

Bridging Men's and Women's Gender Activism



An Analysis of the Male Involvement Discourse
in the Gender, Antiviolence and HIV/AIDS Sector
in South Africa

Combined Bachelor's and
Master's Thesis in Sociology
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ABSTRACT

Title: Bridging Men's and Women's Gender Activism: An Analysis of the Male Involvement Discourse in the Gender, Antiviolence and HIV/AIDS Sector in South Africa

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Aim and research questions: In recent years rising attention has been drawn to boys, men and masculinities within the field of gender and sexual and reproductive health and rights. Given this partial shift from a previous strong focus on women, this thesis addresses the linkages between, on the one hand, male gender, antiviolence and HIV/AIDS activism, and on the other hand women's collective action and possibilities to continue defining objectives in the struggles against gender inequality, HIV/AIDS and gender-based violence. The purpose of the study is to analyse gendered power relations in the male involvement discourse in relation to the bridging of men's and women's gender, antiviolence and HIV/AIDS activism. This global discourse is analysed in a South African context. My specific research questions are:

- How are different positions in the male involvement discourse constructed – specifically in relation to the formation of links between men's and women's gender activism?
- What gender and power analyses underlie arguments and practices related to creating such links?
- What is the role of donors and international development cooperation in the male involvement discourse in relation to forming such links?

Method and material: The study is based on a discourse analysis of documents, participatory observations and, most of all, semi-structured interviews with representatives of gender, antiviolence and HIV/AIDS organisations focusing on men (Sonke Gender Justice Network and EngenderHealth), women's rights organisations (People Opposing Women Abuse, Yabonga and Masimanyane Women's Support Centre) and donors (Sida and USAID). The discourse analytical framework chosen is inspired mainly by Foucault, Laclau and Mouffe.

Main results and conclusions: This thesis points at a number of ambivalences in the male involvement discourse and its intersection with the partnership discourse. By exploring these, the study demonstrates how gendered power relations are resisted *and* reproduced in arguments and practices related to bridging men's and women's gender activism. Creating such links is a means to resist gendered power relations potentially reproduced in work with men. However, by exploring positions of resistance within the male involvement and partnership discourses, this thesis also shows how these discursive practices arguably obscures gendered power relations still reproduced in such partnerships. Moreover, a dualistic and deterministic view of men and women as belonging to two different and somewhat homogenous groups is frequently reinforced and resisted. The study also draws attention to the role of international development cooperation in relation to creating such links. It shows how hierarchies in the relation between donors and recipients, frequently corresponding to power relations between the Global North and the Global South, intersect with the complex gendered power relations in focus here.

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Front page: The photo was taken during the Men's March launching 16 days of activism in Cape Town, November 25, 2008 (cf. Appendix).

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ANC	African National Congress
GAD	Gender and Development
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
MAP	Men As Partners Network
NEHAWU	the National Education Health and Allied Workers Union
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSISA	The Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa
PEPFAR	US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
POWA	People Opposing Women Abuse
PPASA	Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa
RFSU	Riksförbundet för sexuell upplysning (the Swedish Association for Sexuality Education)
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAMF	The South African Men's Forum
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
TAC	Treatment Action Campaign
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organization
WID	Women in Development
YMEP	Young Men as Equal Partners

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

For a long time, work with gender, gender-based violence and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) across the globe has focused on women. While men frequently were portrayed as ‘the problem’ within this field, this rarely functioned as an incentive to engage directly with them. In the past decade, however, a partial shift in Gender and Development (GAD) thinking has occurred. Increasing attention is currently drawn to boys, men and masculinities, in the academy as well as among non-governmental organisations (NGOs), governments, international institutions and aid agencies (e.g. Kaufman 2004: 19; Cornwall 2000; Flood 2005: 462). Currently, most of this work is focusing on SRHR, HIV/AIDS and violence by working on the level of the personal and attempting to transform men’s sexual behaviours and challenging men’s violence against women (Esplen 2008: 1).

The HIV/AIDS pandemic is frequently considered to be one of the largest global threats and political challenges of our time, with an estimated 33.2 million people living with the virus today (UNAIDS & WHO 2007: 1). It both reflects and accentuates some of the major inequalities of our world. More than two thirds of all HIV positive people live in Sub-Saharan Africa (ibid.: 15). Growing attention is being paid to links between the spread of the virus and masculinity norms related to risk-taking, sexuality and dominance. In line with this, connections between HIV/AIDS, gendered power relations and gender-based violence are being increasingly observed, thus recognising how actual or threatened violence makes it difficult for many heterosexually active women to negotiate sexual activities. These factors partly explain why young women in sub-Saharan Africa between the age of 15 and 24 years old are at least three times as likely to be HIV positive as men in the same age group (UNAIDS & WHO 2005: 9).

