end of intra-state conflicts is followed by an increase of women’s rights and a shift in gender norms (Hughes & Tripp, 2015:1532). Since domestic work, such as the chores mentioned, is traditionally viewed as women’s work (Hirdman, 1988), a change in gender norms might result in a shift in the responsibility of the home.

*The Sturdy Oak* consists of two sub-categories: “strength” and “work ethic”. These two are attributes that can each take two different values. “Strength” can either be to be kind or to be tough, and a good work ethic can either be a person being a clear leader or more of a team-player. These are constructed to reflect how different attributes are gendered, and are based on men typically being seen as strong, though and independent (Weinstein et al, 1995:832). These are only being included in the coding scheme if they are ascribed to a male, since the goal of these sub-categories are to indicate how norms of male behaviour are constructed. If these attributes are ascribed to “people” or “citizens”, they will not be included in the coding scheme since it will make it difficult to distinguish the ideal citizen from the ideal man.
Give ‘Em Hell has been divided into the two sub-categories: “right to bear weapons” and “gender-based violence”. “Right to bear weapons” refers to men being the dominant holders of violence in society, since they are more likely to bear arms than women (Connell, 1995:83). This sub-category can be either valued positive or negative, depending on whether the writer of the letter believes owning a weapon is considered positive or weapons should be banned all together. Since weapons is (male) gendered (ibid), it does not matter who’s right to bear arms the letters discuss. Gender-based violence is in this case violence directed at an individual due to their gender, and includes physical, sexual, verbal, emotional, and psychological abuse, threats, and coercion. It can for example take the form of rape, sexual harassment such as groping, or intimate partner violence (Britton & Shook, 2014). This variable can take the value victim-responsibility or predator, which indicates who is seen as responsible for the violence. If the letter is written in a way where the victim is seen as responsible for the attack, by for example saying that women need to drink less or not be out during the night, the variable will be valued as victim-responsibility. If the letter is written in a way which condemns the perpetrator of the gender-based violence, for example by stating that there needs to be harder punishments for rape, the variable will be ascribed the perpetrator-value. This is since victim-blaming upholds the norm of men as sexual beings where violence comes naturally (Harvard Law, 2019). By studying how gender-based violence is perceived among the Namibian citizens, one might get a clearer understanding of how violence is gendered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Category</th>
<th>Sub-Categories</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>1st Period</th>
<th>2nd Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>No Sissy Stuff</strong></td>
<td>Homosexuality</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Several sexual partners</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responsibility of HIV and AIDS</td>
<td>Men</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Women</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Both</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The Big Wheel</strong></td>
<td>Importance of education</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male breadwinner</td>
<td>Positive</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attitudes toward female politicians</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Responsibility for the home</td>
<td>Men</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The Sturdy Oak</strong></td>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>Toughness</td>
<td>Kindness</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Work ethic</td>
<td>Team-player</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leader</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Give ‘Em Hell!</strong></td>
<td>Right to bear weapons</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Negative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender-Based Violence</td>
<td>Victim-responsibility</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Perpetrator</td>
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The discourse analysis will consist of four analytic questions which will be asked to the material. These questions are inspired by the Brannon Masculinity Scale, but formulated with this particular study in mind. The analytic questions are therefore:

*How are sexual practices constructed and gendered?*

*How are education and income earning gendered in the letters?*

*How are different personality traits ascribed to men?*

*How is violence viewed and responded to? Is there a different view on different kinds of violence?*

How sexual practices are constructed and gendered refers to the theme of *No Sissy Stuff*, where concealing emotions and avoiding everything that can be seen as feminine are important parts of the construction of masculinity (Weinstein et al., 1995:832-833). This is also based on the findings of Brown et al, which found that having several sexual partners were an important part of the masculinity among Owambo men (Brown et al., 2015:589). Furthermore, this is based
on the “antifemininity-norm”, where men distance themselves from “feminine” behaviour, and homosexuality, to maintain their masculinity (Falomir-Pichastor et al., 2019:208).

The question regarding how education and income are gendered refers to the theme The Big Wheel, where an important part of the masculine identity is to be the breadwinner of the family (Weinstein et al, 1995:832-833). The question also refers to men and women being separated through the division of labour, with male dominated areas of labour often being valued higher (Hirdman, 1988). This question also refers to previous research on Namibia, which found education important for the construction of masculinity among the Owambo people since it increased the probability of a higher income (Brown et al., 2015:589).

How different personality traits are ascribed to men refers to the theme of The Sturdy Oak, where men are supposed to be tough and confident (Weinstein et al, 1995:832-833), but also to the gender system theory where men and women are constructed as each other’s opposites. To maintain this separation, men and women are ascribed different personality traits. Therefore, personality traits are an important part of the construction of masculinity (Hirdman, 1988). How this is done can however differ depending on the given context.

The question regarding violence is based upon the theme Give ‘Em Hell!, which emphasises violent behaviour as an important aspect of the masculine identity (Weinstein et al, 1995:832-833). It also refers to men being the dominant holders of violence within society, and men being more likely to own a weapon than women (Connell, 1995:83). How violence is viewed and responded to can therefore show if and how violence maintains the hegemonic masculinity, or if it is discarded as a part of masculinity.

