"BEER, BOOBS, AND BABES": 
HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY IN THE TELEVISION PROGRAM "MANSWERS"

A Thesis

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by 

Hennie J. Weiss 

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Department of Sociology
Abstract

of

"BEER, BOOBS, AND BABES":

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Statement of problem

The author examined the prevalence of hegemonic masculinity in the male-centered television program “MANswers”. The author conducted content analysis to analyze the questions posed in the episodes of “MANswers”. Ten categories relating to hegemonic masculinity were created and analyzed. These categories were: sexual orientation, women’s roles, women’s bodies, men’s bodies, sex, violence, weapons and death, alcohol and drugs, emotions, animals, and making money. Finally, the category of other was also included to discern questions not related to the other categories. The author discussed the main findings of hegemonic masculinity pertaining to women and men, implications of propaganda, societal implications, efforts to change, and recommendations for future research.

_____________________________. Committee Chair
Ellen Berg

_____________________________
Date
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Chapter 1: Introduction

The concept of hegemonic masculinity has been widely researched in diverse areas for several decades and has become imperative in the discussion of men and masculinities. Hegemonic masculinity and traditional masculine behavior tend to center around the ideals of aggressiveness, toughness, (West 2001) violence (Johnson 2010), emotional control (Lilleaas 2007) and emotional detachment (Bird 1996), power (Kimmel 2006), the sexual objectification of women (Bird 1996) and heterosexuality (Kiesling 2005). The characteristics of hegemonic masculinity are believed to stem from behavior and practices of men rather than through innate characteristics. “Masculinity is not a fixed entity embedded in the body or personality traits of individuals. Masculinities are configurations of practices that are accomplished in social action and, therefore, can differ according to the gender relations in a particular social setting” (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 836). Furthermore, individuals or groups can rework the ideals of hegemonic masculinity as they seek to refute or change the hegemonic notion (Pascoe 2003). Connell (1992) states that it is important to view masculinities in relation to resources, power, exclusion and inclusion as well as the “splitting and reconstitution of gender forms” (p. 736). Multicultural societies have different types of masculinities, even though some forms are more honored and valued than others. The culturally dominant masculinity is then the hegemonic one (Connell 1996) and in North America is expressed through the use of white, heterosexual, often aggressive and dominant men (Connell 2005).

Due to the recent addition of television programs that focus on the experiences of men solely (with the explicit use of “man” in the title) such as “MANswers” (Spike TV), “Mancations” (Travel Channel), “Man Caves” (DIY Network), “Man vs. Wild” (Discovery Channel), “Survivorman” (Discovery Channel) and “Man v. Food” (Travel Channel) it is important to examine how such programs depict, construct and reinforce traditional masculine behavior and hegemonic masculinity. Even though a great deal of research has been conducted on hegemonic masculinity, the area of male-dominated television programs has not received as much attention (for a recent exception see Hymowitz’ (2011) attention to the “new genre of male arrested development” (p. 110)).

The present study will examine the concept of hegemonic masculinity as it pertains to North America by focusing on “MANswers”, a male-centered television program aired on Spike TV. “MANswers” is the ideal program to examine as it not only
pertains to “real guys”, but Spike TV is one of the most successful guy channels (Hymowitz 2011). “MANswers” is said to be a humorous satire aimed at men between the ages of 18 to 40. The concept of the television program is based on the introduction of a number of questions in each episode that men supposedly deem interesting and important to their gender. As a question is posed, a variety of experts in diverse areas comment on and provide answers pertaining to the specific question. There is a deductive sort of reasoning behind the question, where several examples are used to examine the “truth” of the question. Women and men are used as actors to reenact different scenarios, where they finally reach a conclusion. By focusing on, examining and analyzing the questions posed and topics used in “MANswers”, the author will concentrate on unearthing the “believed” interests of men. As vocalized in the introduction of each episode of the television program, “MANswers” target “real guys” and their most important interests and concerns: “Get ready for the coolest, toughest, most bodaciously sexy stories, the ones only real guys care about. They’re MANswers”.

Not only does “MANswers” target “real men”, but they also distance themselves from the interests of women as they negotiate and divert female criticism. On “MANswers” Spike TV website, a recent clip of a female comedian making fun of “MANswers” is featured. In response to this comedian, “MANswers” posted on the website: “Comedian Ali Waller has some choice opinions on MANswers and the upcoming new season. Hilarious? Yes. Proof women just don't understand the beauty of this show? Most definitely”. The detachment and rejection of female criticism in “MANswers” is not surprising. Institutions that are male dominated have controlled what
is considered humorous and what is not. By dominating humor, men are able to defend patriarchal ideals and subjugate contradicting and opposing ideals (Case and Lippard 2009). “The humor of male bonding relationships generally is sexual and aggressive, and frequently consists of sexist or racist jokes (Lyman 1987: 148).

Why is Hegemonic Masculinity so Prevalent in Television?

It is important to consider why there is such an increase of male-dominated and male-centered television programs explicitly enforcing the use of the word “man” in their titles, and why it is important to examine the content and messages of such programs in connection to hegemonic masculinity. What has spurred the notion that men need television programs aimed at the interests of men? When examining blue-collar masculinities in the television program “American Chopper” Carroll (2008) states that social and economic changes have contributed to a loss of manual labor and hegemonic masculinity in the United States, thereby producing a need for men to reclaim such lost masculinity. In terms of male-dominated television programs such as “MANswers”, similar conclusions have been drawn. Some scholars have argued that hegemonic ideals have been spurred by a crisis of masculinity (Kimmel 1995: Levant 1997), a reaction against women and feminists (Barnes 2011: Messner and Montez de Oca 2005), through the adoption of an evolutionary and biological view of men, and the emergence of the “man-child” (Hymowitz 2011).

According to McCaughey (2008) popular culture, including television programs
and magazines, has adopted an evolutionary and biological view of men and women where differences are believed to be inherently biological in nature. McCaughey calls this the “caveman masculinity” and states that: “As popular culture, evolutionary narratives offer men a way to embody male sexuality” (p. 4). These narratives then depict men as sexually promiscuous beings who always compete for access to youthful and beautiful women. The “caveman masculinity” is believed to stem from societal and economic changes in “a postindustrial service economy that is less rewarding both materially and morally” (p. 4). At the same time, there was an increased attention to men’s violence (including violence against women) and aggression. The “caveman masculinity” is then simultaneously a reaction to societal changes and an embrace of biology. “The caveman as an ethnicity reveals an embrace of biology as a reaction to social constructionist understanding of masculinity, feminist demands on men, and the changing roles of men at work and in families (p. 11). As a response to societal and economic changes, a “rude-dude attitude” was embraced by some men resulting in shows such as “The Man Show”.

Magazines, and television shows also embraced evolutionary and biological theories to describe male behavior (McCaughey 2008). Thus, the “caveman masculinity has become an “ethnic option”, a way of identifying and living one’s manhood” (p. 11). Even though popular culture has adopted a biological view of men and women, societal changes also reinforce hegemonic masculinity, especially in terms of gender roles.

Tragos (2009) claims that as gender roles are being redefined and women are increasingly depicted as strong and independent (although still very attractive and beautiful) in popular media, the roles of men have changed and masculine and feminine
traits and boundaries have been blurred. A form of reactionary backlash has therefore taken place in which television programs and series are reclaiming their “lost” manhood. “It appears that popular culture is the medium through which men reassert their power via the male gaze wherein women are cast in a sharp focus of sexism” (Tragos 2009: 546). Such a backlash is also evident in reactions to feminism as a threat to hegemonic masculinity (Barnes 2011: Kimmel 2006). Messner (1997) states that “masculinist responses to men’s fear of social feminization resulted in men’s creation of…homosocial institutions in which adult men, separated from women, could engage in “masculine” activities” (p.9). Creating stereotypes about feminist women and the feminist movement is also one way to reject societal changes. By creating stereotypes of feminists and downplaying the significance of feminist ideas and attempts at redefining gender roles, masculine discourse disregards the feminist agenda as a “silly joke” (Gough and Edwards 1998: 425).

Other explanations still pertaining to hegemonic masculinity, its ideals and the assumed backlash against feminism in particular and femininity in general have been developed. Hymowitz (2011) describes the recent emergence of the “man-child”, usually single men between the ages of 18 to 34 who are great consumers of mass media and spurred on by the emergence of cable television and the Internet. The “man-child” is the opposite of what Hymowitz describes as the hard-working, successful “alpha girl”. The “man-child” is fascinated with video games, guy movies and potty humor: “The man-child prides himself on his lack of pretense, his slovenly guyness, not to mention his fascination with body fluids and noises” (p. 114). Hymowitz (2011) believes that
elements of both the crisis and backlash have strengthened the culture of the “man-child” even though she finds that the backlash interpretation has several faults.

Even though there are several different explanations as to why male-centered television programs exist, we know that shows aimed solely at men are becoming more common and that they signal the targeted gender in their titles. As this social phenomenon is becoming widespread, it needs to be examined.

Why Study “MANswers”?

If the reclaiming of “manhood” (Tragos 2009) and reaction against women and feminists (Barnes 2011) is influencing the increase in male-centered television programs, then why should we be concerned with it? The author believes that popular culture is indeed important to examine as it reflects societal changes, values and beliefs. Carter and Hesse-Biber (1999) states that the media not only portrays ways in which women and men interact, and the relationship between genders, but the media also serves as an agent that shapes our gender expectations. “Very often the media reinforce traditional gender stereotypes (e.g. men as aggressive, active, problem-solvers vs. women as passive and more interested in relationships than in work, politics, and power) or overemphasize certain aspects of them to the point of distortion…” (p. 185).

The influence of popular culture on our lives should not be taken lightly and should be analyzed based on its messages and purpose. In chapter five, the author will therefore discuss the findings and messages conveyed in “MANswers” on a larger scale.
Growing up during the middle of the technological innovation and spread of the Internet, the author finds the preoccupation with and emergence of movies, television programs and websites supporting and reinforcing hegemonic ideals and “male-only” interests for the “man-child” (Hymowitz 2011) and “caveman masculinity” (McCaughey 2008) indeed peculiarly reactionary and backwards in relation to the continuous struggles of the feminist movement. Examining and analyzing these television programs and contributing to the debate of hegemonic masculinity therefore seem appropriate.

In order to discern the believed (and perhaps assumed) interests depicted in “MANswers” content analysis will be used. Schrock and Schwalbe (2009) state that by examining media studies we have the ability to analyze “manhood acts” in terms of practices, processes, themes and variations that are hegemonic as well as subordinate. Collins (2010) recommends the use of content analysis of “new media”, media in which the users partake. In addition to the television program “MANswers”, Spike TV also has a website dedicated to viewers and users who would like to post their own comments concerning the program. These viewers can also provide questions pertaining to the culture of “MANswers”, some of which are later used in the different episodes. Hegemonic ideals can therefore be discussed, and reinforced based on the interaction between “MANswers” writers and their audience and fans. Content analysis is also a valuable tool to use when analyzing gender roles and the symbols people use to differentiate appropriate gender behavior (Rudy, Popova and Linz 2010). The use of content analysis is also connected to hegemonic ideals in several ways and is therefore an appropriate tool to use. Schrock and Schwalbe (2009) state: “media imagery provides a
repertoire of signifying practices that males can draw on to craft manhood acts” (p. 283).

Popular culture is also highly significant to men now more than ever. According to Hymowitz (2011) “it is the oxygen they breathe” (p. 121), but popular culture, technological use and innovation also unleashes the man-child.

Adhering to the normalized standards of hegemonic masculinity and traditional male behavior contributes to the acceptance of certain behaviors over others, especially in male-centered television programs. Boys believed to embody feminine traits tend to be found in the lower ranks of the hierarchy ladder (Barnes 2011) while subordinated masculinities often are excluded in cultural and political contexts (Lindgren and Lelievre 2009), or represented in derogatory ways (Schrock and Schwalbe 2009). Hegemonic masculinity is limiting and damaging to both women and men as they restrict gendered behavior (Barnes 2011), “distort the everyday realities of social practice” (Connell 2002: 90) and as women are represented in sexualized ways (Schrock and Schwalbe 2009).

As the notion of hegemonic masculinity has been more thoroughly articulated through diverse studies, the analysis of male dominated television program will add yet another facet of how masculinities are constructed and reinforced in the media. The examination of “MANswers,” will be based on analyzing all questions posed each season (that professionals and experts answer during the duration of the television show). Through the application of concepts related to hegemonic masculinity, the author will provide a theoretical understanding of why certain topics and questions are more likely to be included in “MANswers”. Contributions to our knowledge of hegemonic masculinity,
such as homosociality, the “man-child” and “caveman masculinity” will also be discussed further as they are examined in “MANswers”.

As male interests (according to “MANswers”) are examined, the author believes that stereotypical male attitudes consistent with hegemonic masculinity as well as homosocial values will be displayed through the use of “humor and “satire” to enforce the notion of masculinity. “In face-to-face interactions and through various media, humor, satire, and joking are important vehicles for creating and communicating meanings in daily life” (Case and Lippard 2009: 241). Based on the notion that “MANswers” is a male-oriented television program along with the ideals of hegemonic masculinity in connection with other aspects pertaining to hegemonic ideals, the following hypotheses were developed.

As masculinity in North America is based on hegemonic masculinity (Kiesling 2005), but also homosociality (Flood 2008) several behavioral traits are associated with the hegemonic notion. When defined as practices and behaviors, the hegemonic form is constructed around the notion of femininity, but also other forms of masculinities that do not conform to the hegemonic ideal. “Hegemonic masculinity – that form of masculinity that is currently ascendant and dominant – is constructed not only in relation to femininities, but also in relation to subordinated and marginalized masculinities” (Messner 1993: 724).

Gender differences are used to separate women and men through biological or behavioral means (Kiesling 2005), while the hegemonic definition of heterosexism center around one’s sexual desire for women rather than other men (Kiesling 2005), and through
the sexual objectification of women (Bird 1996). There is also a strong association of homosociality in terms of masculinity and sexual experience, where female friendships are deemed difficult if not impossible, as males believe these relationships are mediated and governed by sex, and as they compete with each other over “scoring” with women, and also encourage brief sexual involvement and enforce rules concerning sexual relationships through teasing, boasting and encouragement (Flood 2008). Hypotheses one through five are therefore based on the association between homosociality and hegemonic masculinity, but also on the relationship between hegemonic masculinity and femininity.

Hypothesis 1: Women in “MANswers” are displayed as sex objects and the sexualization of female bodies through the mentioning of body parts such as breasts, legs and buttocks will be common.

Hypothesis 2: Women in “MANswers” will more often be portrayed in roles that can be deemed demeaning (and where they are sexualized) in comparison to roles that signify their importance as employees, partners, wives or caretakers among other roles.

Hypothesis 3: There is a strong focus on male reproductive genitalia (including the penis, testicles, semen and ability to ejaculate) in “MANswers.”

Hypothesis 4: There is no mentioning of or reference to male homosexual relationships or sexual activities in “MANswers”. The homosexual and bisexual orientations of women will be deemed acceptable and mentioned to a greater extent in “MANswers.”
Hypothesis 5: References to heterosexual sexual activities including foreplay, intercourse, oral sex, anal sex or sex with multiple partners is common in “MANswers.”

Hypotheses six through ten focus on other behavioral notions of hegemonic masculinity concerning violence, the use of drugs and alcohol and animals. Hypothesis seven focuses on the display of emotions in line with hegemonic masculinity as men are to be “strong, authoritative and in control” (Kiesling 2005: 696), as well as emotionally detached (Bird 1996).