This thesis explores the context of South Africa, a country known worldwide for its high rates of both HIV infection¹ and gender-based violence, including sexual violence. However, it is also known for social movements engaging with these issues. Tremendous attention has been drawn to effective HIV/AIDS activism² in the country (Thörn & Follér 2008: 286f). The women’s movement³ is recognised as a success, given the gains achieved when engaging with the state during and after the transition to democracy (Hassim 2006). Since the late 1990s, South Africa has, in addition, been known as one of the leading countries when it comes to intervention and research focusing on men and gender equality (Sonke 2007b: 20). International development cooperation clearly plays a significant role in relation to this civil society work on gender, HIV/AIDS and gender-based violence. Accordingly, the politics of gender and HIV/AIDS is not merely a local and national concern, but it is important to pay attention also to its transnational dimensions.

¹ According to UNAIDS estimations, there are 5.5 million HIV positive people in South Africa, making it the country with the largest number of HIV infections in the world (UNAIDS 2007: 3).

² I define HIV/AIDS activism as all those mobilisations where HIV/AIDS is at issue, whether around prevention, care, support, training, advocacy or treatment. What South African HIV/AIDS activism has gained a worldwide reputation for, however, is first and foremost advocacy in relation to patent monopoly and accessing treatment, with Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) being the leading organisation (Mbali 2003: 323; Thörn & Follér 2008: 286).

³ Although I have chosen to talk of the women’s movement (whether the global or South African) in singular, I do acknowledge that this is a ‘movement of movements’ with sometimes contradictory goals and strategies (cf. Antrobus 2004: 9f).

1.2. Problem formulation

Among theorists and practitioners concerned with gender and development, it is increasingly argued that it is not enough to work with women's empowerment if we are to transform unequal gender relations. For women to be able to exercise the rights they have learnt about rather than encounter a male backlash, boys and men need to be involved in gender work as well (Chant 2000: 11; Greig 2000: 28; Kaufman 2004: 19). Accordingly, across the world there are gender, antiviolence and SRHR programmes attempting to involve men to a greater extent. These are gaining increased attention. Men's involvement in the struggle for gender equality has long divided the women's movement; while most seem to agree that it is an inevitable part of sustainable gender equality work, a great deal of scepticism still remains. Based on the premise that it involves 'the mobilization of members of a privileged group in order to undermine that same privilege' (Flood 2005: 458), some caution that it risks drawing on men's articulated interests and thereby entrenches men's gendered power rather than genuinely challenges it. Moreover, there is a fear that the focus on women and feminist analysis is at stake when 'bringing men in'. Some argue that certain 'male involvement'⁴ programmes, indeed, have a flawed understanding of gendered power relations (cf. e.g. Bujra 2002: 225; White 2000; Esplen 2008: 1; Pearson 2000: 46).

In order to enable women's rights organisations to continue defining goals in relation to gender, gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS, some theorists and practitioners call for the establishment of stronger links between work with men and male gender activism and women's gender activism (e.g. Baylies 2000: 23; Kaufman 2004: 24, 27; Ruxton 2004b: 215; Sida 2005; Esplen 2008). Yet, very few gender organisations and programmes focusing on men have direct and close collaborations with the women's movement (Esplen 2008: 1; Cornwall, personal correspondence; Greene, personal correspondence), although counter examples exist (Kaufman 2004: 27). Notable exceptions are the South African NGO Sonke Gender Justice Network (henceforth Sonke) and the South African branch of the international NGO (INGO) EngenderHealth⁵. Both implement gender, antiviolence and HIV/AIDS programmes in South Africa, carried out predominately by men and for boys and men, with a strong emphasis on masculinities. Simultaneously, both argue that they should be supportive of, accountable to and in ongoing dialogue with women's rights organisations (e.g. EngenderHealth 2005a: Chapter 3; observation 4). This thesis explores linkages between women's and men's gender activism in this specific South African context.

