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### Becoming cornered

*Migration, masculinities and marginalisation in inner-city Johannesburg*

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# CHAPTER EIGHT

## Conclusion

## Introduction

The last decades have seen a proliferation of narratives related to masculinities in post-apartheid South Africa. In this dissertation, I have focused on how these narratives intersect with migration and marginalisation, and I have specifically examined how migrant men in inner-city Johannesburg have responded to political, economic, legal and social marginalisation, as well as to dominant anti-migrant and problematic masculinities narratives. I have argued that systematic marginalisation and discursive practices may result in men becoming 'cornered', leaving them with no or limited room to manoeuvre. In such a position, men find it difficult to live up to their own and society's gendered expectations. Related research in various contexts has conceptualised men's inability to fulfil masculine expectations and roles as 'failed masculinities'. This notion of failed masculinities has been offered to explain men's use of violence, presumably as a way to compensate for their failures (Dube 2016; Morrell 1998; Jewkes and Morrell 2010; Ratele 2013). For example, building on the idea of a 'crisis of masculinity' (Hamber 2010; Cornwall et al. 2011), studies in South Africa have portrayed men as struggling to embrace the changes that came with the post-apartheid new democracy and its support for women's legal equality (Clowes 2013).

This new democracy has been associated with a shift in gender relations and a consequent emasculation of men, resulting in the increasing prevalence of violence against women and the associated spread of HIV (Morrell 1998). These assumptions gave impetus to many interventions targeting men to mould them into responsible and 'gender-equitable' individuals. Owing to their social, economic and legal positioning in society, migrant men have been disproportionately targeted by such interventions, because they are presumed to be 'highly mobile'. High mobility has been associated with an increased risk to transmit HIV as well as higher levels of violence (Campbell 1997). Despite being identified as a 'key population', migrants are still not adequately provided for in the national policy on health coverage (Vearey 2017), placing them in an ambiguous position regarding access to state resources. This becomes an added rationale among some NGOs, who seek to fill the gaps in government services for marginalised migrants. While there are many NGOs and interventions that target migrants, I have focused on interventions that target men with the aim of addressing gender-based violence (and HIV), through encouraging men to change behaviour. The interventions I examined in this study situate gender-based violence within the gender (in)equality framework on one side and care in its different manifestations on the other side. Such interventions are premised on the 'crisis of masculinity' theory, as described above.

In as much as I concur that men are often forced to shift their ideas and

practices of masculinity in response to the lived realities of marginalisation, I have argued, using empirical evidence as presented in the preceding chapters, that the resulting shifts are more varied and unstable than ‘masculinity in crisis’ would suggest. I have attempted to show how men understood violence as emanating from deeper underlying issues, more economic and political than gendered. I have also shown how violence, according to my participants, was neither a given attribute of masculine identity nor a predetermined outcome, but was a practice triggered by various factors that resulted in what I have termed ‘being cornered’. Hence a man might be both violent and caring; he could believe in women’s empowerment but not subscribe to the rhetoric of gender equality; or he could subscribe to gender equality and still act abusively towards women or other men. Men who find themselves in cornered positions respond to normative ideas of masculinities in undetermined and multidimensional ways.

While men’s perpetuation of violence and women’s disproportionate risk and experience of violence cannot be overemphasised, my findings show that violence was a complicated multidimensional practice that was not only difficult to define but also varied in its manifestations. My findings call to question current developmental practices that aim to solve the problem of gender-based violence by training problematic men in positive masculinities so that they become better men, using individual behavioural change interventions. These practices, and the theory of change that motivates them, are further complicated by the metrics used to define and measure positive masculinities, primarily simplistic frameworks that assume linear transformation. The present study, echoing findings by Jewkes and colleagues (2015) and Ratele (2015), shows that the solutions implemented by NGOs do not always achieve the desired results, especially when they are entangled in the politics and messiness of the everyday lives of the NGOs and individuals involved. Further, my research shows that some men (and women) participate in such interventions with the aim of getting access to the labour market. In this way NGOs have unintentionally provided spaces through which cornered migrant men (and women) can execute *kukiya kiya* endeavours in an effort to escape the tough economy.