The questions are purposefully formulated in an open way, to minimize self-confirmatory bias. More open questions are able to encompass more aspects of the material, where more narrow questions run the risk of missing information that do not fit within the questions. This also helps encompass important aspects of Namibian masculinity which Brannon’s masculinity scale fails to include. To be able to find all possible interpretations of the texts, the material will be analysed two times according to the method which is suggested by Essaiason et al (2017:229). The first time that the material is analysed, the content analysis will be conducted. The second time, the analytic questions will be asked to the letters which were found through the content analysis. Thereby, the analytic questions will not be asked to the entire text material, only to letters which are known to discuss the relevant themes. This is due to limitations in time, and
this method creates a natural and fair demarcation of the material. However, this also have some disadvantages. There might be a risk that the discourse analysis misses something important that is not included in the content analysis. To fully understand the discourse of the material, it would be preferred to analyse the entire text material. However, due to limitations in time this is not possible.
3. Research Design and Method

3.1 Choice of Case
Aside from the relatively recent ending of an intrastate conflict, there are several reasons for why Namibia is an interesting case for the study of masculinity norms. According to Hughes and Tripp, sub-Saharan Africa is ideal for the studies on how intra-state conflict affects gender norms. Since the Second World War, Africa has experienced a high amount of civil conflicts. During the past two decades, the number of armed conflicts in Africa has declined and there has been an increase in women’s political representation (Hughes & Tipp, 2015:513-14). The Namibian war of independence is one of these large civil conflicts (Harmse & Dunstan, 2017:5). Since the declaration of their independence, Namibia has seen an increase in women’s representation within the legislature. In the election of 1989, five seats in the national assembly were occupied by women. In the 2003 election, this increased to 18 seats. Hence, seats occupied by women increased from 6.94% to 25% of the assembly (EISA, 2019). This clearly shows a change in gender norms which allow women to gain political influence and representation. One could thereby argue that this change should also be reflected in the construction of masculinity norms.

The majority of SWAPO’s leaders and some of the Namibian population moved into exile as refugees, students, politicians and soldiers. When the campaigning began for the elections of Namibia in 1989, the majority of SWAPO’s political leaders were still living in exile. Many of these leaders were receiving academic degrees from universities to prepare them for their future roles as governmental leaders (Dobell, 2000). According to SWAPO, they sent thousands of young men and women to receive education abroad (SWAPO, nd). When Namibia gained independence, the majority of these people moved back to Namibia (Mwase, 1990:113). One could argue that this would create a diversity of values and attitudes between the people who stayed in Namibia and the people who were living in exile, since they were exposed to different cultures and norms. The amount of people returning to Namibia, and their different experiences, can therefore be seen as a possible cause for a shift in norms amongst the people. If this is true, however, is still to be explored.

3.2 Data Selection
Since this analysis aims to examine if there is a shift in norms over time, the time-span of 1991-2003 has been selected. To examine all of the newspaper articles from this time-period would
however not be possible in the scope of a bachelor thesis, since a bigger amount of data decreases the time which can be spent on analysing each text (Esaiasson et al. 2017:225-226). Thus, the data selected has been limited to articles from 1991 to 1992, and 2002 to 2003. This will still enable an understanding of how norms are expressed shortly after the end of the conflict, and how these have developed during the following decade. The starting year of 1991 has been chosen since it is the first full year after Namibia became independent (Richard, 2014). To achieve a greater understanding on the development of norms, a larger time span might be preferable. However, due to limitations in accessing data after the year 2003, this year marks the end of the timeframe which will be analysed. The articles analysed are accessed through The Nordic Africa Institute, which has an archive on The Namibian newspaper. However, this archive only covers the years 1985 to 1988, and 1991 to 2003. As previously noted, women’s political representation in the legislature has also increased during this time span (EISA, 2019). Therefore, the chosen time span should be sufficient in detecting a development in norms.

The data which will be selected is, as previously stated, letters from the “letters to the editor”-section in newspaper The Namibian. The Namibian is an independent newspaper, which claims to be a newspaper representative of the people (The Namibian, 2010). Therefore, state censorship is not to be expected. This is also supported by several letters that readers have sent in which are critical of the Namibian government and the Namibian newspaper. Anyone can send in “letters to the editor”-section, and the number of letters varies between each publication. It is, however, important to note the high rates of illiteracy in Namibia, which in 1991 was as high as 35% of the population (UNESCO, 2016). This may, of course, have some implications on who is able to write and send in a letter. Another limitation to the choice of material is that the letters have to be approved by the editors of the newspaper, meaning that some letters may not be published due to the editor’s own values. However, the editors of the Namibian are also citizens of Namibia and should therefore also be affected by the masculinity norms in Namibia. One could therefore argue that even if the editors censor some of the letters, the letters that are published are still an adequate representation of the norms of Namibia.

In my data selection, I will not pay attention to the author of each letter. Both women and men work together in the reproducing and maintaining of masculinity norms (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005:832). Since discourse analysis, which will be presented in the following section, is not interested in specific agents but rather the discourse itself, this becomes further irrelevant (Boréus & Bergström, 2017:210). In the first period, 446 letters are analysed from
103 issues of the newspaper, and in the second period 849 letters from 124 issues. The analysis thereby consists of 1295 letters overall.

3.3 Discourse Analysis and Content Analysis

This study will be based on a qualitative discourse analysis which will be complemented by a more quantitative content analysis. Hence, this analysis will use mixed methods, also known as multi-methods. This is by some researchers seen as a methodological ideal, on the basis that qualitative and quantitative methods can communicate with and complement each other. Scholars also argue that this can be viewed as a method for achieving triangulation, where different methods are used to analyse the same material. By viewing the same issue from different perspectives, and receiving coherent results, we can be more confident in our findings. However, mixed-methods are also critiqued by scholars who believe the two different methods are unable to be combined in a satisfactory way due to their differences in norms and cultures. Scholars also claim that they may be able to complement each other, but not give an inferential leverage (Söderström, 2011:68).