Hypothesis 6: In accordance with hegemonic masculinity, the discussion of violence and use or presence of weapons and death (as a result of the use of violence and weapons) will be mentioned to a great extent in “MANswers.”

Hypothesis 7: The mentioning and discussion of emotions will be largely absent from “MANswers.”

Hypothesis 8: Alcohol and drug use (including excessive use such as binge drinking) will be a common feature in “MANswers.”

Hypothesis 9: The mentioning of animals (in reference to killing, hunting, defending oneself from and the use of sexualized terms) will be common in questions posted in “MANswers.”
Chapter 2: Literature Review

As mentioned above, hegemonic masculinity is based on ideals such as aggressiveness, toughness, (West 2001) violence (Johnson 2010), emotional control (Lilleaas 2007), emotional detachment (Bird 1996), power (Kimmel 2006), the sexual objectification of women (Bird 1996) and heterosexuality (Kiesling 2005). These concepts will be examined in greater detail in order to gain an understanding of how hegemonic ideals are constructed and enforced. The way that hegemonic masculinity is expressed in media will also be discussed.

Media Depictions of Hegemonic Masculinity

The way that women and men are portrayed in media is important to consider, as “MANswers” is a televised program with an intended male audience. Feasey (2009) points out the importance of studying men and masculinities: “After all, masculinities, like femininities, are created by the cultural environment rather than biology or nature, and as such, it is important that the representation of men and masculinities be open to the sort of questioning that has for so long applied to women and their femininities” (p. 358). Even though the aim of this study is to examine the television program “MANswers”, a discussion concerning the role of media as a whole in distributing the hegemonic ideal will be presented. Gerbner (1998) discusses the impact of television in our lives: “Television is the source of the most broadly-shared images and messages in
history. It is the mainstream of the common symbolic environment into which our children are born and in which we all live our lives” (p. 177). Televised stereotypes are also important to consider as “Stereotypes are often linked to social positions and roles” (Jansz and Martis 2007: 146). Television commercials are said to often reinforce already televised stereotypes, often exaggerating them (Coltrane and Messineo 2000). Therefore, the notion of hegemonic masculinity as it pertains to the depiction of men in media will be discussed. The portrayal of women in combination to hegemonic ideals is also shortly examined as gender specific roles, traditional gender behavior and stereotypes of men and women influence media perceptions and depictions of gender.

Men are found to watch more televised sports than women (Gantz and Wenner 1991), whereas soap operas are specifically created for women (Rogers 2001), and watched more by women, along with game shows (Lopate 1976). Men prefer films with more sex and violence, whereas women prefer love stories (Emmers-Sommer et al. 2006). Men also play more videogames than women (Ogletree and Drake 2007). Gendered differences are also found in television news. Females are more likely to present health and human interest stories and reportage, whereas men are more likely to present politics, and are more likely to be used as experts in a story (Desmond and Danilewicz 2010).

Messner, Dunbar and Hunt (2000) describe what they call the “Televised Sports Manhood Formula”, ten themes that reoccur in televised programs enjoyed by men. These themes include the dominance of white males, sport being a man’s world, men and whites being central figures in commercials, women being “sexy props”, aggression
being central to winning, boys will be boys, giving up one’s body for the team (ignoring physical pain), sport being depicted as war, and the importance of showing guts. These themes, the authors argue, help maintain and promote hegemonic masculinity. As media is gendered, it is important to consider how women and men are portrayed in various forms of media.

Stankiewicz and Rosselli (2008) found that more than half of all women featured in magazines were depicted as sex objects. Furthermore, the objectification of women is more common in men’s magazines. The notion that women are objectified in men’s magazines is also noted by Monk-Turner et al. (2008). McArthur and Resko (1975) found that women were less likely than men to appear as the main character in advertisements, especially in the evening hours. Women were also depicted as less knowledgeable and independent than men. When examining Lynx short media texts Feasey (2009) found that the men were portrayed as ordinary “everyday everyman” (p. 363), not as sexual objects. Feasey also found that traditional and dominant gender stereotypes were common, focusing on male sexuality and sexual fulfillment. Focusing on television programs, similar conclusions have been made. Studying emerging adult acceptance of gender stereotypes, Ward (2002) found that women and men with great media involvement are more accepting of traditional notions of gender roles. These roles included women as sex objects, men as being sexually driven and dating being a game. Ward and Friedman (2006) examined the impact of television clips on adolescent acceptance of gender stereotypes. The authors found that, in clips where women were displayed as sex objects,
participants were more likely to endorse a traditional and stereotypical notion of women than were participants who viewed nonsexual clips.

Violence and violent acts are also portrayed in gendered and often stereotypical ways. In their study of televised violence in Spain, Fernández-Villanueva et al. (2009) found that violence and violent acts are typically a male phenomenon. More than two-thirds of the aggressors were men, and their victims were typically male as well. The authors found that group violence among males was a common feature that appeared in thirty percent of all cases of violent acts. Male characters in video games were identified as being more aggressive and strong in comparison to female characters (Ogletree and Drake 2007). Examining video games, Dietz (1998) found that a majority of games involved violence and aggression. Violence against others and against women was commonly depicted. Analyzing slasher films, Molitor and Sapolsky (1993) found that acts of violence have been increasing since 1980, and that violent acts against innocent victims are increasing as well.

According to Atkinson (2002) professional wrestling is becoming increasingly popular, and is being watched by more than 50 million people weekly. The main theme in professional wrestling is that of violence. “Violence is the central action – and therefore, source of entertainment – in the professional wrestling match…” (p. 61). Atkinson believes that the success of professional wrestling is partly due to the fact that using violence is deemed acceptable. “A large portion of wrestling’s cultural appeal is generated by the psychological arousal/excitement provided by witnessing highly aggressive and violent forms of physical interaction…” (p. 62-63).
The notion of sexual identity is also represented in media although the representation of homosexual characters on television is sometimes difficult to assess. Raley and Lucas (2001) found homosexual characters depicted in less sexualized situations, such as holding hands and hugging. Netzley (2010) found that homosexual characters on television are depicted in sexual situations more often than straight characters. Women are twice as likely to be depicted in (same-sex) sexual activities than men, indicating increased heterosexual acceptance of homosexual women over homosexual men. Bisexual individuals are however represented to a less degree than homosexual characters on television, and homosexual characters are also ridiculed and joked about more often than are straight characters on television (Raley and Lucas 2001). Homosexual characters also discuss their sexual orientation more often than straight characters (Fouts and Inch 2005).

Sexual Identity

Heterosexuality is often assumed in media (Krassas, Blauwkamp and Wesselink 2003) and remains the norm (Attwood 2005). This notion is called heteronormativity. Heteronormativity is the presumption of heterosexuality (McCormack and Anderson 2010: 844). Anti gay behavior is often used to reinforce the traditional heterosexual male role (Jewell and Morrison 2010), and feminized men are said to violate the standard of heteronormativity (Jones 2006: 453). Garlick (2003) states that heterosexuality produces the notion of hegemonic masculinity because “Homosexuality is rightly seen as
disrupting conventional ideas about what it is to ‘be a man’” (p. 158). Ingraham (2005) further explores this topic through the discussion of “thinking straight”. According to Ingraham, “Thinking straight means believing that the world is only and has always been heterosexual – not historically or regionally variant or as a cultural invention” (p. 3).

As sexual relationships with other men are rarely accepted, in comparison to close heterosexist friendships, males constantly have to reinforce the notion that they are heterosexual rather than homosexual (Kiesling 2005). Madon (1997) found that gay men are often believed to violate what is deemed as appropriate male behavior. Heterosexual men often physically distance themselves from homosexual men in order to prove their disinterest in gay men while conveying their own heterosexual identity (Jewell and Morrison 2010). Heterosexual males not only reinforce their own sexual identity through distancing themselves from gay men, but they also assign value to attributes believed to be associated with heterosexuality and homosexuality. Attributes of gay men included “melodramatic” and “engage in anal sex” whereas attributes found to be “counterstereotypic” included “macho” and “hunt animals” (Madon 1997). Preston and Stanley (1987) found that the worst insult one man could call another man would be that of homosexual (“gay” and “faggot”).

Men are also less likely to be accepting of the homosexual lifestyle in comparison to women (Kane and Schippers 1996). Jewell and Morrison (2010) found that men were more likely than women to engage in antigay behavior such as telling “antigay jokes” and “yell insulting comments” to homosexuals. The authors also found that “individuals who behave discriminatory toward gay men also tended to hold blatantly negative attitudes
toward them” (p. 2099). Interestingly, attitudes towards homosexuality in terms of gender differ for men. Pascoe (2007) states that the notion of homophobia may not fully explain the gendered notion of sexuality, as homophobic behavior applies more so to boys in comparison to girls. Boys often accept lesbian girls, resulting in girls not being systematically called names such as “dyke”. The acceptance of lesbians also carries over to the media as recent depictions of homosexual women in media have focused on the “hot lesbian”, whereas homosexual men are rarely depicted in a sexualized manner. This display of lesbian women is constructed for the heterosexual male gaze (Gill 2008).

According to Jackson and Gilbertson (2009) lesbian acts are often fashioned for heterosexual viewers and deemed “temporary”, in which lesbian women are really bisexual or heterosexual, only experimenting with other females. The authors state that; “Media lesbian’s appeal to the male gaze extends beyond her heterosexual packaging. The heterosexual audience is generally aware that displays of ‘lesbian’ sex are acts of performance, that the actors portraying them are (often) ‘really’ heterosexuals” (p. 202). The authors conclude that the portrayals of lesbianism in media produce little threat to heteronormativity. Pascoe (2007) also states that the words “fag” and “gay” are fluid enough to address many behaviors and concepts, not just sexual orientation. “This fluidity of the fag identity is what makes the specter of the fag such a powerful disciplinary mechanism” (Pascoe 2007: 54). As anti gay behavior among men is common and heterosexuality becomes the televised norm, women become the focus of sexual relationships and sexual interaction. The role of women in media (especially male-centered media) is therefore important to consider, and will be discussed next.
The Role of Women

Essential to the behaviors and constructs of masculinities, hegemonic ideals should also be viewed in relation to women and "the pattern of practice (i.e., things done, not just a set of role expectations or an identity) that allowed men’s dominance over women to continue" (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 832). Women are often portrayed as sex objects in popular media (Krassas, Blauwkamp and Wesselink 2003), and even more so in male-centered media (Stankiewicz and Rosselli 2008). Males also engage in different behaviors that reinforce male dominance and views of women as sexual objects (Gough and Edwards 1998). DeWall, Altermatt and Thompson (2005) found that women in media are often depicted in three roles: the “homemaker”, the “professional” and the “sex object”. Interestingly, the women portrayed as sex objects received the lowest scores in terms of social desirability, moral virtue, warmth and competence in comparison to the other roles. Just as women’s roles in media are often sexualized, males also have a tendency to sexualize women when interacting in groups.

The tendencies for groups of men to evaluate and comment on women’s bodies, discuss sexual acts or boost about sexual performance is sometimes described as “girl watching” (Quinn 2002). Quinn describes “girl watching” as an example of both objectification of women and the “suppression of empathy” (p. 388). Males tend to engage in “girl watching” as a game or play to maintain and reinforce male identities and heterosexuality. Furthermore, in male conversations, female body parts such as breasts are often the topic of conversation (Gough and Edwards 1998). Females are therefore
both viewed as sexual objects and as different from men. At the same time, stories including bragging and boosting about females bodies are common as men compete to “one-up” each other and reinforce masculine ideals. Homosexual men are also often the topic of jokes and conversation. In doing so, hegemonic masculinity and heterosexuality are implicit between men (Gough and Edwards 1998). Similar to “girl watching”, “hogging” is another way in which men sexualize and objectify women.

“Hogging”, the notion of having sexual interactions with females deemed unattractive is also one way for men to gain status and adhere to traditional notions of masculinity among one’s male peer group in terms of “winning the bet, entertaining others in the group, or by receiving sexual gratification” (Prohaska and Gailey 2010: 18). Having sex with an “ugly woman” does not damage one’s reputation, while being in a dedicated relationship with an “ugly woman” will do so (Flood 2008). Boys often use other forms of sexual harassment (both visual, written, spoken and physical) as a mean to perform hegemonic masculinity. When discussing sexual harassment, most boys claimed that such behavior was only a joke, a normal part of interaction, and that girls like the attention or asked for it (Robinson 2005). Sexual harassment therefore becomes part of boy’s everyday interactions towards girls while reinforcing the performance of masculinity, power, status and acceptance in one’s peer group. Boys who did not adhere to the hegemonic standards were often severely harassed by other boys (Robinson 2005). As women’s bodies become the focus of male attention and discussion, males also refer to their own sexual competence. Sheffield (1995) describes any form of sexual violence and harassment as “sexual terrorism” (p. 410). In line with “sexual terrorism”, Tyler
(2011) states that the pornographication of women’s sexuality in popular culture promotes a harmful model of sex that reinforces male dominance and violence, while at the same time promotes the sexual interests of men and the sexual servicing of men by women. Women’s sexual pleasure is therefore not deemed as important as men’s, which Tyler (2011) states is apparent in sex self-help books who focus on women’s submission, men’s sexual demands, and men’s genitals.

In their discussions of heterosexual sexual relationships males often focus on their own sexual organs (Gough and Edwards 1998). The penis and testicles become the symbol of virility and sexuality (Lindgren and Lelievre 2009), but only so in relation to females as recipients in regards to sexual acts (Gough and Edwards 1998), since women and men are biologically different (Lindgren and Lelievre 2009). In addition to focusing on the penis, erection and ejaculation is also imperative to the notion of hegemonic masculinity as it reinforces the notion of successful intercourse, and is tied to the validation of maleness and sexual ability (Johnson Jr. 2010). The male body and its reproductive organs become viewed as distinct parts of a “machine” tied to erectile functioning as an important aspect of the “male machine” in order to achieve masculinity (Loe 2001). In cases of erectile dysfunction, the penis is viewed as a “part” of the “machine” that needs to be fixed through the use of pills. “Viagra can be understood as a tool for the repair and/or production of hegemonic masculinity” (Loe 2001: 285), especially since the ability to “penetrate one’s partner and sustain an erection” (p. 284), is the desired outcome. Hegemonic masculinity is therefore displayed in reference to the female body and male sexual ability, while at the same time acknowledging the fact that
homosexual men and homosexual acts are outside the norms of traditional masculinity (Gough and Edwards 1998). There are other implications concerning the role of women in terms of serious relationships, long-term relationships, sexual relationships and friendships.

Males who have friendships with women or interact with women rather than men (excluding sexual relationships) do not adhere to the traditional notion of hegemonic masculinity and are therefore often ostracized (Marino 1999). Relationships with females are also viewed as less important to younger men than are male friendships. Relationships with females are therefore not considered a priority, whereas male friendships are believed to be more important, serious and less complicated (Gilmartin 2007). Heterosexual relationships are not viewed as a topic of interest in contrast to sexual pursuits and activities. “In this context, sexuality is divorced from reproduction, becoming primarily an expression of individuality, a form of recreation and a means of constructing intimate, though not necessarily long-lasting relationships” (Attwood 2005: 95). “Hooking up” therefore becomes the norm in contrast to stable, serious relationships (Freitas 2008). As sexual relationships with women become the standard, “policing” among boys and men often take place as a way to reinforce this notion (Marino 1999).