Work with men, male gender activism and arguments concerning building bridges between such initiatives and the women's movement bring a number of questions about gender and power to the fore. Given the unequal power relations between women and men in society, what should the relationship be like between gender, antiviolence and HIV/AIDS organisations focusing on men and women's rights organisations⁶ according to people in the field? What gender and power analyses underlie these arguments? How are women and men constituted as gendered subjects in

⁴ 'Male involvement' is a key term in the evolving masculinities discourse within GAD, and many organisations and male gender activists, indeed, aim at *involving* men in gender work to a greater extent. However, I would like to somewhat distance myself from the concept. At times, it is used in a rather gender stereotypical way, indicating that men need to be *involved* in gender work while women *mobilise* as activists. For the same reason, I frequently prefer the expressions 'male gender activism' and 'work with men' respectively.

⁵ EngenderHealth henceforth refers to the South African branch of EngenderHealth if otherwise not stated.

⁶ I have chosen to refer to EngenderHealth, Sonke and similar initiatives as 'gender, antiviolence and HIV/AIDS organisations focusing on men' rather than 'men's organisations'. The reason for this is mainly to avoid confusion with reactionary 'men's rights organisations'. I frequently use (gender) organisations and gender activism as short for gender, antiviolence and HIV/AIDS organisations and activism, i.e. those working with the intersection of gender, gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS. The terms women's organisations and women's rights organisations are used interchangeably for those gender, antiviolence and/or HIV/AIDS organisations working primarily with women.

the discourse employed and how do people in the field engage with these subject positions? Another important aspect concerns international development cooperation, given its support to and influence over gender and HIV/AIDS work in the region. What are the links between the strong partnership discourse in the development field and arguments for partnerships between organisations focusing on men and women's organisations specifically? Below, I specify the aim of the study and the particular research questions which have guided the writing of this paper.

1.3. Aim of study and research questions

This thesis addresses the linkages between, on the one hand, male gender, antiviolence and HIV/AIDS activism and, on the other hand, women's collective action and possibilities to continue defining objectives in the struggles against HIV/AIDS, gender inequality and gender-based violence, given the attention drawn to men and masculinities in this field in recent years. The purpose of the study is to analyse gendered power relations in the male involvement discourse in relation to the bridging of men's and women's gender activism. This global discourse is analysed in a South African context, more precisely by studying Sonke and EngenderHealth as well as, to a somewhat lesser extent, their partner organisations Yabonga, People Opposing Women Abuse (henceforth POWA), and Masimanyane Women's Support Centre (henceforth Masimanyane). All of these NGOs work with the intersection of gender, gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS in South Africa. While the former two concentrate on men, the latter three work primarily with women.

The study is based on a feminist perspective, whereby notions of gender are not merely assumed to produce meaning but also power. Following Michel Foucault, power is conceptualised here as complex and distributed rather than in binary terms. The overall analytical research question of the thesis is as follows:

- How are gendered power relations articulated, reproduced and/or resisted in the male involvement discourse in relation to the bridging of women's and men's gender, antiviolence and HIV/AIDS activism in South Africa?

More specifically, my intention is to answer the following questions:

- How are different positions in the male involvement discourse constructed – specifically in relation to the formation of links between men's and women's gender activism?
- What gender and power analyses underlie arguments and practices related to creating such links?
- What is the role of donors and international development cooperation in the male involvement discourse in relation to forming such links?

Currently, there are gaps in research making these issues crucial to explore.

1.4. Relevance of research

In spite of the fact that gender and HIV/AIDS activism in South Africa has been paid a rather great deal of attention, there are still some under-researched areas within these fields. As Mandisa Mbali states, while many researchers have explored how gender and sexuality shape HIV/AIDS, little interest has been displayed in the issue of how these power relations influence the actual HIV/AIDS activism (2008: 177). Another for the most part under-researched aspect of HIV/AIDS and gender politics is that of international development aid and its impact on local and transnational civil society and power relations (Thörn & Follér 2008: 291). Hence, there is need for research on the politics of gender and HIV/AIDS in South Africa which focuses on power relations in the civil society and takes the role of international development aid into consideration.

Within this area of research, this thesis focuses on linkages between women's and men's gender, antiviolence and HIV/AIDS activism. In spite of occasional calls in the literature for

creating stronger such links, I have not been able to find any research on this specific topic. When studying general literature on male gender activism and male involvement as well as when communicating with researchers in the field, I have not come across any references to such studies (e.g. Robins, meeting; Cornwall, personal correspondence). For instance, as Emily Esplen states, 'It's striking how little we really know or understand about women's hostility towards working with men, or indeed about men's experiences of trying to work with feminist and women's organisations' (2008: 3). My intention is that this study will be a small contribution to the filling of this huge gap.