The basic premise of content analysis is to systematically break down a text material through coding, to be able to categorise and describe this material. Quantitative content analysis is often used for measuring frequencies. This is believed to be representative of something outside of the text material, such as the frequency of different ideas in a party manifesto representing the policy positions of that party. Content analysis can be beneficial if one wants to study a change over time, since it allows for comparisons of similar material over different time spans. Content analysis is also suitable for discovering patterns in a large amount of material, such as numerous “letters to the editor” (Boréus & Bergström, 2017:24-25) which will be analysed in this study. Furthermore, this method is also suited for the examination of the attention that is paid to certain topics (ibid: 26). In this study, content analysis will be applied to examine the frequency of different topics which are discussed in material, and how these have changed over time. If there is a lower frequency of a specific topic in the later years of the material, this might reflect a change in attitudes. We cannot, however, be certain that this is the case. The content analysis cannot explain why the change in frequency occur, if it is due to a change of attitudes or rather because of a decrease of interest among the writers of the letters. It is therefore beneficial to complement the content analysis with discourse analysis, to be able to gain a better understanding for the change in frequency.
Content analysis is beneficial in many ways, but it also has its limitations. One of these limitations is that the frequency of a specific topic is not necessarily related to it being more important in the given context. It may be more important to understand in which way a topic is discussed, than how many times (ibid: 45). This problem will be attempted to be managed by the help of the discourse analysis. Another limitation is that content analysis can only analyse what is decided within the coding scheme beforehand. Therefore, one might miss important information that cannot be captured with the coding scheme. It also means that you can only analyse what is explicitly said within the texts, and therefore might risk missing important implicit meanings or topics that are not discussed, and why (ibid: 46). This problem will also be attempted to be solved through discourse analysis, speaking to the advantages of multiple-methods, but also by doing parts of the coding for the content analysis inductively if necessary.

Discourse analysis views language as not being a neutral instrument of communication, it does not reflect a given reality. The method rather emphasises the constitutive power of language, where different words can have different meanings ascribed to them. Power is an important element of the construction of discourses, since groups with power can easier promote different understandings, categorisations and meanings (ibid: 210). A discourse can be defined as “a mode of organizing knowledge, ideas, or experience that is rooted in language and its concrete contexts” (Merriam-Webster, nd). It can be seen as favourable method for analysing “letters to the editor”, since discourse analysis believe that text receive meaning from a wider discourse. All text-material should be understood through the discourses that the texts manifest, and therefore also by other texts that it is related to. In the same way, the discourse itself is understood by the interpretation of many single texts. The texts are therefore both receiving their meaning through the discourse, and giving meaning to the discourse. They can be seen as mutually constitutive (Boréus & Bergström, 2017:13.14).

According to discourse analysis, identities are seen as unstable and can take different forms in different contexts. A specific identity cannot exist if it is not placed in opposition to something else, there can be no we without a them. Discourse analysis does not focus on specific agents and their motives, but rather the constitutive power of the discourse itself (Boréus & Bergström, 2017:210). The method is beneficial in studies of the construction of identities and to study how attitudes change over time. It can also study different power structures, such as gender power (ibid: 238). This correlates with the gender system theory by Yvonne Hirdman, where gender
is constructed as each other’s opposites, to give meaning to the own gender but also to create a gendered power structure (Hirdman, 1988).

The content and discourse analysis will, as previously stated, be applied to “letters to the editor”-section of the newspaper *The Namibian*. Similar research investigating hegemonic masculinities often use the method of focus groups or interviews (Brown et al., 2005; Hollander, 2014). Even though my thesis shares a similar goal as these studies, our methods are quite different. My method has the advantage of capturing attitudes and opinions in a more natural way, it is not forced in any way since the letters to be analysed are written without the knowledge of this thesis. A negative aspect, however, is that there is no possibility to ask further questions to the authors. An interview or focus group might create a greater understanding for the attitudes or thoughts of the people, by asking follow-up questions. The method of analysing “letters to the editor” may, however, be able to comprehend different tensions in the discourse on a larger scale. The letters can be written by all (literate) citizens of Namibia, and are not contained to a certain region. It can therefore attempt to analyse the discourse of the country, rather than a small group representative of their region.
4. Results and Analysis

The analysis will be divided according to the four themes from Brannon’s masculinity scale, on which the analytical framework is based upon. Firstly, the results from the content analysis will be presented for each theme. Following is a presentation of the discourse analysis, and each section will be concluded by an analysis based on the theoretical framework.

4.1 No Sissy Stuff

The content analysis for this theme show a clear change in the frequency of which homosexuality is mentioned in the letters. During the first time-period (1991-1992), homosexuality is never mentioned. In the second time-period (2002-2003), it is mentioned in 0.71% of the letters. Of these letters, 50% of the letters described it as something positive while 16.67% described it as something negative. The rest of the letters mentioned homosexuality without ascribing it a value. Having several sexual partners was mentioned in 0.22% of the letters in the first period, and always seen as something negative. In the second period, it was mentioned in 0.47% of the letters. 0.12% of the letters wrote about it in a positive way, while 75% of the letters described it as something negative. Finally, HIV or AIDS were mentioned in 1.57% of the letters in the first period. 14.29% of these letters assigned responsibility for the prevention of the disease on men, while 42.86% of the letters put the responsibility on both of the genders. In the second period, 3.77% of the letters mentioned HIV or AIDS. Of these, only 3.13% thought that men had the responsibility of prevention while 59.38% of the letters thought that both men and women were responsible. None of the letters of either time-period though that women had the primary responsibility for prevention.