The ethnographic material presented in this thesis challenges the widely circulated and deterministic ‘crisis of masculinity’ narrative whereby violence is understood as a straightforward and inevitable outcome of being cornered. With the aim of capturing the many challenges that men in inner-city Johannesburg face in their everyday lives, I have coined the term ‘cornered masculinities’ as a spatial metaphor for marginalisation. This is a space of unpredictability and contingency. Scarcity, competition, unequal distribution of resources and opportunities, disappointments, unpredictability of employment and housing, poor health and meagre food, xenophobia, corruption – all these may contribute to violent interactions among and against migrants. The same factors may also combine to create contexts in which kinship, friendship and positive gender roles

emerge as strategies utilised by differently positioned migrant men to cushion and distinguish themselves.

I have opted for a theory that can simultaneously capture the powerful structural forces that constrained the lives of my study participants as well as the impact of their desires in finding new possibilities. While drawing on the ways that study participants have used the concept of cornering to theorise the structures and opportunities that shape their lives, I have also engaged with the anthropology of becoming (Biehl and Locke 2017) to argue against an understanding of migrant men as a sum of the forces that construct or constrain them. Rather, I show the ways they move 'around impasses or push through them, carving out small life chances against the odds' (Biehl and Locke 2017, 75). In spite of the crises, and particularly the 'money crisis', to quote my interlocutors, men always found ways to make do. I have termed such agentic efforts '*kukiya kiya*' after my interlocutors' theorisations of themselves. Metaphorically, this phrase describes the process of trying many keys to open a door. I have also framed the tinkering aspect in care as *kukiya kiya* to capture the flexibility and diverse adaptations, experiments and adjustments (Mol, Moser, and Pols 2010) by migrant men in their efforts to cope with the harshness of corner spaces. Understanding masculinities in relation to *kukiya kiya* helps us to move away from totalising theories that frame people as either this or that, an assertion that Nyamnjoh (2015) refutes using the concept of frontier Africans. Similarly, I present the participants in this study as 'frontier beings' who 'can simultaneously belong and not belong, be a present absence and an absent presence, without the compulsion of the zero-sum games of a regressive and stunted rationalism' (Nyamnjoh 2015, 8). I also extend the notion of *kukiya kiya* to frame the multiple efforts by NGOs to reinvent their ideas and interventions that aim to adapt to the shifting funding landscape in the context of global economic recession (Lorist 2020; Mueller-Hirth 2019).

I have found the concept of hegemonic masculinity, as developed by Connell (1995), useful in understanding power dynamics within gender hierarchies (within and between genders) as well as in identifying normative ideas of masculinities. In addition, Ratele's (2013, 2016) expansion of the concept in relation to violence and homicide among black South Africans was relevant particularly for capturing the ambiguous position of migrant men, who despite subscribing to certain hegemonic masculinities, also lacked social power and were thus in a subordinate position. Their self-reported use and ideas of violence were not always about dominating others, as might be implied by hegemonic masculinities framing, but rather seemed to emanate from a place of powerlessness or insecurity, for example, in response to violence targeting migrants. Paying attention to these nuances is imperative particularly in the study of masculinities, where for some time now, broad-brush strokes have been applied to diagnose certain populations (such as migrants and men in general) as problematic and in need of

transformation. Such population-level diagnoses can obscure the many ‘political, economic and social discontents behind their symptoms’ (Biehl and Locke 2017, 65). I propose looking at masculinities not as a structure, as implied by the term ‘hegemony’, but as an open-ended space (corner) that is under construction and thus never finished (Massey 2005; Nilan 1995; Nyamnjoh 2015; Biehl and Locke 2017). My use of the corner as a lens to understand masculinities was my way of theorising with my interlocutors who understood their quotidian challenges as temporary corners rather than as permanent structures.