Thus, women are used to reinforce hegemonic masculinity through objectification and sexualization, and are simultaneously viewed as distinctly different from men. Differences are made between masculinity and femininity in terms of the “right” to engage in acts that are viewed as masculine, while at the same time reinforcing the notion of distinction between men and women. Such an example is provided by Nylund (2003)
in his discussion of Augusta National Golf Club (until 1990, African-Americans were barred from entering the club), in which women are not allowed to join. By pointing to men’s need to socialize with others and by reinforcing homosociality, women are treated as distinctly different in relation to men (Nylund 2003). Distinctions are also made to differentiate women and men in terms of expressions of emotionality.

**Emotionality**

Women and men have been found to address and discuss their feelings in different ways. In contrast to women, men exhibit more restrictive emotional behavior, and are less inclined to discuss emotional topics (Vogel, Wester, Heesacker and Madon 2003), even though they do not experience more emotions than women (Kring and Gordon 1998). These distinctions between women and men are often attributed to one’s belief about femininity and masculinity where displaying one’s real emotions is considered a feminine trait (Marino 1999) and is often avoided among boys and men, as they are more likely to suppress their feelings (Bird 1996). Kivel (1984) uses the expression “Act-Like-a-Man” Box to describe a learnt regulatory system imposed on boys and men, in which they are taught how to act like men. Emotional control is an important aspect of how to “Act-Like-a-Man”. The notion of masculinity is therefore shaped in response to femininity and feminine traits (Bird 1996). Women are viewed as distinctly different from men and more emotionally “needy” and “unreasonable” (Gilmartin 2007: 533). This distinction of gender is expressed through the work of
Gilmartin (2007) in her examination of college men: “Girls were suppose to be emotional and relationship oriented, whereas guys were suppose to be detached and sex oriented; older peers reinforced this gender divide and other hegemonic masculine forms” (p. 537).

Departure of the norm of emotional detachment is rare even though some men expressed a need and interest in disclosing their emotions (Bird 1996), but felt it challenged their masculinity (Lilleaas 2007). In order to maintain hegemonic masculinity, but satisfy their emotional needs, turning to a girlfriend to discuss deep feelings and emotions and for nurturing and care was more common (Stoudt 2006) since women are believed to be more serious and open than men (Lilleaas 2007). When men failed to adhere to the hegemonic norm and discussed their emotions with other men, the consequences of their actions often resulted in them being excluded (Bird 1996), or being labeled by other men as a “wuss” (Marino 1999). Marino (1999) explains the origin of such a term; “‘Wuss’”, in fact, is a sexualized term that is derivative of “weak pussy” and refers to female genitals” (p. 244). Other ways in which men control and police each other and their own emotions is through joking, teasing and avoiding sensitive topics (Lilleaas 2007), reiterating the notion that emotionality should not be discussed (Stoudt 2006). Lilleaas (2007) gives an example of how men’s expressions of emotionality are restricted in interactions with other men in her examination of handball players in Norway. Lilleaas describes how, after one of the handball players cried in front of his teammates following the death of his father, he was told to pull himself together rather than embracing his feelings of grief. It is interesting to note that certain feelings are accepted among men whereas others are not. While playing, emotions such as aggression
are highly valued and endorsed, but showing intimate feelings such as grief and openly crying was considered outside the norm (Lilleaas 2007).

Seidler (2007) states that men often use violence and aggression to express their emotions without necessarily knowing what it is that is troubling them since displaying emotions often points to men being weak. Seidler further states that in order to understand men’s expression of emotions (which they may not discuss with others) “We need to also be able to engage with the emotional processes through which boys have grown up to be men and the ways in which they have shaped their emotional bodies to affirm dominant masculinities” (p. 18).

It is important to note that there are different kinds of emotions that are reasonable for men to display. In contrast to women, men should not complain or whine, but displays of anger and frustration are valid emotions. Emotions such as anger and frustration often complement men’s feelings of aggression and violence and are therefore deemed appropriate. If men were to show emotions considered feminine, such as crying, whining and complaining they would not adhere to appropriate expressions of masculinity (Soulliere 2006). Instead, the use of emotions and adherence to certain personality traits among men often center on the use of violence and weapons to reinforce hegemonic masculinity and hegemonic ideals.
Violence, Weapons and Death

Messages on how to be a man often include aggression and violence as masculine traits (Soulliere 2006). Kaufman (1987) describes the “triad of men’s violence” as violence towards women, violence towards other men and violence against oneself. According to Kaufman “The construction of masculinity involves the construction of “surplus aggressiveness”. The social context of this triad of violence is the institutionalization of violence in the operation of most aspects of social, economic, and political life” (p. 5). Using violence is imperative for men in gaining the respect of others. Men who refuse to fight often become the subject of peer harassment and tend to face victimization by others (Cobbina, Like-Haislip and Miller 2010). “If someone calls a boy a “wimp” or a “fag”, he is supposed to fight to prove that he is not (Kivel 1984). Being physical is therefore necessary in terms of masculinity. Men should confront the person with whom they have a problem, and take responsibility for their actions, indicating that men are not whiners. Winning a fight or physical conflict is important, as real men are also winners (Soulliere 2006). Using violence to settle arguments is also a common way for boys and men to deal with others. Violence is therefore tied to one’s masculinity as a necessary response to the disrespect of other males. As a result, men indicate that they fight to gain and maintain respect, to protect others and avoid getting cheated (usually in terms of monetary loss) (Cobbina, Like-Haislip and Miller 2010).

The use of one’s body is an important feature in violent acts. Examining adolescent masculinities, Messerschmidt (1999) states that taller, muscular boys are deemed more
masculine through their bodies, and are therefore more popular with others. “Through interaction at school, adolescents “make bodies matter” by constructing some bodies more masculine than others” (p. 214). Therefore, “…the body intervenes in social interaction as a personal resource that socially symbolizes a boy’s masculine identity” (p. 215). Physical violence is the appropriate measure to use when solving interpersonal issues and “real men” should therefore respond with physical violence (Messerschmidt 1999: 212-213). Studying bouncers, Monaghan (2002) stresses the importance of using the body as capital. Being physically large, muscular and strong is an asset for bouncers in cases where violence may be necessary. “Dimensions of masculinity enumerated and valorised in urban licensed premises include body build (muscle, size, shape, height and weight), techniques of the body (fighting ability) and a willingness to risk one’s body in performance” (p. 351).

Men’s use of violence is also viewed as distinctly different from violence used by women, and is measured in such terms. Women are said to fight over “gossip, jealousy, envy and love”, whereas men fight to defend the honor of others and to gain respect (Cobbina, Like-Haislip and Miller 2010: 612). Thus, women and men are also deemed different in the way they fight. Women are unpredictable whereas men are calm and calculated. Rather than having legitimate reasons to fight and fight “well”, women’s unpredictability, coupled with their emotionality lead them to fight “ineffectively” and “crazy” (Cobbina, Like-Haislip and Miller 2010: 612 - 614). The male who does not win a fight or conform to the standards of male fighting becomes labeled through the use of feminine terms such as a “punk-ass bitch”, “pretty boy” or “ladies” (Soulliere 2006: 8).
Men are also interested in and fascinated by violence and violent acts. Men have been found to prefer films involving sex and violence more so than women. Men who prefer higher levels of violence are also more inclined to accept traditional attitudes and beliefs about sexual relationships with women (Emmers-Sommer, Pauley, Hanzal and Triplett 2006).

In relation to violence and violent acts, the use of firearms is also tied to the notion of masculinity. Women tend to use less lethal weapons such as small knives in contrast to men who preferred the use of firearms (Cobbina, Like-Haislip and Miller 2010). Weapons are often linked to hypermasculinity, focusing on aggressiveness, strength and sexual force as to reinforce the notion of “boys becoming men” through the use of violence and weapons (Myrttinen 2004). Weapons also offer a sense of protection and serve to reinforce one’s reputation through impression management (Stretesky and Pogrebin 2007). The use of violence and weapons to enforce hegemonic ideals are not only used among humans, but extend to include the use of force, domination and violence against animals as well.

Animals

The connection between displays of masculinity and the use of animals has been examined in bloody sports such as dog fighting (Evans, Gauthier and Forsyth 1998) and cockfighting (Marvin 1984), as well as in the slaughtering of animals (Parry 2010). There are also connections between hegemonic displays of masculinity and power and sexuality
in terms of killing and hunting animals; “Men are often portrayed as innately predatory, with women and nonhuman animals as their prey” (Luke 1998: 642). “Men have been taught that they are hunters, and women – all women – are fair game” (Sheffield 1995: 420). In North America, most men do not hunt for survival or to feed their families, instead hunting is a sport and form of leisure activity (Luke 1998). The killing of animals and the use of animals to fight each other depict not only an interest in such events, but also reinforce the notion of masculinity, in many forms, such as the domination of animals (along with women, most often in sexualized terms).

Cockfighting is very much a male-oriented event and draws from notions of masculinity, such as tenacity and aggression. The realm of cockfighting is one in where the notions of masculinity reinforce men’s identity (Marvin 1984). As the killing, hunting and dominating of animals reinforce traditional notions of masculinity; the use of language and animals can also be a powerful factor in reinforcing gender. Thus, the use of animals for killing, hunting and in “sports” reinforces both accepted standards of masculinity while at the same time constructing stereotypes about women in reference to men; “In the most basic form of social construction of gender by way of animals, animal behavior is simply perceived and/or interpreted in a manner consistent with sex-role stereotypes” (Jones 2010: 368).

The language used when hunting or killing animals is often tied to sex, women and weapons (Kalof, Fitzgerald and Baralt 2004). Power and possession over life and death are important characteristics as are the depictions of romance in the hunting and killing of animals (Luke 1998). Weapons and animals are often given feminine
characteristics or described using feminine traits. “Sexual words and phrases, such as “climax” and “hot and heavy action” were used to describe hunters’ hunting experiences and encounters with killing animals” (Kalof, Fitzgerald and Baralt 2004: 245). In contrast to men, women who hunt tend to use a different nonsexual language when describing the activity of sport hunting (Luke 1998).

The hunting of animals to reinforce male dominance and hegemonic ideals is also depicted in the media. In their examination of the television program Jackass, Lindgren and Lelievre (2009) found that the domination of animals is a common feature in displays of hegemonic masculinity. The domination of animals can be viewed in terms of risk-taking experiences, but also as a way to try and dominate nature. The authors conclude that; “the animal domination in Jackass can be seen as a demonstration of supremacy of intellect, and sometimes strength, on the part of masculinity and civilization over the more “primitive” animals” (p. 403). Men and women do not only differ in ways relating to the killing and hunting of animals, but the gendered culture of alcohol and drug use enforces hegemonic ideals of accepted behavior.

Alcohol and Drug Use

Men report more use of alcohol and marijuana (White, Labouvie and Papadaratsakis 2005) and more binge drinking (Clapp, Shillington and Segars 2000) than women, and the use of illicit drugs in private settings also contributes to increased alcohol consumption (Clapp et al. 2006). Women, on the other hand, are more likely to
receive medication for mood, anxiety, and somatoform disorders among others (Ussher 2011). When examining the U.S Navy and an undisclosed fraternity, West (2001) found that alcohol consumption also enables men to engage in casual sexual relations, violent acts, homosociality, and hegemonic masculinity, especially in male dominated cultures. West (2001) states that the use of alcohol creates and contributes to male bonding and group cohesion as dominant thoughts and definitions regarding masculinity and masculine behavior are constructed. Drinking with the “buddies” is also one way of rejecting people based on gender and other prerequisites, while maintaining homosocial values (West 2001). The media also contributes to hegemonic ideals of accepted male behavior.

Beer and liquor advertisements often focus on men’s friendships with each other as they construct a “‘desirable lifestyle’ in relation to contemporary social conditions” (Messner and Montez De Oca 2005: 1880). Messner and Montez De Oca (2005) state that beer advertisements in the 1950s and 1960s focused on heterosexual couples enjoying a cold beer. But starting in the 1970s and onwards, women were largely excluded from such advertisements, shifting the focus on men spending time with other men in a leisurely fashion. The shift in focus of such advertisements has resulted in women being viewed as “sexual consorts” rather than equal alcohol consumers (Kirkby 2003: 247).

As media ideals often depict the drinking of alcohol as a pastime for men, the amount of alcohol consumption is also paramount to the hegemonic ideal. A sizable majority of both males and females endorse the belief that heavy alcohol consumption is
a masculine type of behavior (Peralta 2007). By consuming alcohol, masculine behavior and hegemonic masculinity are enforced. Males also associate the act of heavy drinking with power and strength, such as how much alcohol their bodies can handle. Among males, both the consumption of alcohol and story telling concerning heavy drinking is part of accomplishing masculine behavior with one’s peers as a reference group. This drinking behavior is a form of “badge of honor” (Peralta 2007: 746), in which males construct and assert their masculinity.

Not adhering to the accepted consumption of alcohol based on one’s gender has consequences for both women and men. If women engage in heavy drinking, they are believed to breach traditional male behavior, a behavior that resulted in women being viewed as less attractive and more masculine (Peralta 2007). For men, the reverse is true. Males who do not engage in heavy drinking are often deemed weak or feminine. Therefore, those women and men who do not adhere to the acknowledged alcohol consumption standard are legitimized as subordinate through the culture of alcohol consumption (Peralta 2007). Language used to reinforce masculine and heterosexual drinking behavior included “fruit”, “two beer queer” (Peralta 2007: 750-751) and “faggot”, “poof” and “pillow biter” (Gough and Edwards 1998: 427).

Another way of reinforcing masculinity is apparent in the social games of drinking culture. Engaging in drinking games is an expression of male propensity to express power, control and stamina while withstanding intoxication. Women who partake in drinking games are often given “handicaps” as to enforce the belief that women cannot
consume as much alcohol as men. The use of “handicaps” also differentiates men from women and enforces male superiority and dominance (Peralta 2007).

As stated above, the purpose of the current study is to examine and analyze the presence of hegemonic masculinity and hegemonic ideals in “MANswers” as it is a male-oriented television program (aired on Spike TV). In order to observe hegemonic masculinity in “MANswers”, a closer discussion of hegemonic ideals including sexual identity, the role of women, emotionality, violence and weapons, animals and alcohol and drug use was presented. By using content analysis, the author is able to discern the interests of “real guys” as presented in “MANswers”. To the author’s knowledge, no other examination of “MANswers” has been conducted to date. Therefore, a closer discussion of “MANswers”, its aired episodes and the methods used to execute content analysis are discussed.
Chapter 3: Methods

The first season of “MANswers” aired in 2007 and there have been three additional seasons aired since then. Season four was aired in late 2010 and in 2011. Season one consists of nine episodes, season two of thirteen, and season three and four consist of ten episodes each. In all, a total of 42 episodes of “MANswers” have been aired. In each episode questions are posed and then answered through the use of reenactments, as well as actors and professionals in different field such as criminology, psychology, anthropology, human sexuality, zoology and so forth. Each episode contains between four and eight questions. Examples of the questions posed in “MANswers” from all the seasons include; “How Drunk Can A Dude Get in One Night Before He Dies?” (Season one, episode one), “What’s The Guaranteed Way To Make Your Penis Bigger?” (Season two, episode three), “What Is The World’s Smallest Handgun?” (Season three, episode six), and “What’s The Secret Weapon To Winning At Beer Pong?” (Season four, episode nine).