1.5. Outline of the thesis

The literature which has inspired this study can roughly be divided into six categories; power as a theoretical concept; power in international development cooperation; Gender and Development (GAD); discourse theory; research on the politics of gender and HIV/AIDS in South Africa; and lastly, male involvement, male gender activism and masculinities. These are treated in different chapters of this thesis. After these introductory words follows a chapter which introduces the theoretical perspectives on power on which this thesis is based. Although this is intrinsically linked to the development of discourse theory, I have chosen to have a closer look at discourse analysis in the subsequent methodology chapter. This chapter also discusses the background to the choice of research problem as well as the actual fieldwork, selection of cases, chosen methods, methodological considerations and the process of analysis. Considerations about the limitations of the thesis are also integrated in different parts of the methodology chapter.

The literature review continues in the fourth and fifth chapters. The first of the two contextualises the politics of gender and HIV/AIDS in South Africa. It does so by exploring the links between gender, HIV/AIDS and gender-based violence as well as by providing a background to the women's movement in South Africa and by looking at the role of international development aid. The second and last part of the literature review contextualises the male involvement discourse which this thesis aims at analysing. It does so by discussing the global discourse and, then, by looking at men's gender oriented collective action in South Africa. The NGOs in this study are also introduced here.

In chapter six I turn to the actual analysis of the data, thus focusing on the bridging of men's and women's gender, antiviolence and HIV/AIDS activism in South Africa. I also attempt to answer my research questions in this chapter by exploring a number of ambivalences and contested definitions underlying arguments and practices in the male involvement discourse in relation to such bridging. Finally, the concluding discussion in chapter seven aims at explicitly linking these findings to the problem formulation, theoretical and methodological perspectives as well as to the literature review.

2. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON POWER

This thesis explores how power relations are articulated, reproduced and/or resisted in the male involvement discourse, focusing on the links between men's and women's gender activism. For this purpose I use a theoretical framework which conceptualises power as complex and distributed, rather than in binary terms. My selection of theories is based on what I have found elucidative in relation to my data. In short, perspectives which merely focus on men's power over women or donors' power over recipients did not prove explanatory when attempting to comprehend how the male involvement discourse deals with women's and men's gender activism or the relationship between the two.

Below, I begin by giving a brief introduction to the power theories of Michel Foucault and Steven Lukes. It is followed by a discussion on how one can use a power perspective, which emphasises the complexity of power relations to look at power structures in international development cooperation. The last part of this chapter specifically concerns how development thinking historically and currently has dealt with gender and gendered power relations.

2.1. The power perspectives of Lukes and Foucault

Power has traditionally been understood in binary terms. Such a perspective is interested in observable conflicts of interests between the 'powerful' and the 'powerless', where the choices of the latter are restricted. The influential power theorists Lukes and Foucault have offered alternatives to this view which have inspired many others interested in the concept of power, such as GAD researchers.

In his book *Power: A Radical View*, Lukes argues for a three-dimensional view of power. The first aspect corresponds to the traditional one-dimensional view, where power is conceptualised as one actor deliberately exercising power over another (1974: 11ff). The second dimension concerns the inadequacy of associating power with such actual, observable conflict, therefore drawing attention to non-decision as a form of power. He discusses the 'bias of the system', i.e. socio-economic structures which are advantageous to dominant groups (ibid.: 17ff), claiming that this:

is not sustained simply by a series of individually chosen acts, but also, most importantly, by the socially structured and culturally patterned behaviour of groups, and practices of institutions, which may indeed be manifested by individuals' inactions. (ibid.: 21f)

To these perspectives he influentially adds a third dimension, arguing that power is exercised most efficiently in situations where conflicts are covert and latent since a person can exercise power over someone else by influencing her/his very wants. Hence, power can be internalised and thereby prevent people from having grievances as they frequently cannot imagine any alternative to the existing order (ibid.: 23f).

By describing the emergence of modern forms of power, Foucault also avoids a binary understanding of power relations. He argues that these are not exercised occasionally and top-down by certain institutions or structures. Rather, power is continuous and diffuse, inherent in all social relations (1980b: 104f; Layder 2006: 124). According to Foucault, power cannot be acquired, seized or possessed by any individual or social group, and is not determined by economic relations. Instead, he maintains power

is not that which makes the difference between those who exclusively possess and retain it, and those who do not have it and submit to it. Power must be analysed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localised here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power. (1980b: 98)

This is not to say that we are ‘dealing with a sort of democratic or anarchic distribution of power through bodies’ (ibid.: 99). Foucault is, however, more interested in degrees of power involved in a particular relation and how people negotiate these power relations than seeing power as a fixed and stable part of relations between individuals or groups (Mills 2004: 34f).