Using case studies of migrant men, I have shown how migration contributes to shaping masculinities in post-apartheid South Africa by disrupting gender roles and familial structures, albeit not changing gender order per se. While the study focused mainly on migrant men in a resource-poor setting, I also considered the experiences of women, South African nationals and migrant men from different economic and social classes. My aim of including people from such social groups was to avoid coming to conclusions about black migrant marginalised men in a vacuum; I aimed rather to relate their experiences to others. Theoretically, I have included experiences of men and women from other social categories because I understand masculinity as relational, and not only to femininity but other factors such as class, nationality space and time. I have shown how men understood and practiced their masculinities in relation to what they thought of South African men and women as well as men from different economic classes. By including women, I sought to show how masculinities are not about what men think or do only, but also about how women relate to those ideas and practices. In the following section I highlight the key arguments arising from this study, drawing on the findings of the preceding chapters. I also highlight areas for further research, including observations I made and found relevant but could not fully pursue.

## **Associations between marginalisation and gendered violence in migrant populations**

One of my aims was to explore how gendered violence was associated with masculinities in marginalised migrant population. My findings have established complex interconnections between violence and gender. Using several case studies, I have shown the paradoxical positions of migrant masculinities when it comes of violence in post-apartheid South Africa. As men, my study participants were part of the collective group of predominant perpetrators of violence against women. And, despite their privileged position as men, their varying legal, economic and social statuses produced variation in how they experienced their purported male privilege. Being socially and legally marginalised made them targets of other forms of violence, such as xenophobia and structural gender-

based violence, as explored in Chapter 6. In explaining the differences and inequalities among men, Messner (1997) and Vetten and Ratele (2013) argue that all men do not share equally the privileges of being men, although they enjoy the collective privilege of being superior to women.

This reality made it difficult for me to focus on men's reported use or understanding of violence against women in isolation. I was compelled to examine the interconnectedness of different forms of violence and their gendered dimensions. In this process, I ended up looking at structural violence and legal and political factors together as cornering factors that were gendered in their manifestation because they affected women and men differently. For example, the xenophobic sentiments and attacks covered by the media centred particularly around masculinities as exemplified by the rhetoric 'they take our women and jobs' (Misago 2016). Based on the photos and videos that circulated during the September 2019 xenophobic attacks, it was evident that this was a battle fought by and against men. This is not to exclude the participation of women who were equally vocal, especially on social media and in the workshop I refer to in Chapter 5. However, men were the most visible among those marching and protesting in the streets.

Accordingly, NGOs that aim to address xenophobic violence have purposefully targeted men from resource-poor settings, with the workshop on xenophobia that followed the violent eruptions as but one example. However, not many men attended such interventions for various reasons, including because they did not find such projects helpful or relevant, and secondly, they felt they had other 'better' ways to spend their time, such as attending to income-generating activities that might ensure their survival in a tough economy. Women ended up attending such interventions, instead, for reasons that are not necessarily congruent with the objectives set by the NGOs, for example, to get food or transport money. The few migrant men who attended such interventions whom I was able to interview were motivated by reasons other than learning about violence; for example, John hoped to eventually get a paying job as a reward for his volunteering.

Working from the assumption that gender is relational, I also explored the manifestations and understandings of gendered violence in relation to women's experiences. Women as a collective occupy a lower level in the gender hierarchy, making them more susceptible to inequalities and violence. However, their specific position in society determines the level of impact and how they may respond to such inequalities. For example, Nomthi, the South African woman discussed in Chapter 4 and Chapter 6, shared experiences that were similar to those of Thando from Zimbabwe (Chapter 6), with both women experiencing abuse at the hands of their partners. Despite the similarity of their situations, their different positions in society, particularly in relation to their migrant statuses, resulted in different outcomes.

Nomthi as a South African had resources that made her options to leave her marriage relatively easier than was the case for Thando. In fact, Nomthi initiated divorce while Thando refused it, because she was not financially stable and thus unable to provide for herself. Nomthi had many friends and relatives in Johannesburg who could help her; Thando was considering going to a shelter for abused women. While both women left their children with their husbands, Thando was denied access to see them and, as a migrant with no papers, she had no recourse. On the other hand, despite having left her husband, Nomthi still had the upper hand: 'He cannot play games with me otherwise I will go to [the department of] Home Affairs and revoke his papers. It is just that he is looking after my children'. Nomthi's husband had certain boundaries that may have limited his behaviour or attitudes towards Nomthi; Thando's husband felt he did not need her for anything. Collectively, women share similar risks, particularly of violence by men, but their specific social position can determine their choices and costs.