The population is therefore every episode of “MANswers” recorded to date, whereas the unit of measurement is each question posed throughout the four seasons of aired episodes. When using multiple delivery systems to gather data it can be difficult to define one’s population (Neuendorf 2011). The author did have access to the television channel Spike TV, but due to the fact that no current season of “MANswers” is ongoing, older episodes are sporadically aired and since all episodes of “MANswers” are available on Spike TV’s website, the author found the content of the website to be more reliable. In
many instances, the changing nature of the Web may provide less consistent information (Neuendorf 2011). In this case, the author was able to locate all episodes aired and all questions posed in each episode. All aired seasons of “MANswers” and all questions posed in each episode were recorded and the exact wording of the questions was written down. The author viewed all episodes on Spike TV’s website as they are posted in seasonal order. Season one consists of 61 questions, season two of 93 questions, season three of 65 questions and season four of 63 questions. In all, 282 questions are posed throughout the four seasons of “MANswers”. To ensure the credibility of the questions, the author viewed each episode and recorded all questions exactly as posted in each episode (each question in “MANswers” is visually depicted but also verbally expressed and the exact wording is therefore easily recorded).

By examining all episodes of “MANswers” recorded and aired to date, the author is confident that the believed interests of “real guys” as described in “MANswers” can be explored. Such an approach is described as an “availability-based approach” and is appropriate when applying theories of message production (Neuendorf 2011), as the author in this case is. Not only is an “availability-based approach” appropriate in terms of examining all episodes of “MANswers”, but it allows the author to use the entire sampling frame of questions rather than drawing a sample.

By using content analysis to discern the interests of “real guys” as described and vocalized in “MANswers”, the first issue becomes describing the content of the messages portrayed in “MANswers”, represented by the questions posed. The second part of the objective is to also take a closer look at each category containing the messages of
“MANswers”. The goal is to break down the categories into areas of interests not
generally described in the first assessment. By doing so, the author is able to focus both
on the interests described in “MANswers” on a larger scale, but also on characteristics
within categories to provide further comprehension of hegemonic masculinity in male-
centered television programs.

In order to assess the construction of hegemonic masculinity in the television
program “MANswers” the author developed a coding schema, or codebook, consisting of
nine characteristics (ten including the category of “other”) associated with hegemonic
masculinity. Since the author is not aware of any existing codebooks specifically meant
to examine hegemonic masculinity in male-oriented television programs, a novel
codebook was deemed necessary. In order to assess the impact of the variables
constructed, each variable needs to be exhaustive as well as mutually exclusive
(Neuendorf 2011). The author therefore constructed the codebook and variables so that
characteristics would not overlap and complicate the coding procedure. The author chose
not to include any example questions in the codebook as they may “limit the coder’s
vision as to the application of the variable” (Neuendorf 2011: 283). The categories
constructed in the codebook were as followed.

Sexual Orientation:

To assess the hegemonic ideal of heterosexuality in “MANswers” questions
including references to the sexual orientation of males and females (heterosexuality,
bisexuality, homosexuality, transgender and transsexual) were coded. The current coding
allowed the author to discern the relative frequency of topics related to sexuality for both men and women.

Women’s Roles:

Included in the category of women’s roles was any reference to the role that a woman occupies, such as girlfriend, mother, wife, employee and so forth. Any role mentioned considered by many to be a put down or negative in nature such as “hookers”, “prostitutes”, “strippers”, and “porn stars” was also included to examine the occurrence of roles related to the provision of sex or sexualized acts by females and inevitably the sexual objectification of women.

Women’s Bodies:

To examine how women were related to in “MANswers”, questions that included any reference to the female body such as legs, breasts, buttocks and vaginas was included in the category women’s bodies. In order to examine the extent to which women were categorized as sex objects in “MANswers” it is important to focus on the sexualization of female bodies.

Men’s Bodies:

When examining men’s bodies, any reference to body parts such as arms, legs, stomach and so forth was included. References to the male penis and to ejaculation were also coded in the category of men’s bodies. Even though the sexualization of males is not
as persistent as female sexualization, the penis is the symbol of male sexuality (Gough and Edwards 1998) and ejaculation (semen) becomes inseparable from the male penis (Johnson Jr. 2010). Examples of terms that describe the male genitalia include; “erection”, “boner”, “balls”, “pud” and “manhood”. Any reference to bodily fluids such as urine and excrement was also included.

Sex:
References to sexual activities including foreplay, masturbation, intercourse, oral sex, anal sex or sex with multiple partners were included. Slang terms are often used when describing sexual activity. Therefore any term that indicates sexual acts was also included. Examples of such terms were; “banging”, “getting laid”, “getting some”, “screwing”, “scoring”, and “3-ways”. Sexual emotions or sexual feelings were also included under the category of sex. Examples of questions with terms referencing to such feelings were “horny” and “turned on”. Any references to places where sexual acts may occur such as strip clubs and brothels were also included in the category of sex.

Violence, Weapons and Death:
To measure the extent to which violence and weapons were included in “MANswers” the author included any questions that portray violence such as fights, physical attacks, injuries caused by others, violence towards oneself, death caused by violence, and the use of violence to protect oneself. References to weapons that would cause bodily injury or death to oneself or others were also included. Deaths occurring
without the use of human force or involvement, violence or weapons (such as cases of
death due to old age) were not included.

Alcohol and Drugs:

References to alcoholic beverages, intoxications, adverse effects of drinking,
binge drinking and drinking games were included in the analysis. Any reference to the
use of drugs, purchasing of or distributing of drugs, drug tests or drug paraphernalia was
also included. It is important to note that not only illicit drugs were included in this
analysis, but prescription drugs and drugs used to enhance one’s body appearance or
body functions were also included. When discussing the frequency of questions including
illicit drugs or over the counter drugs, the author did make a distinction between illegal
and legal drug use.

Emotions:

In order to discern the use of emotions in “MANswers” any reference to emotions
and feelings were included in this category. As mentioned above, sexual feelings and
emotions were displayed under the category of sex rather than emotions. Examples of
such questions concerning references to emotions as “sensitive” and “depressed” were
included. Questions pertaining to the personality or personality traits of a person were
also included.
Animals:

The mentioning of animals or acts involving animals (such as killing, hunting and defending oneself from the attack of an animal) along with the use of sexualized terms that include animals were placed in the category animals.

Making Money:

The author did not create the category of monetary gain before gathering and analyzing the data. Therefore, no formal hypothesis was established for this category. Instead, the category emerged from the data in the process of analyzing the results. Questions that pertained to ways in which a man can make money, including references to monetary gain were placed in this category.

Other:

Questions pertaining to issues that did not conform to the above mentioned groups were coded under the category of other. These questions may have referred to characteristics consistent with the ideals of hegemonic masculinity, but were beyond the scope of this examination. In reference to the existing categories the author provided an analysis and discussion of these questions.

When assessing intercoder reliability, it is important that each coder involved in the coding process studies the codebook. In order to establish intercoder reliability a sample is usually taken and coded by at least two coders (Neuendorf 2011) before the final coding procedure is recorded. A subsample usually consists of 10 to 20 percent of
the full sample, and an agreement of at least .60 should be achieved (Neuendorf 2011).
The total number of questions to be analyzed is 282 questions recorded through the four
seasons of “MANswers”. The author believed that a sample size of 10 to 20 percent
would not be enough due to the relatively low number of questions recorded throughout
the shows entirety. The author therefore chose to utilize 40 percent of the questions posed
in “MANswers” or a total of 112 questions to be included in the sample designated to test
intercoder reliability. A random sample of 112 questions based on the total 282 questions
was therefore chosen and calculated from the possible range of values between 1 and
282. An independent coder was provided the codebook. Thereafter the author and the
independent coder independently categorized and coded the 112 questions making up the
sample.

As described above, no example questions were provided to the independent
coder or the author during the coding process. There were however instances in which
one question contained elements of two or more categories and therefore could be placed
in either category. As previously mentioned, categories need to be exhaustive as well as
mutually exclusive (Neuendorf 2011), but as a significant number of questions referenced
several categories, the issue of credibility arose. To resolve any discrepancies during the
coding process, questions containing multiple references to categories were placed in
both categories included in the codebook. Examples of questions containing multiple
references are provided here to explain how discrepancies were resolved. In the case of
the questions “How Drunk Can A Dude Get in One Night Before He Dies?” “What Does
The Shape Of Her Boobs Tell You About Her Personality?” and “What Animal Can Give
You An Erection For Hours?” each question contains multiple references to the categories in the codebook. The first question contains both references to alcohol and drug use (being intoxicated) and violence, weapons and death (a person dying). Therefore, the question was coded in the categories of alcohol and drug use and violence, weapons and death. The second question includes the categories of women’s bodies (breasts) and emotions (personality trait). The question is placed in both the category women’s bodies and in the category of emotions. The last example question refers to both animals and men’s bodies (erection), and is therefore placed in both categories.

Since it is important to assess the impact of intercoder reliability on the concepts of reliability and validity, the author believes that the approach used can establish reliability in terms of measuring consistent results for coders through the use of a well-designed codebook, studied by both coders. It is important to note that the author was one of the coders involved in establishing intercoder reliability, even though Neuendorf (2011) suggests that the author should not necessarily be involved in the first aspect of coding, intercoder reliability. Reliability can also be established through the decision to allow the coders to place a question in more than one category when deemed necessary rather than choosing one category over the other, reducing uncertainty for the coders. When establishing validity it is important to include references made to two or more categories in order to assess any relationships within the questions pertaining to multiple categories and hegemonic masculinity. The author is aware that the system imposed of categorizing questions containing two or more references may have its limits, but
believes it is deemed necessary in order to establish intercoder reliability while keeping in mind that reliability and validity are important concepts in research based studies.

The sample coding was carried out on August 24, 2011 by the independent coder and on August 23, 2011 by the author. Out of the total 112 questions analyzed by the independent coder and the author, several questions were coded into two categories. Therefore, even though the sample contained 112 questions, the total number of questions placed into categories, after accounting for some questions being placed under more than one category was 124. A high level of intercoder reliability was attained (agreement of .86), with 17 questions placed in different categories.

After studying the inconsistencies between the independent coder and the author, it seemed as if the coding of a question relied much on the coder’s interpretation or understanding of particular questions. Examples of such questions include; “They’ve Dropped The Bomb! What’s The Secret To Keeping Your Ass Alive?” “How Tough Are Implants?” and “What Food Is The Most Bone Prone?” “MANswers” contains a significant number of slang words, some which are interpreted in different ways based on the coder’s own experience and understanding of such words. Disagreement can be solved by allowing for the coders to be able to view the episode containing the question in order to gain a further understanding of the content and meaning of the particular question, therefore decreasing any uncertainty and ambiguity of particular questions. Due to the high level of agreement however, the author feels confident that the codebook and categories included are sufficient enough for a successful examination of “MANswers” to be carried out.
Chapter 4: Results

Due to the fact that several of the questions were placed in more than one category, the final coding procedure produced 319 questions. In order to assess the prevalence of hegemonic masculinity in “MANswers”, and the messages contained in the categories, a closer analysis and examination of the categories is offered. The categories are presented from the most common to the least common, except for the case of other, which contains questions that do not fit in the categories created by the author and is therefore presented last. The number of questions (and percentages of the total) is also presented.
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*Table 1. Results from all questions of “MANswers”.*
Violence, Weapons and Death

The category of violence, weapons and death contains 66 questions (20.7 percent of the total questions posed in “MANswers”). Hypothesis six states that in accordance with hegemonic masculinity the discussion of violence and use of, or presence of, weapons and death will be mentioned to a great extent in “MANswers”. The hypothesis is confirmed due to the fact that violence, weapons and death is the largest category in “MANswers”. The messages about violence, weapons and death are however important to discuss.

Several patterns emerged when analyzing the questions. As in other categories, animals are frequently used in reference to violence, weapons and death. Eleven questions (17 percent) of the total 66 questions included animals in the questions, such as: ”How can you kill a bear with your hands?” “How do you survive a killer bee attack?” “How can you survive a tiger attack?” and “What’s the deadliest animal ever killed by hand?” These questions point to the ability of man to dominate nature. The majority of questions pertaining to violence and the use of animals mention large, strong and predatory animals. The ability of men to dominate, kill, or escape these predatory animals point to “a demonstration of supremacy of intellect, and sometimes strength, on the part of masculinity and civilization over the more ‘primitive animals’” (Lindgren and Lelievre 2009: 403).

Another common pattern was the use of violence or weapons in order to protect oneself or defend oneself in order to survive. These questions did not include the defense
against or survival of animal attacks as described above. Even though both include the words “survival” or “defending”, they are different in the sense that animals are used to display the strength of men in “MANswers”, whereas other survival/defense questions frequently lack the use of humans as perpetrators. Seven questions (10.5 percent) pertained to the use of violence and weapons for such reasons. Examples of these questions include: “How can you defend yourself in a bar room brawl?” “How can you survive being hit by a car?” “How can a dude survive being impaled by an arrow?” and “How can someone survive being struck by lightning?” Many of these questions are perhaps not relevant in the everyday lives of men, as few men will experience being “impaled by an arrow” or “struck by lightning”. The important message is however, that men can survive almost anything as long as they know how to react and act in such situations.

The largest subcategory of violence, weapons and death is that of killing/dying. Nineteen questions (29 percent) of the total 66 questions used language that reference killing/dying. Examples of such questions include: “How much electricity would it take to kill you?” “Can you take the dump of death?” “What’s the deadliest martial art move in the world?” “Can music be loud enough to kill you?” “How many elevator farts would it take to kill you?” and “Can you kill someone by dropping a nickel off the Empire State building?” Many of these questions do not portray violence between men that result in someone being killed or ending up dead. Instead, other forces are likely to contribute to the death of a person. It is important to note however, that many of the questions in the subcategories of defense/protection and killing/dying used in “MANswers” tie into the
overall notion that men are interested in and fascinated with violence and violent acts (Emmers-Sommer, Pauley, Hanzal and Triplett 2006). The fascination of violence in “MANswers” is common, as is the fascination with weapons.

Another important category is therefore that of weapons. In contrast to men, women often use smaller, less lethal weapons, whereas men prefer firearms (Cobbina, Like-Haislip and Miller 2010). Eleven questions (16.5 percent) mentioned different types of weapons. Questions referencing weapons include: “Which is stronger, a samurai sword or a speeding bullet?” “What’s the biggest handgun you can buy?” “What is the world’s smallest handgun?” “How many nukes would it take to blow up earth?” “Once a grenade is thrown, how long until it explodes?” and “How can a guy make a weapon for under five bucks?” It is interesting to note that the questions in “MANswers” display a preference for powerful, dangerous weapons, such as bombs, grenades and handguns. Not only are weapons linked to hypermasculinity (Myrrtinen 2004), but there also seems to be a distinction between what kinds of weapons are focused on in “MANswers” as they are very much lethal. So far the subcategories included in the category of violence, weapons and death have not focused much on interpersonal violence, but one of the subcategories does.