Lukes and Foucault both avoid a simplistic and dichotomous perspective on power. A crucial difference between the two is that Lukes still perceives power in negative terms as something which first and foremost prevents, represses and prohibits, whereas to Foucault, power is also productive through the construction of knowledge, individuals, identities and practices (Foucault 2001: 227; Layder 2006: 121, 124; Mills 2004: 17, 32f, 64; Burr 2003: 69). According to Foucault, the individual is constituted by power relations rather than simply oppressed by them (Mills 2004: 19f). The theory on power which I have found most fruitful in relation to my data is mainly inspired by Foucault. However, I use Lukes’ theory to gain a background understanding when analysing the power perspectives underlying arguments in my material.

An understanding of power as complex has also inspired scholars interested in hierarchies in international development cooperation.

2.2. Power relations in international development cooperation

Power inequalities in development aid have long been subject of debate and criticism. Although I seek to have a critical perspective to aid, my aim is to provide a nuanced analysis, which acknowledges aid as a heterogeneous phenomenon and goes beyond the debate on whether it is ‘good or bad’ (cf. Thörn & Follér 2008: 293). To begin with, I discuss power, agency and resistance in international development cooperation. This is followed by an introduction to the dominant partnership discourse in this field as I argue that it overlaps with the male involvement discourse in focus here (cf. 3.2.3.). The last section looks into the issue of NGO accountability, since the language of accountability turned out to be fundamental in arguments about bridging women’s and men’s gender, anti-violence and HIV/AIDS activism. Hence, the purpose of these latter two sections is primarily to contextualise positions identified in the male involvement discourse.

2.2.1. Power, agency and resistance in aid

Many have argued that it is simplistic to assume a rationalist model whereby development intervention is viewed as a harmonious process based on equality and mutual goals. Rather, there is an obvious power imbalance inherent in the relation between donors and receivers of aid. This is especially so since funds frequently go the same direction⁷ and usually also with economic and political strings attached. Furthermore, these imbalances are closely related to racial and national identities (Crewe & Harrison 1998: 22, 87; Eriksson Baaz 2005). Power structures related to people’s intersecting identities of, for instance, gender, age, class, ‘race’ and nationality conflate with institutional positions within the ‘aid industry’, such as donor or recipient, junior or senior etc. (Crewe & Harrison 1998: 88). Hence, in accordance with the power perspective described above, where power is conceptualised as complex, multidimensional and mobile, one cannot divide development aid actors into powerful ‘developers’ and powerless recipients (ibid.: 184, 192f). In addition, although donor-recipient relations are unequal and frequently argued to involve conflicting interests, development practice and discourse cannot be entirely controlled by the former. Interventions do not proceed smoothly from policy and implementation to outcomes in predictable ways. Instead, there is always a certain room of manoeuvre available for receiving organisations in development networks. Actors within these organisations should be expected to

⁷ This is not to say that donor-recipient categories are dichotomous. They certainly overlap in so far as funds circulate in complex networks where most donors also are recipients (Crewe & Harrison 1998: 88, 180). However, in a specific relation between a donor and a recipient, funds tend to go in one direction.

take advantage of these for independent interpretation, action or even resistance, both in relation to donors and other actors in the local contexts. While not necessarily consciously, policies and concepts are infused with new meanings, transformed and sometimes resisted by various actors in what could be called processes of hybridisation (Eriksson Baaz 2005: 8f, 73ff; Jones 2004: 402; Crewe & Harrison 1998: 24, 89; 155ff).

Even though power in development aid is a complex issue rather than a matter of powerful versus powerless, hierarchies undoubtedly prevail. Since roughly a decade, one response to these from within the 'aid industry' has been the partnership discourse (Odén 2006: 19).