Similar conclusions can be made about men collectively and as individuals. At face value, the men in my study appeared to subscribe to equal treatment of men and women to varying degrees. For example, the men at Uncle Kofi's Corner and those working for feminist NGOs openly denounced violence against women. Other men professed respect for women, but only when they were sober. When they were drunk, I heard them use derogatory names for some women, such as 'gold digger' or 'black mamba'. Despite their inconsistent attitudes, it was apparent that there was usually an internal (and at times expressed) conflict between ideas of gender equality and the place of men in an 'African' gender order, wherein men were expected to be leaders and protectors of their families and communities. In this thesis, I have suggested understanding such masculine ideals and expectations as forms of cornering that provide men with limited opportunities to express themselves as men.

Feminist scholars of masculinities have identified such views, beliefs and statements as markers of 'toxic masculinity'. The Gender Equitable Male (GEM) scale developed by Pulerwitz and Barker (2008), which has now become the flagship tool of the International Men and Gender Equality Study (IMAGES), identifies statements and attitudes similar to those that some of my study participants shared. However, the GEM scale defines only two categories of men: gender equitable and gender inequitable. Violence against women by men is one of the many markers of gender inequality, while men's involvement in reproductive roles involving care work is identified as a marker of gender equity. Such a framing makes it difficult to conceptualise the experiences and practices of men in my study, who straddled multiple albeit temporary categories as they challenged being confined to 'neat dichotomies and exclusionary identities' (Nyamnjoh 2015, 7).

Based on some of their attitudes and views that showed contempt for women and other genders (see Chapter 6), one may be tempted to prematurely conclude and label my study participants as violent. To counter this, Chapter 7 presents differently positioned men engaging in caregiving roles in their families or communities. Such practices, if read as stand-alone, could lead us into defining these men as gender equitable, a pitfall that Morrell and Jewkes (2011) warn against. These two scholars further argue that ‘efforts to change men through a focus on caring should secure a connection with gender equity through promoting human rights, empathy and emotional involvement rather just caring as a duty’ (Morrell and Jewkes 2011, 9). Doing so would exclude some men in this study who condemned violence, engaged in care work including caring for the sick and aged, and expressed emotions, but still did not find value in human rights as such rights did not seem to pertain to them as marginalised migrants. They particularly shunned the idea of gender equality, because of their cornered position wherein they found themselves economically, racially, legally and socially marginalised. Here they echoed Ratele’s (2017, 116) rhetorical question, ‘Equality with whom?’ This becomes further complicated if we consider power imbalances (Lorist 2020) between those who get to define the parameters of equality (such as those in the development world) and their targeted populations (such as the men in this study).

## **Masculinities, marginalisation and alternatives to violence**

Despite the everyday occurrence and seeming normalcy of violence, my interlocutors’ lives did not revolve around it. Rather, they moved on with their lives as best they could, given their contexts. From their place of incompleteness and inadequacy, cornered migrant men formed and/or altered convivial networks such as friendship and kinship to cushion themselves. In such relationships, care was a currency that cemented bonds. Men engaged in practices of (re)defining localised scripts and moral codes that were not exclusive to each other.

In the gender-transformative framework, gender-based violence is a marker of problematic masculinities that can be countered by promoting positive masculinity ideas and practices, such as men engaging in care work. In reaction to these claims, I have illustrated the complexities associated with both factors as markers of masculinities. While terms such as ‘gender equitable men’, ‘men who care’, ‘violent men’ are common in public health literature and within development interventions, this study establishes that such terms present people as ‘stable or fixed unidirectionally determined by history, power and language, culture’ (Biehl and Locke 2017, 42). Instead, an individual’s ideas, practices and behaviours are shaped by specific temporal and spatial contexts; hence a man’s

identity as a man is continually being worked on and negotiated based on certain factors that either inhibit or enable certain behaviours relating to violence and care.