Ten questions (15 percent) served as more of a “how to guide” in regards to violent acts. The “how to guide” of male violence is concerned with how to use violence against others as well as how to ensure that a person is able to manage violence, especially in a physical manner. Examples of such questions include: “How do you take a punch to the head to reduce the risk of brain damage?” “Where’s the best place to take a
“How long do you have to reattach a severed limb?” “How can a dude rip your eye out with his bare hands?” “How can a guy win a fistfight in an elevator?” “What’s the best way to kick the crap out of somebody?” and “How can you take a bullet out yourself?” These questions point to the notion that violence is a masculine trait and that being physical and winning a fight or physical conflict is necessary when displaying masculinity (Soulliere 2006). The use of one’s body is an important feature in “MANswers”, especially in terms of being able to “take it” or withstand physical pain as noted in the questions “How do you take a punch to the head to reduce the risk of brain damage?” “Where’s the best place to take a bullet?” “How long do you have to reattach a severed limb?” and “How can you take a bullet out yourself?” Messerschmidt (1999) and Monaghan (2002) stress the use of one’s body when engaged in violent acts, especially for boys and men who are physically large and muscular. In “MANswers” however, the men portrayed are not very muscular or imposing, but they do know how to “take a punch” or “deal with” the pain. In line with Monaghan (2002), there are aspects of using one’s body as “capital” that is apparent in “MANswers”. The “techniques of the body” (such as fighting ability) and the “willingness to risk one’s body in performance” (p. 351) are present in “MANswers”. These characteristics are evident in the next subcategory of violence, weapons and death, that of self-harm.

There are four questions (six percent) pertaining to self-harm in “MANswers”. These questions are: “How fast do you have to go to rip your muscles off the bone?” “How can a dude cut his arm off with a pocket knife and survive?” “How the hell can a dude take out his own appendix?” and “How can a guy instantly increase his pain
tolerance?” These questions again point to the ability of the men in “MANswers” to withstand pain and to control their bodies. It is difficult to understand the need for taking out one’s “own appendix” or cut one’s “arm off with a pocket knife”, but that is beyond the point. Rather than focusing on the reason why a man would cause such self-harm, we know that “real men” can once again “deal with it”.

There are four questions (six percent) that the author was unable to find a pattern for, but that still pertained to the notion of violence, weapons and death and that were placed in that category. One example of such a question is “What’s the oldest violent gang on earth?” The notion of violence in terms of promoting hegemonic masculinity and masculine displays is also evident in the use of alcohol and drugs in “MANswers”. The second largest category of questions in “MANswers” is that of sex.

**Sex**

In the category of sex, 47 questions (14.8 percent) referenced sexual activities, sexual emotions and sexual feelings. Hypothesis five states that references to heterosexual sexual activities including foreplay, intercourse, oral sex, anal sex or sex with multiple partners is common in “MANswers”.

Just as women in “MANswers” are portrayed in roles such as “hookers”, “prostitutes” and “strippers”, places where you can find such women are important venues for a man to engage in sexual activities. The pornographication of sex and sex being based on the model of prostitution as mentioned by Tyler (2011) is evident in these
questions as they pertain to sexual activities (both legal and illegal) that portray such models, as in the questions: “How have guys gotten a happy ending at a high-class massage parlors?” “Where are America’s most kick-ass whorehouses?” “What’s the biggest strip club in the world?” and “How can you become a porktastic porn star?”

These questions not only imply that men should look for sexual activities in places such as “whorehouses” and “massage parlors”, but they also imply that men in general and the fans of “MANswers” in particular deserve not only any old “whorehouse” or “massage parlor”, but the most “high-class”, “kick-ass”, “biggest” and “porktastic” experiences and sexual activities in such places. The notion that if you cannot engage an “ordinary” woman in sexual activities, then you can purchase those experiences is fairly common in “MANswers”.

Another common theme that arose is the notion that men need sex, and are always looking for ways to get it. Sixteen questions (34 percent) included words that imply that men are always finding ways to engage in sex, as mentioned in the questions: “In what country are you more likely to get oral sex?” “How can you be six times more likely to get oral sex?” “Where are you most likely to get a 3-way?” “What’s the secret to getting in your girl’s pants?” “What drink is most likely to get you into her pants?” “What is the surefire way to put your junk in that trunk?” and “In which country will chicks spend the most time banging you?” These questions imply that men will do almost anything in order to have sex with a woman and that men look for ways and places to have sex with women without putting very much effort into the process. If you know where to go, then sex will follow immediately. Notice that few of the questions pertaining to sexual
activities in “MANswers” include that of a stable or monogamous relationship. Instead, most questions imply that brief sexual encounters are more normalized and desired than long term ones. Only one of the questions included the mentioning of a girlfriend in “What’s the secret to getting in your girl’s pants?” The question does not imply that the girlfriend wants to have sex, but she will if only you can figure out the secret. A rather small percentage of questions pertained to men as inherently promiscuous, even though many of the questions imply that men are naturally promiscuous by focusing on brief sexual encounters that signify men as sexually active. These two questions are: “What male will screw anything?” and “How can you catch your guy getting some on the side?”

Another theme in the category of sex is that sex can be dangerous or part of thrill seeking behaviors. Five questions (11 percent) used language that indicate that sex can be dangerous or should be part of thrill seeking behavior, such as “What is the number one sex injury in the world?” “What’s the best way to have sex while scuba diving?” “How the hell do you get laid on a speeding motorcycle?” “What’s the secret to skydiving sex?” and “How the hell can a guy have sex while flying a helicopter?” The use of sexualized terms and animals is also present in the category of sex. Four questions (8.5 percent) include animals when using sexualized terms. These questions are: “Which animal is most like having sex with a woman?” “What is the horniest animal in the jungle?” “What animal is more adept at choking the chicken?” and “Besides humans, what’s the only animal that engages in prostitution?”

The questions included in the category of sex also point to a pattern in how “MANswers” portray women’s sexual feelings. Seven questions (15 percent) displayed
women’s sexuality in questions pertaining to sex. Women’s sexual desire and willingness to have sex is an important aspect in “MANswers”. There are however, very few references to how men can improve, contribute to, or increase female pleasure. Instead, external sources of pleasure are more important for men, as if women’s enjoyment of sex is of little thought or relevance in “MANswers”. Women’s sexual needs are often portrayed as less important than men’s as noted by Tyler (2011). Questions that portray this lack of caring or feeling of responsibility include: “Who’s horniest, women with real breasts or women with fake ones?” “What can she put on that will help her get off?” “How can you tell if she’s faking it?” “What car makes chicks the horniest?” “What smell turns women on the most?” and “How can you tell if a chick is going to be a screamer?” Women are viewed as sexual beings having the same sexual feelings and desires as men, but there is no reason for men to take any responsibility for women’s sexual pleasure.

Nine of the questions (19 percent) pertaining to sex were placed in a subcategory of other, in which no specific theme was found. These questions did however still pertain to sex in very explicit ways, such as “Should athletes abstain from sex the night before a big game?” “What’s the record for most sex in one day?” and “How can going green save your sex life?” Hypothesis five which states that references to heterosexual sexual activities including foreplay, intercourse, oral sex, anal sex or sex with multiple partners is common in “MANswers” is confirmed as all types of sexual activities were not only mentioned, but were included in almost all questions in the category of sex. Heterosexual
relationships and sexual activities are taken for granted in “MANswers”, especially since women are mentioned to a great degree and as the target audience is male. The overall message about sex in “MANswers” is that relationships with females are not very important (Gilmartin 2007), in contrast to sexual pursuits and sexual activities (Attwood 2005). “Hooking up” therefore becomes the norm (Freitas 2008) and the overall message conveyed in “MANswers”. The use of animals in “MANswers” is also tied to sex and women (Kalof, Fitzgerald and Baralt 2004). To summarize the results of the category sex, using money in exchange for sex in “MANswers” is deemed appropriate. Men are also viewed as innately promiscuous, and are always looking for sex. Sex is also tied to dangerous, thrill seeking behavior, as well as to animals. Women’s sexual feelings are legitimate and similar to those of men, but there is little recognition that men have any responsibility or accountability to make sure that the women they are having sex with are equally satisfied. As sex was the second largest of the nine categories created by the author (except for the category of other), it is important to examine the third largest category, that of men’s bodies.

*Men’s Bodies*

A total of 41 questions (12.9 percent) pertain to the male body. Men’s bodies are portrayed, discussed and described in very different ways than women’s bodies in “MANswers. Discussing how male bodies are referred to and explored in “MANswers” is therefore needed. Hypothesis three states that there is a strong focus on male
reproductive genitalia (including the penis, testicles, semen and the ability to ejaculate) in “MANswers”.

Fifteen questions (37 percent) concerning men’s bodies referred to bodily fluids such as urine, excrement and farts. Examples of such questions include: “What are five things you can use piss for?” “Can you freeze your farts and smell them later?” and “How can poop become a destructive missile?” These questions point to a fascination with bodily fluids and noises, much in line with the description of the “man-child” by Hymowitz (2011). The second largest category of men’s bodies is that of the penis (13 questions, 32 percent). Examples of questions discussing the penis include “Who’s got the world’s biggest penis?” “How can your penis make a face?” and “How can you untrap your pud from a zipper?” There are five questions (12 percent) that focus on the testicles. Examples of these questions include “How cold do you have to be to freeze your balls off?” “What’s in your ball sack?” and “What do your balls say about you?” Another five questions (12 percent) included either semen or ejaculation, such as: “How much is your semen worth?” “Who’s faster: man or sperm?” “How can a laptop lower your sperm count?” and “How can a guy temporarily shoot blanks?” Another three questions that still pertain to men’s bodies, but do not fit in the categories of bodily fluids, the penis, testicles, semen and ejaculation, can be included in their own category, the male rear end. It is however important to include these questions to give an overall understanding of questions that are still relevant to the male body. These questions were: “What’s the deadliest weapon a prisoner can hide up his ass?” “How can a burger joint cure your hemorrhoids?” and “What’s the biggest thing someone has ever gotten stuck in
their ass?” In contrast to the female body where the “ass” becomes a sexual object intended for male enjoyment, the male “ass” is no sexual object. It is a body part, albeit one where a man can get something “stuck” or “hide” something in, but it is not intended to be an object of female desire. The “ass” is the man’s “ass” whether he needs to cure hemorrhoids or put something up it.

Loe (2001) states that erectile functioning is an important aspect of hegemonic masculinity and the “male machine”. While there are only a few questions that reflect the notion of the body as a machine dependent on its parts, these questions do tend to frame erectile dysfunction as temporary and primarily due to external forces. Questions describing such events include “How can a laptop lower your sperm count?” “How can a guy temporarily shoot blanks?” and “What vegetable can give you erectile dysfunction?” The notion of erectile dysfunction becomes temporary, and essentially has very little to do with the male body itself. Instead, other forces can contribute to dysfunction, but if eliminated, the “male machine” goes back to its original functioning. Other questions that are also relevant to the male body as a machine include “What’s the guaranteed way to make your penis bigger?” “What habit will most likely shorten your pud?” “How can a man train his balls to disappear on command?” “What fridge food is the most bone prone?” and “What will add the most meat to a guy’s manhood?” The underlying message in these questions is that men have the ability and power to change, add to, train and command their sexual organs in order to control them. The notion that the body is a “machine” (Loe 2001) becomes evident as men can influence the different parts to function in ways that reinforces hegemonic masculinity. Two of these questions do
however point to dissatisfaction with the size of one’s penis as stated in “What’s the guaranteed way to make your penis bigger?” and “What will add the most meat to a guy’s manhood?” Perhaps these questions indicate men’s insecurity concerning the size and ability of the penis. The questions do however state that there are ways in which men can change their bodies to become more satisfied with them. It is possible to make one’s penis “bigger” or to “add more meat”. Interestingly, it seems as if the size of the penis has little to do with the response of females, in contrast to the notion that women need to increase the size of their breasts for the enjoyment and satisfaction of men, as discussed in the category of women’s bodies.

The overall notion in terms of the messages of men’s bodies in “MANswers” is that they belong to men. Whether men want to “improve their urinal aim”, “reattach a severed penis”, “deflate a beach boner” or “untrap your pud from a zipper”, their body is their own to use as they wish. The penis and testicles do become the symbol of virility and sexuality (Lindgren and Lelievre 2009), and erection and ejaculation are important aspects of maleness and sexual ability (Johnson Jr. 2010), while erectile functioning becomes an important aspect of the “male machine” (Loe 2001). The male body and its sexual organs are however not described in comparison to females as recipients in regards to sexual acts (Gough and Edwards 1998). Instead, women are essentially not mentioned in the questions pertaining to the male genitalia, as if they have little power and control over men’s bodies in comparison to the control men wield over the female body. The male body is for the male to enjoy, whereas the female body is constantly described in reference to what males enjoy, and their desire and preferences. The female
body becomes a sexual object, but the male body and its parts are free from objectification. Hypothesis three is confirmed due to the fact that the majority of questions pertaining to the male body (23 questions, 56 percent) were concerned with the penis, testicles, semen and ejaculation. A strong emphasis was also made concerning bodily fluids, such as “farts”, “poop” and “piss”. As women and men’s bodies are described in different ways (women’s bodies will be discussed later), so does the category of alcohol and drugs distinguish between women and men.

**Alcohol and Drugs**

Thirty-five questions (11 percent) pertain to the use of alcohol and drugs. Based on the questions and messages about alcohol and drug use, several different patterns emerged. Hypothesis eight states that alcohol and drug use (including excessive use such as binge drinking) will be a common feature in “MANswers”.

Interestingly, and at the same time disturbing, is the fact that illegal drug use is the largest subcategory, consisting of ten questions (28.5 percent). The author stated that the distinction would be made between the use of illegal drugs and legal drugs. Three questions pertained to the category of legal drugs (8.5 percent). Questions included in the category of illegal drugs are: “How have some guys beaten a drug test in 24 hours?” “Which method of smoking weed can get a guy the highest?” “What’s the newest way to smuggle drugs across the border?” “What is the most dangerous high a dude can get?” and “How many dollar bills would it take to get a dude high?” In the category of legal
drug, the three questions included in that category are “How can a guy get high legally?” “What’s the best drug to find in a girl’s medicine cabinet?” and “How can you tell if a chick might be on psychiatric drugs just by looking at her?”

In terms of drug use, there is a distinction between gender and illegal or legal drug use. In the category of illegal drugs, women are not mentioned at all, as if women are not consumers of illegal drugs. In the subcategory of legal drugs, one question pertains to male consumption of legal drugs, but not through the use of pills or other over the counter prescriptions. Instead, the overall (and rather vague) message is that of getting high legally, pointing to the desire of men to get high. When it comes to women and legal drugs, there is an assumption that women are great consumers of over the counter prescriptions, whereas men are not. The message of women’s use of prescription drugs through the questions, “What’s the best drug to find in a girl’s medicine cabinet?” and “How can you tell if a chick might be on psychiatric drugs just by looking at her?” point to women as inherently crazy or “mad” (Ussher 2011). As women are more likely than men to be diagnosed with “madness” including mood, anxiety, and somatoform disorders (among many others), “madness” has been linked to women’s reproductive bodies, cognitive, personality and biological states (Ussher 2011). The notion of women as somehow naturally “mad” is reiterated in “MANswers”. The assumptions that there is a gender divide in the need for and use of illegal drugs and legal drugs also carries over to the consumption of alcohol.

The need to binge drink or consume heavy amounts of alcohol is a common feature in “MANswers”. Seven questions (20 percent) include the need to be intoxicated
or drunk. Examples of such questions include: “How can you get drunk faster?” “Where is the drunkest place in the universe?” “How many non-alcoholic beers would it take to get drunk?” “How can you literally get drunk on grandpa?” and “How much communion wine does it take to get drunk?” There are seven other questions (20 percent) pertaining to the use of alcohol even though they do not include the word “drunk” in them, such as “How long can man survive on beer?” “Who do you pray to to make sure you never run out of beer?” “How can a guy get free brewski?” and “How can vodka save a guy’s life?” The message conveyed in these questions point to the need to consume alcohol, and especially beer. Consuming alcoholic beverages in “MANswers” is an important feature of everyday life. There is only one question (three percent of the total) that includes the use of drinking games. That question is “What’s the secret to winning at beer pong?”