As illustrated by the content analysis, the first period has no letters discussing or mentioning homosexuality. One is unable to conclude why this absence is, but the theoretical framework suggest that this is due to the “anti-femininity norm”. An important aspect of traditional masculinity norms is to reject everything that is seen as feminine, and to do this can be a strategy to claim one’s masculinity. Homosexual men are often viewed as feminine, which makes heterosexuality an integral part of traditional masculinity (Falomir-Pichastor et al., 2019:208). Thereby, the absence of homosexuality being mentioned in the letters might be due to a fear of being associated with it, and thereby undermining one’s masculinity. We cannot, however, be certain if this is true.
In the second time-period, there is a clear conflict in the discourse of homosexuality. There are some who view homosexuality as equal to heterosexuality, while others view it as something negative and immoral. A letter published the 30th of August in 2002 praised a former prime minister who openly talked of the rights of lesbian and gay Namibians. The letter states that “[lesbians and gays] fought just as hard for freedom as any other Namibian”, and should therefore enjoy the same rights as other citizens. This belief was shared among other letters, with one writer urging the state to allow adoption for same-sex couples. One letter also mentioned a female politician who was labeled a lesbian after speaking up for lesbian and gay rights, which further supports the argument for the absence of homosexuality in the first period.

Even though these letters talk of homosexuality in a positive manner, they also reflect a negative discourse regarding homosexuality in the society. This discourse is reflected in letters such as the one published on the 3rd of September in 2003. This letter mentions the current president’s open stance against homosexuality, and urges him to therefore “stop sodomy in prisons”. This refers to homosexual encounters between men in the prisons, both rape and consensual sexual relationships. The writer also states that “maybe that is where homosexuality has originated in Namibia”, referring to a man raping another man.

In the first period, having several sexual partners is something that is clearly condemned and is often discussed in relation to the spreading of HIV and AIDS, which is thought to destroy a person’s future. The letters also reveal a discourse of people infected with HIV or AIDS as being less valuable to the society, with several letters being outraged at the treatment of infected people. A letter published on the 24th of February in 1992 referred to a public statement from an official, who said that the AIDS infected citizen “is not going to contribute to economic growth”. The writer states that the people infected with HIV should be encouraged and supported, instead of looked down upon. Similar thoughts are reflected in a letter published on the 15th of January in 1992, which discussed the way an AIDS patient was treated in a state hospital. According to the writer, the patient was not tended to by the nurses who called AIDS a “returnee disease”. Even though the writer of this letter was outraged of this treatment, this and other letters reflect a discourse which view people with HIV or AIDS as less of a citizen than others.

In the second time-period, having several sexual partners is still seen as something negative. In contrast to the first period, however, it is often described as a male practice. This can be illustrated by a letter published on the 25th of March in 2003, which discussed men who have
several relationships while their partners are expected to remain faithful. The writer states that “a man can have up to four women at the same time without any problem [...] I beg you to change your lifestyle!”. This view is shared by other writers, who also state that having several sexual partners is the biggest cause for the spreading of HIV.

In the second time-period, HIV and AIDS is often discussed in the context of how to prevent the spreading of the disease. There is a consensus among the letters of abstinence being the most sufficient method of preventing the spread of the disease. Several of the letters mention the ABCD-approach, such as a letter published on the 21st of January in 2003. According to this approach, the preferred method of prevention is to practice abstinence and being faithful to your HIV-negative partner in marriage. If one is unable to do this, the use of condoms is the only acceptable option. By not fulfilling either of these methods, the only possible outcome is death. This approach is mentioned in several of the letters, and the only other option mentioned is complete abstinence from premarital sex. In several of the letters, women and children are seen as the people suffering the most from HIV and AIDS, and as being the ultimate victims of the disease. One could argue that for there to be a victim, there also has to be an offender. This offender is never distinguished in the letters but, according to the gender system theory, the offender may be men. According to the theory, there is a complete dichotomization of the genders which causes them to be seen as each other’s opposites (Hirdman, 1988). Furthermore, women are often described as passive while men are seen as more active (Mirkin, 1984). Implicitly, men are thereby labeled as responsible for infecting the female “victims”. This is further motivated by the previous discussion regarding homosexuality, which is largely unaccepted in the Namibian society. When discussing the transmission of HIV and sex, one might therefore argue that the sex is assumed to be by two people of the opposite gender. Carrying and spreading HIV and AIDS are thereby gendered, with women seen as innocent victims of the virus and men active spreaders of the disease.

To conclude the theme of *No Sissy Stuff*, there has been a clear change in the discourse of homosexuality. The content analysis clearly showcases an increase in the frequency of which the topic is discussed, and the discourse analysis illustrates how the discourse concerning homosexuality has become more contested. The view on having several sexual partners remains rather unchanged between the two periods, with both the content and discourse analysis showing that it is seen as something negative. The reason for this view seems to be the high rates of HIV and AIDS, which is often seen as being caused by promiscuity. The content
analysis suggests that the view on HIV and AIDS, and the views on the responsibility for its prevention, is consistent between the periods. This is however contradicted by the discourse analysis, which show that women are described as victims of the disease in the second period. Thereby, men implicitly become the diseases perpetrators. This does not mean that HIV and AIDS are an integral part of the hegemonic masculinity, since it is seen as something negative and degrading. The hegemonic masculinity is something all men strive towards (Connell, 1995), which in the case of No Sissy Stuff seems to be a healthy, monogamous and heterosexual man in both periods.