A nuanced analysis of the practices of care and violence, beyond their simplistic framing within the gender-transformative framework, shows that violence, like care, is a complex issue that involves many (f)actors, enablers and inhibitors. To illustrate this point, I refer to Kimo's story in Chapter 6 and his statement, 'I am the king and my wife is my slave'. Every time he said this, I read it as his way of provoking me, soliciting my attention or picking at my thoughts. Men at Uncle Kofi's Corner assured me that he was joking and that he would never act like that. Their reasoning was that, as a migrant man married to a South African woman, he was not in a position to abuse his wife despite his self-proclaimed violent behaviour. The more I spent time with Kimo, the more I became convinced that he probably was just bluffing. But I could not help but wonder, if I had used a questionnaire in my study, how his bluffing would have influenced his responses and impacted my findings. Reflecting on Kimo's responses and his general behaviour, I began to question how ideas of masculinity shaped individuals' behaviour as research subjects. What could have been Kimo's motivation to present himself as a man in charge of his household through the use of violence, even if everyone else discredited his claims?

Kimo was not the only one who took up such a subject position. As indicated in Chapter 5, the female peer educators staying at the shelter, and volunteering for Men and Boys, had presented themselves as survivors of gender-based violence. Timmy from Men and Boys thought they were survivors of gender-based violence and that is why he had offered them a paid opportunity to be peer educators. John, also in Chapter 5, openly supported interventions that addressed violence against women and promoted the rights of migrants, but privately he denounced the efficacy of both. Given such scenarios, it becomes complicated to place any of the people I spoke with in a well-defined category based on their statements, attitudes or even practices. One can profess to be gender equitable but not act accordingly, similarly, one can profess to be gender inequitable (violent) but not act accordingly. This insight resounds with a statement made by Lang and Williams (1977, 112): 'a lived hegemony is always a process. It is not, except analytically, a system or a structure. It is a realised complex of experiences, relationships, and activities, with specific and changing pressures and limits'. Jewkes and colleagues (2015, S113) similarly argue that 'hegemonic positions are occupied situationally through practices that differ per context.' Therefore, I suggest that we understand violence and care as situated, processual practices that depend on enabling or disabling factors, which I describe in the following paragraphs.

## ***Understanding practices of violence and care as processes***

Among study participants, a 'South African woman' came to mean someone who knew their rights 'too much' and had an upper hand somehow, because of the resources available to her, as exemplified in the case of Nomthi. John's comments in Chapter 5 that 'women here have too many rights' can be read as reflecting his disappointment that he felt restricted by women's rights. In this way, being a 'South African woman' was not a protective factor against violence per se, but reflected an association of South African womanhood with an awareness of rights. Even if Kimo was serious about his threats, certain inhibiting factors would prevent him from acting in a violent way, particularly as a marginalised migrant. These factors included the law that would protect his wife and his dependency on her for papers and income. Linked to this, another factor in deterring migrant men from violence, particularly those who did not have papers, was to avoid getting in trouble with the law. As the South African government had already labelled them 'illegal' by denying them papers, they needed to avoid contact with police at all costs.

In addition to the law as a deterrent, there was also the issue of morality and the need to be seen as respectable. This was apparent in many conversations I had with study participants. For example, while men at Uncle Kofi's Corner subscribed to the idea that men held sole leadership in households, they always followed such statements with a caveat like 'that doesn't mean a man does whatever he wants'. Even though some things were permissible given men's advantaged position in the gender order, not everything was acceptable. In Chapter 4, I argued that men at Uncle Kofi's Corner made efforts to distinguish themselves as respectable men, different not only from South African men who they constructed as violent and lazy but also from wealthier men who they constructed as abusers who thought money could replace love. While such statements were opinions and not based on evidence, studies in other contexts found that migrant men performed exaggerated masculinities as a way of asserting and distinguishing themselves in transnational spaces where they otherwise felt emasculated by factors such as unemployment (Donaldson and Howson 2009; Mangezvo 2015). Feeling emasculated does not always result in aggression; it may also result in men's overcompensation in positive masculinities as a way of constituting their respectability.