Binge drinking and consuming such high quantities of alcohol no doubt has its adverse effects on both men and women. There are however only five of all questions (14 percent) included in the category of alcohol and drugs that point to those adverse effects. Those questions are “How drunk can a dude get in one night before he dies?” “What’s guaranteed to cure hangovers?” “What’s the best way to whip an addiction?” “Who should you pray to to cure your hangover?” and “What can stop binge drinking brain damage?”

In terms of the relationship between women, alcohol and drugs, only two questions (six percent) pertain to women. These questions however, point to women as sex objects in the discussion of alcohol and drugs. Those two questions are: “How can beer make your girlfriend’s boobs bigger?” and “What drink is most likely to get you into
her pants?” Such questions reduce the woman to a sex object in terms of focusing on body parts and sexual activities. It is also quite disturbing that one of the questions points to using alcohol in order to have intercourse with a female.

The results reveal that consuming alcohol and drugs is an important feature in the lives of men in “MANswers”. Hypothesis eight stating that alcohol and drug use (including excessive use such as binge drinking) will be a common feature in “MANswers” is confirmed. This is especially true since the subcategories of illegal drug use (28.5 percent of all questions) and the need to get drunk (20 percent of all questions), along with the overall mentioning of alcohol (20 percent of all questions) were the most common characteristics of alcohol and drug use. The results are also in line with the notion that men report more use of alcohol and marijuana (White, Labouvie and Papadaratsakis 2005), and binge drinking (Clapp, Shillington and Segars 2000). In line with the messages conveyed in “MANswers” is the notion that women are “sexual consorts”, not equal alcohol consumers (Kirkby 2003: 247). Not only are the women in “MANswers” not equal alcohol consumers, but they also do not engage in the same behaviors as men. Women who engage in heavy drinking are deemed less attractive, whereas men who do not are often deemed weak or feminine (Peralta 2007). Some of the messages in “MANswers” are very explicit, whereas some are more implicit. By not including women in questions pertaining to alcohol and drug use, except for in a few cases, such as women being the users of over the counter prescriptions, and women being displayed as sex objects, “MANswers” message that women should not consume alcohol or infringe on men’s territory is unspoken, but clear. The consumption of alcohol and
drugs is an important aspect of men’s lives, so is the inclusion of animals, as discussed next.

*Animals*

Thirty-four of the questions (10.7 percent) portrayed in “MANswers” were placed in the category of animals. A majority of those questions (58 percent) were also coded under other categories. In no other category were so many questions coded in more than one category. The questions pertaining to animals will therefore be examined based on the underlying message of those questions, but there will also be a discussion of why so many of the questions were placed in more than one category. Hypothesis nine states that the mentioning of animals (in reference to killing, hunting, defending oneself from and the use of sexualized terms) will be common in questions posed in “MANswers”.

When examining questions placed in the category of animals, patterns emerge. The first pattern is the use of violence towards or in self-defense against animals. The majority of these questions point to men’s ability to dominate or conquer large, predatory and wild animals. Examples of these questions include: “How can you kill a bear with your hands?” “How can you survive a tiger attack?” “How the hell can you survive an elephant attack?” “What’s the secret to escaping the death grip of a great white shark?” and “What’s the deadliest animal ever killed by hand?” Many of these questions are also placed in the category of violence, weapons and death. The use of violence against or violence as self-defense against animals points to men as being “portrayed as innately
predatory, with women and nonhuman animals as their prey” (Luke 1998: 642). In their examination of Jackass, Lindgren and Lelievre (2009) found the domination of animals to be a common feature, both in terms of risk-taking behavior, but also as a way to dominate nature by pointing to men’s “supremacy of intellect, and sometimes strength” (p. 403).

Another theme that ties into the use of violence against animals is the notion that dealing with animals is a dangerous and risky business. These questions pertain to the notion that animals have the capacity to kill a man. Such questions include: “What’s the most dangerous animal in America?” “What’s the deadliest fishing in the United States?” “What kills you faster: a cobra or a python?” and “What rodeo event is more dangerous than bull riding?” These questions describe how possession over life and death are important characteristics in the hunting and killing of animals (Luke 1998). Even for animals that do not look aggressive and deadly, they are a threat to men’s displays of masculinity, power and strength, such as in the question “What are the 5 cutest animals that can kill you?”

The use of animals in reference to sexual acts and body fluids is another theme that emerges. These question tie women, sexual acts and sexual feelings together. Examples of such questions include: “What animal is most like having sex with a woman?” “What animal can give you an erection for hours?” “What is the horniest animal in the jungle?” “Besides humans, what’s the only animal that engages in prostitution?” “What animal busts the biggest nut?” and “What animal is more adept at choking the chicken?” In these questions, animals are compared to humans in terms of sexuality, sexual acts and sexual feelings. In the first three questions, animals are
mentioned in sexual acts, or as having sexual feelings and desires, whereas in the last
three questions, the use of man made terms such as “busts the biggest nut” “engages in
prostitution” and “choking the chicken” are used to explain the sexuality of animals. Not
only are these terms used to describe animals as males, as men “choke the chicken”, but
they also reinforce the notion that men are similar to animals. Stereotypes are therefore
created to describe the actions and behaviors of animals in comparison to men. As Jones
(2010) points out “in the most basic form of social construction of gender by way of
animals, animal behavior is simply perceived and/or interpreted in a manner consistent
with sex-role stereotyping” (p. 368). Although not referring to sexual acts, three other
questions also compare animals to humans and human acts in questions such as “Which
animal farts the most?” “Which animal can drink you under the table?” and “Can a police
dog sniff drugs and get high?” The last two of these questions also fit into more than one
category as drugs and alcohol are used in reference to animals.

When referring to stereotypes, animals are also given feminine characteristics
(Kalof, Fitzgerald and Baralt 2004). To explain the use of feminine characteristics, we
can use the question “What day are you most likely to catch a cougar?” The question
could be interpreted as to catching the actual animal, the cougar, but when watching the
reenactment of the question in the episode, it is clear that the question refers to an older
woman. The question itself conjures an image of a man catching a “cougar” using a trap,
snare, or a net, even though it is set up in a way to imply catching a woman. Again, the
language used in the question points to men as “innately predatory” (Luke 1998: 642).
Other questions also deal with both women and animals at the same time, such as in the
questions: “What dog can score you the ladies?” and “How can you cook a piece of salmon on a hot girl’s ass?”

The reason why so many questions in the category of animals were also placed in other categories, such as violence, weapons and death, sex, and alcohol and drugs is due to the fact that animals are constantly compared to humans, or discussed in reference to human acts, behaviors and feelings. The author was surprised of the amount of overlapping that was found in the category of animals. In light of the statement that “animal behavior is simply perceived and/or interpreted in a manner consistent with sex-role stereotyping” (Jones 2010: 368), the findings make sense. Hypothesis nine is therefore confirmed as the majority of questions pertaining to animals include language that describe killing, hunting and defending oneself from animals, as well as the use of sexualized terms when discussing animals. Questions containing references to animals have been placed in many different categories. As discussed earlier, women and men’s bodies are referenced in very different ways. A majority of the questions pertaining to women’s bodies discussed two body parts, the breasts and the buttocks.

Women’s Bodies

Twenty-eight questions (8.8 percent) pertained to women’s bodies, whereas 41 questions (12.9 percent) pertained to men’s bodies. A majority of the questions (22 questions, 78.6 percent) pertaining to women’s bodies focused on women’s breasts (using the words “boob” or “boobs”). Examples of such questions include: “How can boobs
wash your car?” “How can boobs detect earthquakes?” and “How many boobs does it take to screw in a light bulb?” Out of the 22 questions focusing on women’s breasts, 11 questions (50 percent) used the words “big”, “biggest”, and “huge”, focusing on the size of breasts while displaying a male preference for large breasts. Examples of such questions include: “Who has the biggest boobs in the world?” “How would big boobs bounce on the moon?” and “How can you generate electricity with huge, bouncing boobs?” As “MANswers” displays a preference for big boobs, three of the 11 questions (27 percent) concerning big breasts also focus on how women can make their breasts bigger. Examples of such questions include: “How can she make her boobs bigger without surgery?” and “How can your cell phone make boobs bigger?” Three questions (13.6 percent) also focused on “implants” or “fake boobs” to increase one’s breasts. Examples of these questions include: “How tough are implants?” “Who’s hornier, women with real breasts or women with fake ones?” and “What country’s armed forces pays for fake boobs?” It is evident that the female body part focused mostly on in “MANswers” is that of breasts and that big breasts are desired. By mentioning ways in which women can increase the size of their breasts or use plastic surgery to enhance their breasts, “MANswers” also reinforce a notion of what desirable women should look like.

Breasts are however not the only focus in “MANswers”. Three questions (10.8 percent) in the category of women’s bodies focused used the word “ass” “butts” or “booty”. These questions are: “Which bass frequency causes maximum booty bounce?” “How can you cook a piece of salmon on a hot girl’s ass?” and “What do dudes like better: boobs or butts?” As there is a connection between the fixation on large breasts
along with men’s request and satisfaction for women to have “huge boobs” in “MANswers”, there is also a connection in how women’s “butts” are described in reference to male desire and objectification. Two of these three questions imply the possession of women’s behinds, such as “how can you?” and “what do dudes like better?” Women’s bodies, in terms of both breasts and behinds become the focus of male attraction and male desire. Many questions imply than men have a certain power over the bodies of women in terms of what they deem attractive, and how women’s bodies can change to fit their needs. Hypothesis one states that women in “MANswers” are displayed as sex object and that the sexualization of female bodies through the mentioning of body parts such as breasts, and buttocks will be common. This notion is reinforced as the majority of questions (89.4 percent) pertaining to women’s bodies in “MANswers” are about breasts and buttocks. In line with the findings of Krassas, Blauwkamp and Wesselink (2003) and Stankiewicz and Rosselli (2008), women in “MANswers” are viewed as sex objects and are sexualized through the focus of body parts. Through the questions used in “MANswers”, male dominance over women and views of women as sex objects (Gough and Edwards 1998) are reinforced. In male conversation (the questions used in “MANswers” can be compared to a conversation between men) female body parts, such as the breasts are often discussed, implying that females are both sexual objects and different from men (Gough and Edwards 1998). After explaining the category of women’s bodies, a discussion of women’s roles is also necessary.
Eight questions (2.5 percent) were placed in the category of women’s roles. Just as with the category of sexual orientation, the final number of questions posed in the category of women’s roles in “MANswers” was small compared to other categories. The messages conveyed are however important to note as they portray women in very few possible roles. Hypothesis two states that women in “MANswers” will more often be portrayed in roles that can be deemed demeaning (and where they are sexualized) in comparison to roles that signify their importance as employees, girlfriends, wives, etc. Like the category of sexual orientation, all questions posed under the category of women’s roles are presented here due to the small number of final questions. The questions pertaining to women’s roles are as follows: “Is she a hooker or is she a cop?” “How do you take home a stripper?” “Do midget hookers charge half price?” “In which country do hookers peddle their ass, then kick your ass?” “Can you bounce a quarter of a stripper’s ass?” “What day are you most likely to catch a cougar?” “How can beer make your girlfriend’s boobs bigger?” and “What’s the secret to getting in your girl’s pants?”

Four questions use the word “hooker” to describe the role of women, whereas one question places women under the category of “stripers” and one question describes a “cougar”. One question uses both the word “hooker” and “cop” in the same sentence. The role of women in “MANswers” is therefore mostly that of sexual objects, but also that of women as sexual recipients and the objects of sexual acts. Interestingly, the roles of women are also those in which money tend to be used in order to purchase sexual acts.
The overall message concerning the roles of women in “MANswers” therefore suggest that they can be bought for money as they sell themselves to men. In line with the notion that women often are portrayed as sex objects in media (Krassas, Blauwkamp and Wesselink 2003), and male-centered media (Stankiewicz and Rosselli 2008), they are also viewed as sex objects in “MANswers”. The roles of the “homemaker”, “professional” and “sex object” that DeWall, Altermatt and Thompson (2005) found most women in media to be depicted in are limiting enough. “MANswers” however, goes beyond that by portraying almost all the roles that women inhabit in the category of the “sex object”. One might state that being a “hooker” and “stripper” is indeed a profession, but the sexualization of women in these professions is overshadowed by the portrayal of them as sex objects and objects of men’s sexual activities.

Two of the questions in “MANswers” portray women in the roles of girlfriends. This finding points to “MANswers” depicting women in roles that are not demeaning or do not objectify women. The questions do however objectify the “girlfriends” rendering the role that of the sex object as well as noticed in the language used: “How can beer make your girlfriend’s boobs bigger?” and “What’s the secret to getting in your girl’s pants?” Except for the two questions pointing to women as girlfriends, the only question that does not use the words “hookers” or “strippers” is “What day are you most likely to catch a cougar?” The question does however imply that the “cougar” is an object of men’s desire as well as a sex object. The word used in the question also implies that the “cougar” is an object that men hunt and “catch”. By displaying men as “innately predatory” (Luke 1998: 642), and by using language that tie hunting to women and sex
(Kalof, Fitzgerald and Baralt 2004), the “cougar” in “MANswers” is reduced to a sex object. In the category of animals, these concepts were discussed in further detail. The question “Is she a hooker or is she a cop?” is slightly ambiguous as it presents women in two almost opposite categories. However, after viewing the clip reenacting the question, it becomes clear that it presents a way for men to examine whether or not a “hooker” is actually a “cop” in disguise. The focus in the episode is to pick up a “hooker” while at the same time making sure she is not a “cop”, thus reducing the risk of being arrested.

Hypothesis two is therefore confirmed as the majority of women’s roles are sexualized and as most are involved in monetary exchange for sexual acts. The next category to be discussed is the one that emerged as a result of analyzing the questions in “MANswers”.

Making Money

One pattern that emerged during the analysis process was that of monetary gain. There are eight questions (2.5 percent of the total) that point to ways in which a man can make money, such as: “What can I find in the ocean that’s worth more than gold?” “How much money can you make begging?” “How can you get paid to get a tattoo?” “What’s the freshest meat you can eat for free?” “How much money can a pimp make?” “What’s the most bad-ass way to make two grand a week?” “What are three ways people have made money of a dead body?” and “What’s the most awesome job in the world?” These questions point to the rejection of common forms of employment on the behalf of men.
Instead, monetary gain can come from sources that do not require “too” much work, that are illegal, or that are easy to come by, such as being a pimp, beggar or making money of a dead body. Work, according to “MANswers”, should also be “bad-ass” and “awesome”. As such, “MANswers” reject the notion that “real men” should have “real” jobs by pointing to ways in which money can be made in original and even illegal ways. The characteristics of the men in “MANswers” in regards to work are similar to the notion of the “man-child” as opposite to the hard working, successful “alpha girl” described by Hymowitz (2011). Another category that only contained a small percentage of the total questions is that of emotions.