4.2 The Big Wheel
The content analysis for this theme show a clear change in the frequency of education mentioned in the letters. In the first period, education is mentioned and seen as important in 4.04% of the letters. Of these, education is discussed as particularly important for women in only 5.56% of the letters. None of the letters discuss the importance of education for boys or men. In the second period, importance of education has decreased to 1.41% of the letters. None of these are in anyway gendered. The issue of men being the breadwinner is discussed in 0.22% of all the letters during the first period, and is always seen as something positive or indisputable. The man as the breadwinner is however never mentioned in the second period. Responsibility for the home was mentioned in 1.12% of the letters during the first period and always described as being the responsibility of women. The frequency of this topic in the second period decreased to 0.24% of the letters, but was still always described as a woman’s responsibility. Finally, in the first period female politicians are mentioned in 0.67% of the letters and always discussed as something negative. In the second time-period, female politicians are mentioned in 0.24% of the letters, and the letters are always written in a positive manner.

In the first time-period, education is talked about as something important for all citizens of the nation. It is seen as an important aspect of the building of a new nation, with a specific emphasis on education in English to help unify the nation after an extensive independence struggle. One letter from 25th November 1991 critiques young people who refuse to go to school by saying “Why are they throwing their future away? They are spoiling our new nation”. Similar thoughts are expressed in other letters from the same time-period, with people refusing education being labelled “losers” and educated people being described as more valuable for the country. There is no struggle over the meaning of education as important for the building of the nation, it is not contested in any way. The letters emphasising the education of women motivate this by
claiming that women have a large impact on the family. Women are therefore, according to the letters, the best tool to educate the entire nation. Education of women is thereby not necessarily seen as an interest in itself, but rather because it will help decrease the illiteracy rates of the entire nation through their roles as mothers. There are also several letters critiquing the high costs of education, and education not being available for everyone.

In the second time-period, education is still seen as important for all Namibian citizens and an integral part in the development of the Namibian society. Education is often described as important for a democratic society and for the economic development of the country. In a letter published March 11th in 2003, one writer stated that education is “the most successful weapon in hampering a bright future and the development of our beautiful country”. Education is thereby still seen as important both for the development of the country over all, but also for the personal development of each individual. Education is still described as important for obtaining a high-status job with a high salary, and education is often described as being too expensive. Education is described as a class-issue, not only due to students being unable to pay their education fees but also due to schools not receiving sufficient funding from the state. In this period, however, education is never discussed related to a specific gender.

Income earning in the first period is often related to men, with letters complaining of low salaries “for a family man” who needs to provide for his children and wife. A letter published on the 19th of July in 1992 which discussed female politicians, stated that “women should remain women”, referring to them staying home while the men work to support their family. This letter also states that the difference between men and women “[determine] their authority and status in life”. Similar thoughts are expressed in other letters, with men always being referred to as the primary income earner of the household. There seems to be a consensus among the letters that women are responsible for taking care of the home and the children. This is reflected in a letter stating that “women are not, and will never be equal to men because of […] limits such as the fact that women bear children” (10/07-92) According to the writer, these “limits” make women unsuitable for labour work and their true place is in the home.

In contrast to the first period, there is no discussion of the man as the primary income earner or women being more suitable to take care of the family. There is rather an encouragement of women engaging in politics and having a career. A letter published on May 27th of 2003 criticizes the absence of women in history books depicting the independence struggles. The letter calls for women of Namibia to speak of their experiences in the struggles and to “no
longer stand in the shadow of a man”. There are no letters discussing men as the primary income earners, neither in a positive or negative way. It is difficult to know if this is due to it being an unchallenged norm, or men no longer being seen as the breadwinner of the family. However, the changed attitudes towards female income earners may suggest that this absence is due to a more equal responsibility for the family income. At least, the findings show a shift in norms regarding employment. Despite this, women are still thought of as responsible of the children and the home. In several letters, such as one published on 22nd of November in 2002, the writer states that women should be respected because “women are our mothers and must be encouraged to raise our children in a loving/caring environment”. The notion of women being respected as mothers is shared by several writers, and women are described as the ones who should take care of the children. This corresponds with the concept of *woman’s conditional release* by Eva Moberg (1996), where women who enter the work force are still seen as responsible for the children. Therefore, women entering the workforce does not automatically lead to an increased equality (Moberg, 1996).

In the first time-period, education in itself is not gendered since it is not described as more important for either of the genders. There is a strong agreement between the letters of education as important for all citizens of Namibia and the building of a new nation. However, the argument for education is gendered. Women are motivated to receive education due to their status in the household and impact on their children, while no similar argument related to men is put forward. The letters describing education as important for a good job and higher social status can thereby be seen as more targeted to men, especially if one considers the positive depiction of the male breadwinner in the letters. This can be seen as a representation of the distinctive separation and the male norm in the gender system theory (Hirdman 1988). There is a clear division in labour, with men being more valued as the primary income earner of the family. The woman is seen as more suitable taking care of the household, which according to the theory is due to the biological difference between the sexes making men unable to conceive a child (Hirdman, 1988). Education is also described as not equally accessible for everyone, with high costs of education supplies and the difference in education between areas as described by the letters. Despite this, education is valued. An important part of hegemonic masculinity is the fact that it can only be obtained by a few, while being valued by everyone (Connell, 1995:77), which corresponds the depiction of education in the letters. Furthermore, education is seen as a cultural and institutional ideal for the building of the new nation, as well as an individual ideal to receive a high paying job. An important part of hegemonic masculinity is
the coherence between individual, institutional and cultural ideals (Connell, 1995:77). Thereby, education and income earning are important aspects of the hegemonic masculinity during the first time-period.