Notions of respectability were also linked to religious values. Men at Uncle Kofi's Corner drew on their Christian and Islamic values of maintaining peace and love in their homes. Gender ideologies perpetuated via religion, unlike those espoused in gender-equality interventions, allowed them to maintain their unquestioned position as decision makers and leaders while at the same time condemning violence. Dube (2016) gives a similar example, drawing on Horowitz's (2001) study, that Afrikaner men were taught 'ladies first' while African

Xhosa men were taught 'men first'. Dube (2016, 84) notes that both scenarios were undergirded by the assumption that women were the weaker sex in need of protection. This example shows that while interventions may target certain characteristics of hegemonic problematic masculinities, this does not always translate to a shift in gender order. In the same way, taking up caregiving roles cannot be read as evidence of a gender transformation (Morrell and Jewkes 2011). What became apparent, rather, was that men were more accepting of the shift in gender roles but not necessarily their position in the gender order. However, Morrell and Jewkes (2011, 9) conclude that although men's engagement in care work should not be read as an indicator of gender equality, the practices may nonetheless result in broader gender transformations at a societal level through identity and value transformation at individual level.

The role of geographical space in shaping migrants' practices and ideas cannot be overemphasised. As argued throughout the thesis, different spaces came with varying codes and scripts of how to behave as a woman or man. South Africa as a space for migrants also came with certain notions of masculinities and femininities, for example when it resulted in the shifting of gendered roles and practices. In Chapter 7 I explored how migration could disrupt hegemonic masculinities when men took up gender roles that were historically and traditionally thought be the domain of women, for example, caregiving. I have shown how cornered men with limited options and resources find themselves having to take care of each other. This type of care can be read as a strategy to create friendships and fictive kinship, thus building up a network of reciprocity, as well as establishing political belonging. But these activities also show men as emotional beings. The supposed inability of men to express emotions has been a topic of discussion in the study of masculinities and another motivation for interventions that work with men to change their behaviour (Montes 2013). While men have been associated with courage, guts or fearlessness, aggression, pride and anger, other emotions, such as those related to dependency, fear and care, have been thought of as feminine and off limits for men (Ratele 2013; Montes 2013). Furthermore, men are said to bottle up emotions in order to show they are men.

However, as I have shown, men can still be men and express emotions conventionally associated with women, as captured in Denga's statement about Uncle Kofi being a 'man with a woman's heart'. I have argued that such caring practices do not always imply a change in gender norms. However, the possibility of bringing about individual change cannot be discounted. Consider, for example, the statement made by Kudzai that he felt honoured to have looked after his mother-in-law. A similar finding was recorded by Sinatti (2014) among Senegalese migrants in Italy, where one participant testified that undertaking household chores following migration made him a 'better husband' who could understand the difficulties that his wife had experienced (Sinatti 2014, 222). Montes (2013, 481) concludes that migration 'might create the opportunity for

men to get in touch with deeper emotions that would be overlooked under normal circumstances [in their countries of origin].

Migration facilitates alterations to masculine ideals and practices. For instance, traditional notions of marriage and intimate relationships were sometimes redefined, as exemplified by Tino, who opted for cohabitation because he failed to raise money for bride price. Based on his lived reality, he came up with his own terms and conditions of marriage. He told me that he only dated women who did not mind cohabiting without a payment of bride price. Despite not paying any *lobola*, he still called his girlfriend 'wife', thus challenging the meaning of the term. In this way he could still enjoy referring himself as a married man, despite not paying the bride price. Kudzai declared the irrelevance of his Zimbabwean 'culture' in the South African context. Men redefined scripts and came up with new codes of what was acceptable, or not. For example, while marriage was desirable to most men, it was still fine for someone to wait for the right moment as defined by their ability to provide. A man's ability to wait and endure emerged as a marker of respectable and responsible masculinities in contexts where men failed to meet societal expectations. Kudzai found new meaning in his experience with his mother-in-law, presenting himself as a man who loved his wife to the extent that he could overlook traditional scripts on how in-laws should relate to each other. Even his relationship with his mother-in-law was altered when he began seeing her as his own 'mother' instead of an in-law. In these scenarios, migration, and particularly being physically removed from cultural institutions such as the extended family, provided opportunities for men to shift their ideas and later practices to better fit their lived realities.