**Emotions**

The category of emotions is one of the smallest ones, containing five of all questions (1.6 percent) posed in “MANswers”. Hypothesis seven states that the mentioning and discussion of emotions will be largely absent from “MANswers”. Due to the low frequency of questions pertaining to emotions, the hypothesis is confirmed. It is however important to examine the messages of the category emotions as discussed in “MANswers”. The questions pertaining to emotions are: “How can you make your girlfriend less bitchy?” “How do blondes make you dumber?” “What does the shape of her boobs tell you about her personality?” “What kind of music is most likely to make someone depressed or even suicidal?” and “What’s the secret to making a dude more sensitive?” Three of the questions concerning emotions involve women, whereas two
focus on the emotions of men. There is however a distinction to be made between the questions pertaining to the emotions of women and men. First, the question “How can you make your girlfriend less bitchy?” implies that women are inherently bitchy, especially one’s girlfriend. Women therefore need to be less bitchy in order to fit the desired characteristic as imposed by men. Second, the questions “How do blondes make you dumber?” and “What does the shape of her boobs tell you about her personality?” imply that blondes are somehow biologically “dumb”, and that the shapes of breasts enforce biological characteristics of personality. As such, women and men are inherently different due to biological traits. The last two questions “What’s the secret to making a dude more sensitive?” and “What kind of music is most likely to make someone depressed or even suicidal?” imply that men are less emotional or do not engage in emotions such as being sensitive or depressed. Instead, outside forces may contribute to these feelings, but they are not a part of men’s “real” emotions. There is a distinction to be made between the bitchy and dumb woman and the emotionally restricted male. The depictions of emotionality expressed in “MANswers” correspond to men exhibiting more restrictive emotional behavior (Vogel, Wester, Heesacker and Madon 2003), suppressing their feelings (Bird 1996), and viewing women as distinctly different from men (Gilmartin 2007). Even though the category of emotions only contained five questions, there is another category that only contained four questions, sexual orientation.
Sexual Orientation

Of the 319 questions placed in the author’s ten categories, four questions (1.3 percent) pertained to a person’s sexual orientation. Hypothesis four concerning sexual orientation stated that there will be no mentioning of or reference to male homosexual relationships or sexual activities in “MANswers”. The homosexual and bisexual orientations of women will be deemed acceptable and mentioned to a greater extent. The four questions pertaining to the sexual orientation of men and women are: “What percentage of girls are bisexual?” “Who’s easiest? Straight chicks, bi chicks, or lesbian chicks?” “How can you most likely score with a lesbian?” and, “How can you tell if she’s really a he?” Hypothesis four is confirmed as neither of the questions placed in the category of sexual orientation pertains to male homosexual orientation. Three of the four questions mention lesbian and bisexual women while the last question pertains to transgender orientation.

The message conveyed in “MANswers” is in line with the notion that heterosexuality for men is the norm (Attwood 2005), along with the notions of heteronormativity (McCormack and Anderson 2010), but also the concept of “thinking straight” as discussed by Ingraham (2005). The heterosexual assumption found in “MANswers” thus reinforces the notion that “real men” are heterosexual, but it also reinforces hegemonic masculinity, as homosexuality disrupts the ideas of “what it is to ‘be a man’” (Garlick 2003: 158). At the same time, messages about female sexual orientation are also produced. In contrast to male sexual orientation, the sexual
orientation of lesbian and bisexual women is accepted in “MANswers”, which is in line with the research of Pascoe (2007). The notion of lesbian and bisexual women not really being lesbian and bisexual as presented by Jackson and Gilbertson (2009) is also in line with the perception of the questions concerning sexual orientation in “MANswers”. In “MANswers” there is an assumption that lesbian women are not really lesbian, but very much interested in participating in sexual acts with men as noted in the questions “How can you most likely score with a lesbian?” and “How’s easiest? Straight chicks, bi chicks, or lesbian?” The statement that the display of lesbian women is constructed for the heterosexual male gaze (Gill 2008) is therefore present in “MANswers”. As heterosexual males tend to distance themselves from homosexual males (Jewell and Morrison 2010), the question “How can you tell if she’s really a he?” presented in “MANswers” also becomes important to note. The underlying message to the viewers of “MANswers” is that homosexual acts between men are deemed unnatural and should be avoided. Being able to tell if “she’s really a he” becomes imperative in avoiding situations where both gender and sexual orientation are difficult to assess. Hypothesis four is therefore confirmed as the questions in “MANswers” reject homosexuality and bisexuality for men but not for women. The notion that women (no matter their sexual orientation) are very much sexually interested in men also carries over to the ascribed roles of women in “MANswers”. The last category of other, is one in which the author placed questions that did not pertain to or fit in the nine categories created to examine hegemonic masculinity in “MANswers”.
Other

The category of “other” is one of the largest. There are forty-three questions (13.5 percent) placed in that category. The author does not infer that these questions are not relevant in a discussion of hegemonic masculinity, but these questions did not fit in any of the created categories to examine hegemonic masculinity in “MANswers”. The questions are however relevant in the understanding of “MANswers” as a male-centered television program. The questions in the category of other will be examined and the messages conveyed will be discussed as well. Due to the fact that there is a diverse set of questions in this category, it was more difficult to establish any patterns.

One theme that ties into the notion of the “man-child” is the subcategory of putting little effort into anything a man does. Three questions (six percent) use language that suggests that “real men” are fairly lazy, such as the questions “How can you go without washing your underwear for a year?” “How can a convicted criminal get sent to a cushy white collar prison?” and “How can you exercise without exercising?” Again, in opposition to the “alpha girl” (Hymowitz 2011), “real men” are lazy and look for ways around everyday routines, responsibilities and burdens. “Real men” look for ways to get around reproductive work and everyday labor, but they do not mind working on, or spending money on, technological gadgets, especially not if it has to do with automobiles. The subcategory of technology includes three questions (six percent): “What’s the most expensive car available in the U.S?” “How can you turn your pickup truck into a hot tub?” and “What else could you put a hemi engine into?” The majority of the questions
did not, as the author stated fit in any of the nine created categories to examine
hegemonic masculinity in “MANswers”. The themes of putting little effort into anything
and technology do point to characteristics that are important for “real men” according to
“MANswers”. A summary of the results and findings of hegemonic masculinity in
“MANswers” is necessary to reiterate the main points.

Summary

The category of violence, weapons and death is the largest category in
“MANswers”. The messages about violence, weapons and death point to violence in
reference to animals, the use of violence to protect/defend and survive, the reference to
killing/dying, the use of weapons, a “how to guide” in terms of violent acts and behavior
and the use of violence to perform self-harm.

The overall message about sex in “MANswers” is that relationships with females
are not very important in comparison to sexual pursuits and sexual activities. Using
money in exchange for sex in “MANswers” is deemed appropriate and desirable. Men are
also viewed as innately promiscuous, and are always looking for sex. Women’s sexual
feelings are legitimate and similar to those of men, but there is little recognition that men
have any responsibility or accountability to make sure that the women they are having
sex with are equally satisfied.

In terms of the male body, there are significant differences in comparison to
women’s bodies. Fifteen questions (37 percent) concerning male’s bodies referred to
bodily fluids such as urine, excrement and farts. The penis, semen and ejaculation are also important in terms of the male body. One underlying message is that men have the ability and power to change, add to, train and command their sexual organs in order to control them.

When it comes to the category of alcohol and drugs, illegal drug use is the largest category, consisting of ten questions, whereas only three questions pertained to the category of legal drugs. In terms of drug use, there is a distinction between gender and illegal or legal drug use. In the category of illegal drugs, women are not mentioned at all, as if women should not consume illegal drugs. Only five of all questions (14 percent) included in the category of alcohol and drugs point to adverse effects of drinking and/or consuming illegal drugs. The need to binge drink or consume heavy amounts of alcohol is a common feature in “MANswers”.

In the category animals, the use of violence towards or in self-defense against animals is common, as is the notion that dealing with animals is a dangerous and risky business. References to sexual acts and body fluids, and animals being given feminine characteristics are also common.

In the category of women’s bodies, the sexualization of women and the focus on female body parts and bodies as objects in “MANswers” becomes even more obvious. This notion is reinforced as the majority of questions (89.4 percent) pertaining to women’s bodies in “MANswers” are about breasts and buttocks, signaling that women in “MANswers” are displayed as sex object. In terms of women’s roles as portrayed in “MANswers” the majority of women’s roles are sexualized and most are involved in
monetary exchange of sexual acts. Even in cases where women are referred to as girlfriends, the sexualization of their role is explicit.

When it comes to monetary gain, the majority of questions in “MANswers” point to ways men can make money without putting much effort into the process. There is also a distinction to be made between the questions pertaining to the emotions of women and men. The depictions of emotionality expressed in “MANswers” correspond to men exhibiting more restrictive emotional behavior (Vogel, Wester, Heesacker and Madon 2003), suppressing their feelings (Bird 1996), and viewing women as distinctly different from men (Gilmartin 2007).

In terms of sexual orientation, there is no mention of male homosexual relationships or sexual activities in “MANswers”. The homosexual and bisexual orientations of women are deemed acceptable, and are mentioned to a greater extent focusing on men’s ability to “score” with women who are bisexual and lesbian as displayed in many of the questions. There is an assumption in “MANswers” that heterosexuality is the desired norm for men (heteronormativity), but that women’s sexual orientation can be more fluid and is accepted as such.

In the last category of other, the author found it more difficult to discern subcategories. One theme that ties into the notion of the “man-child” (Hymowitz 2011) is the subcategory of putting little effort into anything. The last subcategory of technology includes questions pertaining to technological gadgets, technological innovations and especially automobiles.
Chapter 5: Discussion

Clear patterns of the influence of hegemonic ideals are present in “MANswers” and the author, through the implementation of content analysis and a coding schema, explained the different categories and their relationship to hegemonic masculinity. Although “MANswers” is a male-oriented television program for “real men” the implications of hegemonic masculinity also define women. Therefore, key “lessons learned” about both women and men can be culled from the analysis. Below, the main findings pertaining to women will be discussed first, followed by the major findings relevant to hegemonic masculinity and men.

According to Sheffield (1995) “sexual terrorism” stems from men’s need to control women’s bodies. Sexual terrorism includes “rape, wife battery, incest, pornography, harassment, and all forms of sexual violence” (p. 409-410). Johnson (1997) also states that violence and sexual harassment is more pervasive than ever. If we condone the treatment of women as sexual objects in television programs, then we imply that “sexual terrorism” is acceptable, while we at the same time normalize the behaviors and characteristics of all forms of violence against women. One important component of sexual terrorism is that of propaganda (Sheffield 1995). Propaganda is used to express certain ideologies and beliefs and is inherently biased. Sheffield points out that propaganda is “found in all expressions of the popular culture: films, television, music, literature, advertising, pornography” (p. 411). As Johnson (1997) states that we are less tolerant of overt sexism, propaganda used, such as television programs seem exempt from
this notion. “MANswers” is a perfect example of a male-dominated television program displaying extreme sexism while somehow “slipping under the radar” of examples of overt sexism. Perhaps we are less likely to react to sexism when it is portrayed in television programs, or when it is deemed humorous. By viewing women as sex objects and possessions rather than individuals, “MANswers” reinforces the status quo of gender stereotypes and aids in the production of propaganda. As Ussher (2011) notes, “The continuum of objectification and abuse against women and girls starts with the sexualised imagery that is endemic in Western culture” (p. 113).

Implications of Hegemonic Propaganda for Women

Evident in more or less all categories created by the author, and especially so in the categories of sexual orientation, women’s roles, women’s bodies, sex and emotions, women are being blatantly objectified and discriminated against as sexual objects and objects of men’s sexual outlets in “MANswers.” The implications of hegemonic masculinity as constructed in “MANswers” also asserts men’s power over women through the control over women’s bodies and by viewing women as sex objects. The need for men to dominate and control women and their bodies may have humorous connotations in “MANswers”, but the real life implications of dominance over women is not humorous and may well be further perpetuated through television programs.

Most worrying is perhaps the fact that women are viewed not as individuals, but as body parts existing for male pleasure, and for the “male gaze” (Tragos 2009). West
and Zimmerman (1987) state that; “gender is not a set of traits, nor a variable, nor a role, but the product of social doing of some sort” (p. 129). Gender is something that we “do”. “Doing gender means creating differences between girls and boys, and women and men. Once the differences have been constructed, they are used to reinforce the “essentialness” of gender” (p.137). The differences between men and women in “MANswers” reinforce the notion of women as sex objects and possessions. No doubt the women portrayed in “MANswers” are beautiful, but the connection between the beautiful female body and that of women as sex objects can be dangerous. Women are valued for their beauty, but are simultaneously “possessed and controlled in ways that ultimately devalue them” (Johnson 1997: 6). The devaluation of women as objects is also noted by Ussher (2011); ”Objectification and disregard for women’s rights is most blatant in the context of sexual violence and abuse” (p. 111).

The questions in “MANswers” point to an extreme disregard of women as humans while focusing on them as sexual objects and as parts that men control and dominate, which is evident in “MANswers” questions such as “What drink is most likely to get you into her pants?” “What do dudes like better: boobs or butts?” and “How can boobs wash your car?” As horrific and physically dangerous as “sexual terrorism” is for women, there are also other implications that go beyond the physical body and in to emotional and psychological aspects. “Indeed, there is incontrovertible evidence that the objectification of women is a problem of epidemic proportions, which significantly contributes to distress and the diagnosis of psychiatric disorders on the part of women and girls” (Ussher 2011: 112). It is widely known that women are overrepresented as
victims of sexual violence compared to men (even though men are afflicted as well), even though the exact numbers are difficult to attain. The consequences of sexual violence are summed up by Ussher (2011); “sexual abuse and violence drives women mad – literally – leading to major depression, PTSD, BPD, or schizophrenia” (p. 125). Ussher states that such consequences are reasonable in the face of women’s suffering as victims of sexual violence.

Stating that objectification in popular media helps perpetuate notions of sexual violence and men’s control over women’s bodies may seem like a stretch to some, but according to Ussher (2011) they do go hand in hand. As mentioned above, objectification and abuse “starts with the sexualised imagery that is endemic in Western culture” (Ussher 2011: 113). As noted above, women are displayed as sexual objects in many areas of life. But women are also victims of hegemonic masculinity due to the fact that men tend to be the perpetrators of school shootings (Kalish and Kimmel 2010). Women are also more likely to be victims of IPV (intimate partner violence) (Cho and Wilke 2010). Using the National Violence Against Women Survey, Tjaden and Thoennes (2000) found that “…women were 22.5 times more likely to report being raped, 2.9 times more likely to report being physically assaulted, and 8.2 times more likely to report being stalked by a current or former marital/opposite-sex cohabiting partner at some time in their lives” (p. 151). Women who are the victims of rape are also blamed more than women who are the victims of robbery. This is specially so when the woman knew the perpetrator or was under the influence of alcohol (Bieneck and Krahe 2011). Overall, women commit less violent and serious crimes than men (Becker and McCorkel 2011), but are the victims to
a much greater extent. Violence against women is now recognized as a worldwide
problem that affects millions of women (Dobash and Dobash 2011: 111). The blatant
sexualization of women in “MANswers” and the adherence to hegemonic ideals of
masculinity are not so humorous when compared to the real life experiences of women.

Rather than allowing the continued objectification and sexism in “MANswers”
and many other television programs, shows and films to continue, they should be viewed
as debilitating in women’s struggle to combat sexual violence, sexual harassment and
sexual objectification. The findings and consequences of objectification therefore begs
the question, should we allow “MANswers” to continue airing shows that objectify and
demean women? The author believes that the answer is no.