In the second time-period, education is not gendered. Even though there has been no change in the (non)gendering of education, the gendering of the arguments for education has changed. There is no longer a distinct motivation for the education of women, and no description of women receiving education because to their role as mothers. Education is encouraged to all citizens of Namibia for the same reasons. This should be regarded a hegemony in the discourse since it is unchallenged. Similar to the first time-period, education is often encouraged due to it being seen as beneficial for the country as a whole but also since it allows the individual to receive a higher paying job. Thereby, education is still motivated as an individual, cultural and institutional ideal. However, education may be a hegemonic norm, but it cannot be distinguished as an integral part of the hegemonic masculinity. The major change between the two time-periods with respect to the topic of the Big Wheel, is the changing of the discourse for women and income earning. Income earning has changed from being predominantly male to in the second period not being gendered at all. According to Hirdman, the male norm is threatened if the rule of difference between the gendered is unable to be upheld (Hirdman, 1988). The change in the discourse regarding income earning and employment can therefore be understood as the male norm (as breadwinner) being threatened, resulting in a more equal participation in the labour market. The form of this threat, and the reason for the change in discourse, can however not be explained by this analysis.

To conclude the theme of The Big Wheel, there has been a significant change in the attitudes toward female politicians and women entering the labour market. This is supported by both the content and discourse analysis which also show that the male breadwinner is no longer explicitly valued in the second time-period. Despite this, women are still considered to be responsible for the home in the second period. The content analysis also suggests a change in the view of education, with education being more targeted towards women in the first period. The discourse analysis, however, show how education is not gendered in either period but that the argument for education is gendered in the first period. Education can be seen as being a crucial part of the hegemonic masculinity in the first period, while in the second period being a hegemonic norm in society over all. Education might still be a part of the hegemonic masculinity, but we cannot be certain of this. Being the sole income earner of the family was
an important part of the hegemonic masculinity in the first period, but in the second period this seems to have changed. In the second period, the hegemonic masculinity is more accepting of a working wife as long as she is still capable of taking care of the home and children.

4.3 The Sturdy Oak

According to the content analysis, there has been a clear change in how different personality traits are ascribed to and valued for men. In the first period, the personality traits related to the sub-category “strength” was mentioned in 2.24% of the letters. Of these, 80% saw toughness as a strength while 20% valued kindness as a strength. In the second period, the traits were mention in a combined total of 1.06% of the letters. Of these letters, 11% saw toughness as a strength while 89% viewed kindness as a strength. The personality-traits related to work ethic were mentioned in 1.35% of the letters in the first period, where 50% valued someone as a team-player and 50% valued a leadership role. In the second period, these traits were mentioned in a combined 0.82% of the letters. Letters which valued a person as a team-player made up 14.29% of these letters, and leadership was valued in 85.71% of the letters.

The discourse analysis of the first time-period illustrate personality traits such as hard-working, diligence and dignity being valued among men in Namibia. In a letter published on the 20th of January in 1992, the writer of the letter wants to congratulate the boys of a sports team for winning an important match. The letter also states “you must work harder and win more games in [the] future”. Messages encouraging a sports team to work harder may on its own not be seen as a representation of masculine ideals, but similar sentiments are displayed in several letters concerning other prominent male figures. A further example of this is a letter published on the 4th of September in 1992, praising former rebels during the independence struggles who the writer describes as “true heroes”. The writer describes these people as brave and honourable, who “even through the darkest of times, never gave up and never surrendered”. There seems to be a shared respect for leader figures who listen and care for the people, such as the head and chief coordinator of SWAPO during the time. A letter published on the 25th of September of 1991 describes this man as a leader who cares about his people and who listens to other members of the party. This is something the writer views as increasingly important to mobilise the people of Namibia. There is also a shared respect of men who worked and fought together with others, without being a prominent leader. This is reflected in a letter where the writer praises former combatants in the independence struggles. The writer quotes one of these combatants, saying “come brothers let us together oppose this danger which threatens to invade
our Africa for we are one in colour and custom” (4/09-92). The importance of fighting together and viewing the people of Namibia as one is illustrated in several of the letters. In the first period, being a leader and working together as one seems to be valued the same.

In the second period, personality traits related to kindness and compassion seems to be highly valued in men. Several letters were published in April of 2002 about a famous Namibian boxer, urging him to change his “bad boy attitude”. One of these letters, published on the 26th, the writer states that the wrestler is a “young man who lacks moral principles and a sense of self-respect and respect for others”. The writer encourages the boxer to become “a positive role model”, by caring and showing respect for others. Other letters often refer to respected men as openminded and caring for others. A letter published on the 21st of June in 2002 is written in memory of a former combatant in the independence struggle who passed away a few years earlier. The letter describes the man as strong and diligent, but also as compassionate and gracious. The writer states that “like an oak tree he survived all kinds of weather”, referring to his continuous fight for his country and the love for the people of Namibia. This letter also reflects the recognition of leadership-figures which is prominent in the second period. Admired men are often described as leaders, such as the letter published on the 22nd of February in 2002 paying tribute to a mayor who recently died. The letter describes him as “a born leader […] and executed his duties with diligence and honesty”. Leadership-figures are often described as inspirational, wise and humble. In contrast to the first-period, there is no clear praise for people who work well with others or in group.