Thando's family and Nomthi's in-laws expressed the same views and attitudes as the police officials who helped Thando in South Africa. The latter told Thando to be grateful that 'at least Phil was taking care of the children', a statement that was supposed to console and possibly silence her so that she did not seek legal help. Nomthi married a Nigerian man who had been treating her well, but this continued only until he got his papers. He started having an extramarital affair with a Nigerian woman. Nomthi as the lawfully wedded wife had hoped to get support from her in-laws in Nigeria. However, to her disappointment, the family supported the idea of Nomthi's husband marrying another Nigerian woman 'who understood their culture better'. As in Thando's case, the family encouraged Nomthi to agree to this arrangement as long as he took care of her and the children. Nomthi fumed: 'They thought money could replace love'. I find striking similarities in Nomthi's and Thando's families, as in both cases, families in the countries of origin played a significant role in supporting the men's desires, without necessarily considering the perspectives of the women involved. These examples resonate with Connell's (2000, 29) assertion that 'masculinities are configurations of practice within gender relations, a structure that includes large-scale institutions and economic relations as well as face-to-face relationships and

sexuality. Masculinity is institutionalised in this structure, as well as being an aspect of individual character and personality'. In light of this, several studies have empirically illustrated how gender inequality is embedded in institutions such as families, government, schools and religion (Jewkes et al. 2012), posing a challenge for development interventions that focus on individual behaviour without considering the role of structural factors in shaping that behaviour.

Drawing from examples in Chapter 7, I analysed care practices as a way for men to constitute themselves as responsible citizens. Building on several studies that have looked at citizenship beyond the sovereign state, I have analysed the relationships that my study participants had with each other as a form of relational citizenship that allows one to claim rights in a certain social space. Terming it 'corner citizenship', I highlighted how this is particularly important for migrants without papers, whose formal citizenship is usually contested, even though there are NGOs that specifically attend to migrants' rights through raising awareness. As discussed in Chapter 5, NGOs have produced knowledgeable individuals who know their rights, but this knowledge does not always translate to practical benefits or access to rights. John, for example, showed that despite his awareness and despite meeting all of the criteria to be considered a refugee, he still could not access state resources such as the requisite papers for him to stay and work in South Africa. Like many other volunteers working as peer educators, he decided to make use of the volunteerism channel to enter the labour market. As migrants fail to access citizen rights through formal channels, they create their own social spaces, with localised codes of rights and responsibilities such as those observed at Uncle Kofi's Corner and Tino's Corner.

The type of citizenship advocated by NGOs emphasises the role of an individual in being responsible and in claiming rights. However, citizenship within informal spaces such as Uncle Kofi's Corner focused more on the communal lives of men, not only as leaders of their families but as responsible and respectable members of communities. In these social spaces, men held each other accountable and became responsible of each other's well-being, including immediate needs, such as food, and longer-term needs, such as healthy lifestyles. Both NGOs and social communities such as Uncle Kofi's Corner deemphasised the association of migrants with the nation state, but their localised codes and motivations to become responsible citizens differed. One explanation for this difference was that Uncle Kofi's Corner emerged as a response to the everyday needs and events of marginalised men and women. In contrast, NGOs were shaped by their missions and their funders' priorities, and because of this, did not always meet the expectations and needs of their targeted populations.