*Implications of Hegemonic Propaganda for Men*

Not only are women portrayed as sex objects in “MANswers”, but there are also
limiting portrayals of men consistent with hegemonic masculinity. The men in
“MANswers” are preoccupied with behavior that is not only physically dangerous, but
that often has a negative impact on men’s health. This is especially evident in the
category of alcohol and drug use, where binge drinking and illegal drug use is a common
feature in the lives of the men in “MANswers”. Another common feature in
“MANswers” that has implications for men is that of violence. As violence against
women is not generally accepted in “MANswers”, although the question “What drink is
most likely to get you into her pants?” hint to sexual coercion or sexual violence, other
forms of violence are very much accepted. Kaufman (1987) describes the “triad of men’s violence” as violence towards women, violence towards other men and violence against oneself. In terms of violence towards others, and violence against oneself, “MANswers” both normalizes and reinforces the accepted behaviors tied to hegemonic masculinity. In terms of violence against oneself, Kaufman (1987) did not point to actual physical self-harm, but rather the blocking and denial of emotions. There is a distinction to be made here. While questions in “MANswers” actually describe self-harm in terms of violence against oneself, as noted in the questions “How can a dude cut his arm off with a pocket knife and survive?” “How the hell can a dude take out his own appendix?” and “How can a guy instantly increase his pain tolerance?”, “MANswers” also deemphasize emotional attachment, close relationships with the opposite sex, general conversations of emotions and the venting of emotions. Emotions consistent with the hegemonic ideal are accepted in terms of aggression, anger, and the use of physical violence, as noted in the category, violence, weapons and death. The implications of embracing hegemonic masculinity in real life, and emphasizing, reinforcing and valorizing hegemonic masculinity in television programs, such as “MANswers” cause men suffering. This view is described by Messner (1997), who states that conforming to hegemonic ideals can be deadly for men. “The promise of public status and masculine privilege comes with a price tag: Often, men pay with poor health, shorter lives, emotionally shallow relationships, and less time spent with loved ones” (p. 6). As noted, “MANswers” not only reinforces these ideals, but also values and glorifies them.
The implications of hegemonic masculinity and the suffering of men are noted in our society, as men utilize health services less often than women (Noone and Stephens 2008), and are less likely to visit a doctor for what they believe to be “minor” pain and aches (O’Brien, Hunt and Hart 2005). Men who adhere to traditional gender norms also display lower frequencies of health promoting behavior (Mahalik, Burns and Syzdek 2007). Other issues facing men include “accidents, homicide, and suicide; occupational injury; higher levels of drug abuse” (Connell, 2005: 1813), and a higher consumption of alcohol (Peralta 2007).

*Hegemonic Masculinity, Societal Implementations and Efforts to Change*

Connell (2005) states that gender-equality policies often focus on the struggles of women, using men as a backdrop to the problems existing for women. As such, topics concerning men and boys’ are simultaneously often ignored leading to an antifeminist stance that does create a backlash against women’s issues. Topics including men’s health, education and socialization have therefore become widely recognized. As important as it is to recognize men’s suffering and problems, Connell (2005) argues that this type of policy “forgets the relational character of gender and therefore tends to redefine women and men, or girls and boys, simply as different market segments for some service” (p. 1806). Much of the suffering that men face, such as violence, incarceration and assault is due to the greater power they hold in society. “…Men cannot hold state power without some men becoming the agents of violence. Men cannot be the beneficiaries of women’s
domestic labor and “emotion work” without many of them losing intimate connections, for instance, with young children” (p. 1809). Hegemonic masculinity, gender inequality and the patriarchal dividend reinforce the power positions of men, while men simultaneously pay a high price for their greater power.

Connell (2005) also argues that there is both a significant alliance between men and women and significant opposition in terms of promoting gender equality. Reasons as to why some men resist the efforts of gender equality includes being the recipients of patriarchal dividend, threats to the masculine identity of being the breadwinner, and assumed male supremacy in relation to women. Depending on other factors such as race, class and nationality, some men align themselves with women rather than other men. Even though men’s responses to gender inequality differ based on the above mentioned characteristics, “It is clear that, globally, men have a lot to lose from pursuing gender equality because men, collectively, continue to receive a patriarchal dividend” (Connell, 2005: 1808).

If indeed the notion of strong hegemonic ideals in “MANswers” stem from societal, political and economic changes that have encouraged a backlash against not only feminism but also women’s increased (yet marginalized) power in society, then how can the same society, dependent on the same structure (patriarchy and capitalism) change to better represent and portray women and men? There seems to be several ways in which we can attempt to change the power structures that exist within our society, in terms of media depictions, socialization, and power and family structures.

Even though Scott-Samuel, Stanistreet and Crawshaw (2009) believe that our
cultural and social ideas and attitudes concerning hegemonic masculinity should be challenged, other changes that “involves a systematic assault on embedded sets of ideologies and practices which lie at the heart of political and social systems” (p. 291) are needed. One major issue is the backlash created when men lose their role as the breadwinner and worker of the family. The notion that women’s increased success is dependent on the failure of men needs to be challenged.

McDowell (2000) states that the disadvantages men face in the labor market is not due to the increased success of women. Women are still being paid less than men and less likely to be promoted or hold significantly powerful positions. The crisis of masculinity is more likely due to “changes in the nature of urban and industrial economies” (p. 207). Blaming women for, or working against gains of independence and increased empowerment for women does not seem to improve the overall structure of the economy and its effect on men. “Young men are not losing out because young women are gaining but because the gendering of many service sector occupations produce greater profits for capital” (McDowell 2000: 207). Due to economical changes over the last few decades, traditional masculinity is less productive for men today than when a man’s “family wage” could support the entire family. Those working class men who embrace and rework the notion of masculinity are more likely to succeed and live “settled lives” (Weis 2006). Moving away from hegemonic notions of masculinity adds to one’s life and contributes to it being more “settled”. As Weis (2006) explains “At the heart of this repositioning and, I would argue, remaking of the entire white working class, is the reconstruction of male/female relations and, most importantly in light of high school desires in the case of
young men, the rearticulation of appropriate and valued masculinity” (p. 264).

Interestingly, the subcategory stemming from the category other found in “MANswers” in which men are finding original ways of monetary gain may point to a greater societal issue, the increased unemployment of men in the labor market. The men in “MANswers” are not depicted as successful in terms of work, income or material success. Instead, they are depicted as men who have little societal power in terms of possessions and few “bragging rights” in terms of success. Examining beer and liquor advertisements, Messner and Montez de Oca (2005) found that men increasingly are depicted as losers. The recent emergence of men as losers works to deflect sexism while it reflects their anger and “desire for revenge against women” (p. 476) as both a backlash against feminism and women’s increased social power. The reflection of men as losers is also positioned against “the excesses of a hyper-masculinity that is often discredited and caricatured in popular culture and the increasing empowerment of women, people of color, and homosexuals, while simultaneously being undercut by the postindustrial economy” (p. 476). In a society where the men of “MANswers” may have little to show for, the televised portrayal of hegemonic masculinity and men in control can be appealing to the viewers. In the televised world they are able to control whatever and whomever they can, most often women (through the sexual objectification of them), but also their own emotions (by being emotionally restrictive), their own bodies (through violence and using their bodies as tools) and nature (through the domination of animals).

The increase of women in the labor force and the challenges men face is not the only factor contributing to the displays of hegemonic masculinity and gender inequality.
The media is perpetuating gender stereotypes and accepted femininities and masculinities, often assuming the position of “male supremacy” as noted by Connell (2005). Popular culture in general, and television advertising in particular, tends to present rather superficial images of men and women as fundamentally and inalterably different (Coltrane and Adams 1997: 342), as well as these depictions being “normal” and “inevitable” (p. 325), resulting in “a baseline for cultural distinctions between men and women” and “the ideal of separate spheres” (p. 343). Challenging the very traditional and biased nature of media and demanding a fair depiction of the lives of women and men can also be one way to combat the notions of hegemonic masculinity. When doing so, it is important not to forget that in some way the media also depicts women in ways that are consistent with societal expectations and real life experiences today, namely that women are more likely to be the homemakers and the ones who care for children. Even though media helps spur the notion that men and women are distinctly different, these notions have social roots.

Examining hegemonic masculinity in middle childhood (McGuffey and Rich 1999) states that gender boundaries are negotiated through childhood play. Even in middle childhood, (high status) boys enact values of hegemonic masculinity through the characteristics of “emotional detachment, competition and rivalry, public attention-getting for victories, and the sexual objectification of females” (McGuffey and Rich 1999: 610). Through “gender patrolling” boys exercise hegemonic masculinity. In their description of the “gender transgression zone” (GTZ), boys use “gender patrolling” to control both lower status boys and girls. “It is through the enforcement of gender
boundaries that boys construct their social status” (p. 617-618). Girls more often transgress the boundaries of the GTZ. Interestingly, “girls only receive restrictions from the prime agents of hegemonic masculinity at play – boys” (p. 622), whereas other girls are more accepting of transgression of acceptable masculine and feminine behavior. Even though McGuffey and Rich (1999) state that girls tend to form smaller groups “large group affiliation and support seem to be the gender strategy when girls transgress into traditional boys’ turf” (p. 622).

If gender boundaries and hegemonic masculinity are products of socialization, childhood play, social and cultural norms, the economy, the labor market, and expressed in media, they are normalized in almost every aspect of the lives of women and men. Challenging such notions seems an incredibly difficult task. Especially so when they are reinforced in so many areas of our lives. We need to not only challenge hegemonic masculinity and provide “options” for a more inclusive form of masculinity that is not based on maintaining power hierarchies. Changes need to start early in the socialization process and should be reinforced by parents, teachers, in the media, and in the political arena, just to mention a few agents of socialization. Even though such an undertaking seems to be daunting, Connell (2005) states that men and boys’ have the ability to resist and explore alternative models of masculinity that are more inclusive and accepting. Connell states that the power of relationships is an important social aspect of change. “Men and boys live in social relationships, many with women and girls: wives, partners, mothers, aunts, daughters, nieces, friends, classmates, workmates, professional colleagues, neighbors, and so on. The quality of every man’s life depends to a large
extent on the quality of those relationships” (Connell, 2005: 1812-1813). If the social aspects and cultural norms that perpetuate hegemonic masculinity can change, then so can the televised reinforcement of hegemonic masculinity. In light of the social, economical and political context of hegemonic masculinity, it is important to consider why we support male-oriented television programs such as “MANswers”.

“MANswers” Connection to Cultural Hegemonic Ideals

One reason why television programs such as “MANswers” exist could be because it does reinforce distinctions and “separate spheres” based on gender. Even though “MANswers” can be considered offensive to both men and women as it depicts gender in a very stereotypical and narrow manner, “MANswers” is still accepted because we tend to accept and adhere to standards of hegemonic masculinity. The “need” for such a television program in terms of “educating” men through its questions is bizarre as the majority of the questions undoubtedly are of no use to anyone. In the face of societal and economic changes, “real men” “need” a space of their own, where gender roles are rigid, men can reclaim their manliness, and women are viewed as sex objects, not as equals. The fact that “MANswers” is said to target men between the ages of 18 to 40, even though the average male depicted in “MANswers” is more likely to be younger than thirty, may reflect younger men’s apathy and concern for a society in which they feel they are “losing out” and experiencing less dominance over women.

The concept of a television program for “real men” is validated through the
exercise of control spurred by hegemonic masculinity. Just as boys exercise hegemonic masculinity in everyday life through “gender patrolling” (McGuffey and Rich 1999), defining women along the way, so does the characteristics of hegemonic masculinity in “MANswers” extend power to men in the media while controlling the concepts, behaviors and characteristics deemed appropriate, leaving their social status unquestioned.

Even though it is difficult to state with certainty that “MANswers” adheres to the notions of the evident backlash against women, the highly dramatic and overgeneralized view of women as object and nothing else promotes the view of the caveman masculinity in which men and women are biologically different. The rationale behind the idea of “MANswers” is also unclear, but as “MANswers” is said to target “real men” there must be a feeling or agreement that other television programs do not focus on the interests of “real men”. As such, “MANswers” could be a backlash towards other progressions in media and in our society. The notion of the men in “MANswers” being portrayed as immature and childish is similar to the “man-child” (Hymowitz 2011), in which “the man-child prides himself on his lack of pretense, his slovenly guyness, not to mention his fascination with body fluids and noises” (p. 114). The notion of homosociality is not directly discussed in “MANswers” even though drinking with one’s buddies and being each other’s wingmen is a common feature throughout the seasons. “MANswers” does however target a male-only audience, one that promotes a homosocial environment, and a guy-friendly bubble in which women can be evaluated and sexually objectified, while men can drink beer and engage in masculine and dangerous behaviors.
Targeting “real men”, “MANswers” promote sexism, the objectification of women, emotional detachment, violent, and self-destructive behavior. The analysis of “MANswers” prompts the question whether or not it is beneficial to be a “real man” or if the notion of masculinity needs to change in order for men to establish genuine connections with the opposite sex that are not based on brief sexual encounters only, and an overall healthy and less destructive lifestyle that does not include the consumption of massive amounts of alcohol and drugs. As such “MANswers” promotes a rather selfish image of “real men” that excludes other men and women from most relational and emotional interactions. Such depictions are not only harmful for men’s overall health, but they isolate men from experiencing deeper connections with others and themselves.

Televised programs such as “MANswers” are not the reason why hegemonic masculinity exists. At the same time, they help maintain and spur the notions of gender inequality in our society. If we are to change the gender dynamics between women and men, then we also need to critically examine television programs that help maintain and produce hegemonic masculinity. If we are to move forward in our efforts to create other forms of masculinity that do not view women as sexual objects created for the desire of men, then we also need to include the media in such discussions.

Recommendations for Future Research

Even though hegemonic masculinity has been widely engaged in research, future research might connect more deeply with a discussion of hegemonic masculinity in
different media contexts. Not only can we examine the television programs mentioned in the introduction, such as “Mancations”, “Man Caves, “Man vs. Wild”, “Survivorman” and “Man v. Food”, but we can also examine the connection between the increase of new television programs that focus on the role of men in blue collar professions and its ties to hegemonic masculinity as part of the backlash movement. There has been an increase in such television programs as well, including “Swamp Loggers”, “Gold Rush Alaska”, “Ice Road Truckers”, “Bering Sea Gold”, “Swamp Brothers” “Billy The Exterminator” and “Moonshiners”. In order to be able to examine both the television programs and their portrayals of hegemonic masculinity, or even various forms of masculinity we need to view the social context in which they occur and how they reinforce or even negotiate masculinity. When doing so, it is also important to discuss how women are portrayed alongside men, and whether or not the roles of women are changing or staying the same. International comparisons of male-oriented and popular television programs can also yield important knowledge concerning the role of hegemonic masculinity and additional expressions of masculinity. In terms of the television program “MANswers”, the author has explored the connection to hegemonic masculinity in terms of the questions posed in each episode, but future research can also focus on the visual representation of both men and women in “MANswers”. Clothing, appearance, and gestures of those in the program can be examined, as can the gender and professions of the experts used to answer questions in “MANswers”. Although not widely engaged in this research, future work can also focus on active versus passive language used by the actors in terms of gender.
Researchers can further explore the use of curse words, euphemisms, slang and commentary in “MANswers”.

Limitations to suggested research includes the difficulty of establishing a coding procedure that allows for analysis and conclusions to be made when comparing these types of television programs. The author created the coding schema in light of the fact that an analysis of the questions posed in “MANswers” had not been engaged before. As such, new coding schemas may be necessary to create when examining other television programs. When comparing such television programs, researchers can focus on the representation of women and men as well as the representation and adherence to hegemonic masculinity, drawing from work on both masculinity and femininity and gender studies. Even though “MANswers” is not a reality television program, but a “humorous satire”, the representations of gender that “MANswers” endorse is one that is based on the perceptions and stereotypes of gender that we engage in on a daily basis.
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