The personality traits often mentioned in the first time-period corresponds to attributes often ascribed to hegemonic masculinity in military settings, such as honour, bravery and dutifulness (Gibson, 2014:615). Therefore, desirable personality traits ascribed to men can be seen as a direct result from the Namibian war of independence. Important and valuable personalist traits for combatants or servicemen in the military thereby continues to be valued in a post-war setting. In the second time-period, more than a decade after the end of the war, this has changed. Military-like personality traits no longer seems to be as admirable, and men who are caring and compassionate receive a high amount of respect. However, there is a strong admiration for men who are leaders or have leadership qualities. This is a change from the first period, where men who worked together with others were valued the same as strong leaders. Respected leaders in the second period are however described as caring and loving, rather than brave and honourable.
To conclude the theme of *The Sturdy Oak*, there is a clear change in the personality traits that are ascribed to men. In the first time-period, toughness and bravery seem to be important traits in a man. In the second period, traits such as kindness and affection are ascribed to men who are praised in the letters. This is supported by both the content and discourse analysis. The hegemonic masculinity has thereby gone from a more militant masculinity, with traits such as bravery and honour, to a more compassionate and caring masculinity. There has also been a slight change regarding if a man is respected due to his leadership role or his capabilities of working with others. In the first period, men who fought together with others in the independence struggles are equally respected as the men who had prominent leadership roles. It is therefore difficult to outline how the hegemonic masculinity was constructed in relation to leadership. In the second period, the hegemonic masculinity is clearly related to being a prominent leader. It is however important that the leadership is one of compassion and kindness.

### 4.4 Give ‘Em Hell

The content analysis for this theme show a slight change in the discussion of violence in the letters. In the first period, the right to bear weapons was mentioned in 1.35% of the letters. Of these, 20% viewed having a weapon as a right while 80% viewed the owning a gun as something negative. In the second time-period, the right to own a gun was not mentioned at all. Gender-based violence was mentioned in 1.35% of the letters during the first period. In 33% of these letters, the blame was assigned to the victim and 67% viewed the offender as responsible for the attack. In the second period, gender-based violence was mentioned in 3.33% of the letters. Of these letters, 3.57% of the letters blamed the victim while 92.86% saw the perpetrator as responsible.

The discourse analysis of the first time-period display a discourse regarding guns as something unnecessary and only causing problems. In a letter published on the 31st of May in 1991, the writer explains that carrying dangerous weapons was a “continental tradition” since wild animals and people lives in close proximity to each other. Since this is no longer the case for the majority of all Africans, the writer states that there should “be a ban on carrying of weapons in public for every African except those in the service of the state, like the police and army”. This view is shared by several letters, which state that “we have too many [guns] in this country” (05/11-91) and “weapons are only for the police” (06/11-91). Furthermore, gender-based violence is often discussed in terms of rape. Several letters demand harder punishments for serious crimes such as rapes, murders and burglaries. A letter published on the 19th of march
in 1992 discusses the increasing reports on rape-cases and states that “I fail to understand whether these people who commit such crimes are normal – they must be sick”. The writer also states that people who commit such crimes deserves to spend the rest of their lives in prison; a thought that is shared by other letters as well. A letter published on the 24th of April in 1992 states that there should be harder punishments for criminals in the country. The writer argues that “crimes such as murder, rape etc. carry the mandatory death penalty around the world”, and that the death penalty should be implemented in Namibia. Other letters share the same view, with one stating that “we should punish [criminals] heavily, jailing them with long terms of hard labour” (06/12-91).

In the second time-period, there are no clear talk of weapons or the right to own a gun. There is however a clear discourse of gendered violence such as rape, which is seen as a heinous crime. Several letters describe rape as “a growing trend” (01/07-03) in Namibia, which needs to be combated. A letter published on the first of July in 2003, discusses the increasing violence in the country. The writer pleads to the men of Namibia, saying “To the Namibian men! I beg you to respect yourself and others, to change your dark lifestyle”. The writer also states that not even animals murder or rape each other, and “let us behave like men”. This implies that men who use violence are not behaving “like men”. This view is reflected in other letters, with one stating that “this is a word of caution to all barbaric men who feel that they can go on with this unwanted behavior to stop and become mature minded and have respect for human dignity” (12/07-02).

Both of the time-periods share a discourse of violence as something that should be condemned. However, when talking about violence in the second period, men are often described as the cause for this violence. The first period often talks about the criminals as “people”, not necessarily as men. The men might implicitly be seen as the culprits of the violent acts described, but this is not something we can say for certain. Therefore, the discourse analysis illustrates a change in the gendering of violence, or rather a gendering of the offender. When talking of how to prevent the violence in the second period, the writers often tries to reach out to the men of Namibia. This is a clear contrast to the first period, where the prevention of violence is often talked about in the context of banning guns or implementing harder punishments. According to Connell, men are often the holder of violence. Men are, for example, more likely to own and use weapons (Connell, 1995:83). Therefore, the first period might refer to men when they talk about gun-ownership or violent people but this is implicit. This is,
however, clearly showcased in the second time-period. The discourse analysis therefore shows a change in how violence is talked about in gendered terms, even if violence is always condemned.