## Concluding remarks

The principal question that I set out to investigate in this dissertation was: What happens when normative ideas and practices of masculinity encounter corner spaces that limit their expression or realisation? In answering this question, I established that, when put in a corner with limited options, some men resort to violence. This was captured well by Khulu's statement: 'A black man is a cornered man. He is put in a place that is hard to manoeuvre, and he cannot do anything. He retaliates like a wounded animal'. His response suggests that men, particularly black men, respond aggressively when they are left with no other option. In this statement, violence was cast as a justifiable escape, a means to deal with frustration and pressure resulting from a tough economy. However, the violence identified by men as emanating from corner spaces was not as straightforward as assumed by the notion of a crisis of masculinity. 'Failed' men did not always resort to violence against women or foreigners, or any other weaker person. At times the factors that made them appear 'failed' even crippled them to the point that they could not perpetrate violence even if they might have wished to. Secondly, the violence identified by cornered men took multiple forms that appeared interconnected and gendered, albeit difficult to capture within the frameworks of gender-based violence used within the development world. Thirdly, the assumption that men felt pressured to behave in a certain manner to prove their manhood was not always borne out in this study, where men altered dominant masculinity tropes to match their lived realities.

As part of this conclusion, I wish to highlight the methodological implications of conducting this anthropological study. This is particularly important for me given my past experience in conducting research on a similar topic using a different methodology. While I cannot generalise about all migrant men in Johannesburg, South Africa, because of my limited and non-random sample, the ethnographic approach I used for this study brought to the fore certain nuances that are usually glossed over in quantitative or questionnaire-based research. This study has shown me the pitfalls of understanding gender-based violence by beginning with the assumption that women are victims and men are perpetrators. The ethnographic details have established the complex processes of violence and care, which are some of the markers of problematic and positive masculinities respectively. I have shown how these practices are contested from their very definitions to their varied manifestations, thus making it difficult to assume a smooth linear transition from one practice to another or to fit individuals into clear-cut categories.

Secondly, the ethnographic case studies demonstrate how the work and missions of NGOs get mixed up with individual, economic and political interests,

thus complicating the relevance and impact of certain interventions. While development work cannot be wholly discredited, it also cannot be entirely commended for achieving the desired impact. One of the reasons for this is that it seems difficult to change individual behaviour without changing the status quo. In addition, unreliable measurements of impact shroud the reality on the ground (Cornwall et al. 2011; Jewkes 2015; Ratele 2013).

I have proposed looking at indicators as they are used by NGOs and their part in shaping masculinities particularly in perpetuating the crisis narrative in South Africa. This is important for many reasons, including that, in recent years, such indicators have taken a central role in producing knowledge about social problems such as violence, poverty and specific diseases (Merry 2011; Gerrets 2015). The knowledge produced presents a possible escape for individuals who find themselves cornered as they use such knowledge to solicit resources. At the same time, the same knowledge continues to shape interventions and research projects in ways that are cornering. For example, I could not solely focus on masculinities and violence without referring to HIV. Also, while I had wanted to study a different class of men, the NGO I followed led me to a predominantly black, resource-poor setting, increasing the risk of reifying the violence narrative among marginalised migrant men.

Thirdly, I have shown how outcomes are not always determined as purported in statistical models where individual behaviour can be predicted. The stories have shown how individuals react differently to similar situations, and how individuals slip in and out of different subjectivities depending on time and space, making it difficult to imagine any identity as stable. Capturing this is particularly important for the vocabulary that is necessary to reflect the lived experiences of cornered men, in contrast to current limiting frameworks. Theoretically, I have contributed to the study of masculinities by calling for conceptualisations that are not totalising, but rather leave room for contingencies that emerge from corner spaces.

In certain spheres, masculinities as a concept has been understood as structure (rooted in patriarchy), inhibiting or determining individuals' actions. Using 'becoming cornered' as spatial metaphor, I argue that scholars should look at masculinities as a space under construction, one that is never finished but is in the process of becoming. Because this space is open ended, it captures the multiple creative contingencies – the *kukiyā kiyā* – that individuals and institutions (usually framed as structures too) engage in. Migrant men as frontier beings slip in and out of various subjectivities. Their identities are neither static nor exclusive, but rather are in the process of becoming, in both their singular and collective efforts to make do in a precarious setting.