To conclude the theme of *Give ‘em Hell*, the content and discourse analysis suggest a change in norms regarding gun-ownership. In the first period, the illegalization of weapons for individuals was seen as an important action in the prevention of violence. This is not the case in the second time-period, where the right to bear weapons is not discussed at all. There seems to have been a shift in how violence is viewed in terms of gender, where men are often singled out as the key reason for the increasing violence in the society. Violent men are also described as not being “real men”. Violence is, however, strongly condemned in both periods. It is therefore clear that violence is not part of the hegemonic masculinity, and more so in the second period than the first. The hegemonic masculinity is instead suggested to be a man who is peaceful and calm, not engaging in criminal behaviour.
Conclusion

The overall findings of the content and discourse in this analysis show a shift in masculinity norms during the period of 1991 to 2003. The hegemonic masculinity norms expressed among Namibians shortly after the end of the independence struggles echoed of militant masculine attributes, such as honour, bravery and diligence. Men who had been fighting during the independence struggles were seen as the embodiment of a true hero, no matter if they were a prominent leader or a foot soldier. Despite this, violence is not part of the hegemonic masculinity of this time. It is important to be strong, receive a good education and to later in life have a high income so that the man can take care of his family. It is also important to stay healthy, which entails that the man is celibate until marriage and then remains monogamous with his wife. These are the crucial aspects of the hegemonic masculinity in the post-war era, but the analysis also shows a development of these norms during the following decade. The norms expressed in the time-period of 2002 and 2003 show a hegemonic masculinity that is caring and compassionate. The hegemonic masculinity is a man with a leadership role, someone who takes a lot of responsibility, but he is a leader who cares for others. He is a non-violent, law-abider who respects the people around him. The hegemonic masculinity also respects his working wife, as long as he does not have to take care of the house work. It is also important that the hegemonic masculinity is a healthy one, who is faithful to his wife and is celibate until marriage.

Hence, the purpose of this thesis has been achieved, since the research questions regarding how masculinities are expressed and have developed in the post-war era have been answered. This has been achieved by a mixed-method of content and discourse analysis, which has been conducted on a total number of 1295 of letters. The two methods often found similar things, but the discourse helped achieve a greater understanding for what was found with the content analysis as well as detect implicit attitudes. Even though the analysis consists of a relatively large amount of material, the material in the form of “letters to the editor” may increase the uncertainty regarding the results of this thesis. It remains unclear whether or not the letters have been the subject of censorship, or if they can be seen as a fair representation of the entire Namibian population. Future studies should therefore aim to capture the attitudes and norms of all citizens, without the risk of censorship or discrimination due to illiteracy.
Despite these limitations, this study has contributed to research on how masculinities are constructed in the aftermath of an armed conflict, and how this construction of masculinity norms develops during a peace-period. This thesis has also illustrated how different spheres of society and how different actions are gendered during the post-war period, and how this affects the construction of masculinity. The findings of this thesis thereby correspond with previous research that suggest that an increase in women’s political representation lead to a change in gender norms, as well as with similar studies that found that a societal crisis causes a change in the construction of masculinities. However, further research on this field should be conducted to achieve a greater understanding of how masculinity norms are constructed during a transition to peace. Research on how masculinity construction is affected by armed conflict, and what role these norms play in the work for a lasting peace is also encouraged.
References


Petersen, A, 2003,  “Research on Men and Masculinities: Some Implications of Recent Theory for Future Work”, Men and Masculinities, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 54-69


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## Appendix 1 – Analytical scheme and results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Category</th>
<th>Sub-Categories</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Period 1</th>
<th>Period 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>No Sissy Stuff</strong></td>
<td>Homosexuality</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.1667</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Several sexual partners</td>
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<td>0.0012</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Negative</td>
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<td>0.7500</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Responsibility of HIV and AIDS</td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>0.1429</td>
<td>0.0313</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Women</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>0.4286</td>
<td>0.5938</td>
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<td><strong>The Big Wheel</strong></td>
<td>Importance of education</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.0556</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Male breadwinner</td>
<td>Positive</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attitudes toward female politicians</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Negative</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responsibility for the home</td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Sturdy Oak</strong></td>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>Toughness</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.1111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kindness</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.8889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work ethic</td>
<td>Team-player</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Leader</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.8571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Give ‘Em Hell!</strong></td>
<td>Right to bear weapons</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Gender-Based Violence</td>
<td>Victim</td>
<td>0.3333</td>
<td>0.0357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Perpetrator</td>
<td>0.6667</td>
<td>0.9286</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Number of Letters</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>446</td>
<td>849</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2 – List of Material

The Namibian, 1991, February, The Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala (3)
The Namibian, 1991, April, The Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala (11)
The Namibian, 1991, June, The Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala (5)
The Namibian, 1991, July, The Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala (3)
The Namibian, 1991, August, The Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala (4)
The Namibian, 1991, September, The Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala (6)
The Namibian, 1991, October, The Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala (5)
The Namibian, 1991, November, The Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala (8)
The Namibian, 1991, December, The Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala (4)
The Namibian, 1992, January, The Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala (8)
The Namibian, 1992, February, The Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala (6)
The Namibian, 1992, July, The Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala (7)
The Namibian, 1992, August, The Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala (3)
The Namibian, 1992, September, The Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala (5)
The Namibian, 1992, October, The Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala (1)
The Namibian, 1992, November, The Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala (1)
The Namibian, 1992, December, The Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala (2)
The Namibian, 2003, September, The Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala (9)

The Namibian, 2003, October, The Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala (2)

*Number of issues in parentheses*