2.2.2. The partnership discourse

The current language of partnership implies that development aid now should be conducted between equal 'partners' and the terminology of donor and receiver therefore needs to be abandoned. Hence, it has a strong moral dimension by questioning the paternalism in aid, and by claiming that power and influence should be returned to receiving states or NGOs⁸ by ceasing to impose the visions of donors. There is also an instrumentalist dimension based on the idea that aid needs to become more sustainable. This is believed to be achieved through emphasising 'ownership', whereby receiving partners should take responsibility for their own development and partners on both sides should work towards the same goals and communicate transparently. At present, the partnership discourse encompasses the entire range of development institutions, including governments, multilateral agencies and NGOs, even though not all have an explicit partnership policy (Eriksson Baaz 2005: 3, 6ff; Crewe and Harrison 1998: 69ff; Abrahamsen 2004: 1453ff; Fowler 2000). The language of partnership is used with reference to multiple relationships among stakeholders in the 'aid industry', i.e. not merely between donors and recipients but also between collaborating NGOs. As Alan Fowler puts it: 'Today's rule of thumb in international development is that everybody wants to be a partner with everyone else on everything, everywhere' (Fowler 2000: 3).

In practice, several researchers have shown that the ideals of non-paternalistic, equal relationships are difficult to realise. The basic economic inequalities between donors and recipients cannot be avoided by changing the terminology. Maria Eriksson Baaz has also revealed how old colonial and paternalistic notions still prevail, thereby contradicting with the new agenda (Eriksson Baaz 2005). Furthermore, it has been argued that the language of partnership fails to address conflicts and inequalities by being converted into a technical issue instead of genuinely questioning power relations (Crewe & Harrison 1998: 75, 87, 90). In short, the partnership discourse arguably obscures and fails to challenge power relations. Related to this, it also hides the fact that there are frequently opposing ideas about and interpretations of change and 'development' between partners (Eriksson Baaz 2005: 8f; Fowler 2000: 7, 10). Yet, these critiques should not be conspiratorially interpreted as partnership being a matter of empty rhetoric while trying to mask true motives, since there is not necessarily a direct link between outcomes and intentions (Eriksson Baaz 2005: 7f, 169).

Similarly to the language of partnership, today there is also a common language of accountability in international development cooperation.

2.2.3. NGO accountability

In recent years, there has been a rapid growth in numbers and size of NGOs. They attract more funds and have a stronger voice in shaping public policy. In contemporary international development cooperation, civil society is 'in' and NGOs are, accordingly, very common recipients of aid, frequently recognised as the 'voices of the poor' (Hydén 2006; Jordan & van

⁸ When writing NGOs, INGOs (such as EngenderHealth in this study) are generally included. Hence, throughout the thesis I only refer to INGO as such when it is of importance to the argument that they, indeed, are international.

Tuijl 2006: 4). Critical voices have been raised in relation to this development. Many question the legitimacy of NGOs and ask the crucial question: ‘who do you represent?’ It has been suggested that they undermine national sovereignty and do not necessarily have a relationship to any real public. Why then should they assert such influential roles in political arenas? As part of this criticism, many, donors included, increasingly call for NGOs to be held accountable for their actions (Bendell 2006: xii; Jordan & van Tuijl 2006: 3f; Birdsall & Kelly 2007: 32; Power 2000: 113; Eade 2002: xi; Nyamugasira 2002; Webb 2004: 24f). While such a discourse on accountability has long been lacking among NGOs, a rising number now engage with these issues (Jordan & van Tuijl 2006: 5).

There is a wide variety of definitions of accountability. According to Jem Bendell it frequently involves a relationship between A and B, where A is accountable to B if they must explain their actions to B and could be negatively affected by B if B does not approve of the account (2006: 1). There is often a distinction made between upwards and downwards accountability. The former is, for instance, to donors, governments or others with power over the NGO in question, whereas the latter concerns accountability to those with less power who are affected by the NGO (ibid.: 5, 8).⁹ Both are based on a relational understanding of accountability. Jeffrey Unerman and Brendan O’Dwyer make a distinction between accountability as such a relational issue, on the one hand, and as an identity issue, on the other. The former is about being answerable to and held responsible by certain stakeholders. By contrast, identity accountability is about being answerable to ideals and one’s own sense of responsibility, namely taking responsibility for determining the organisational mission and values, and assessing one’s performance in relation to one’s goals. Identity accountability does not necessarily give any rights of accountability to stakeholders affected by the actions of the organisation, and the NGO can itself define whom they feel they are accountable to (Unerman & O’Dwyer 2005: 353ff; cf. Jordan & van Tuijl 2006: 4).

The theory chapter now proceeds to its third and last topic, i.e. how gender and gendered power relations are dealt with in development thinking.

2.3. Gender and power in development thinking

Development aid inevitably intervenes in local power relations where they operate, whether unintentionally and unconsciously or with intent (Crewe & Harrison 1998: 161f, 171). Gendered power relations in aid have gained particularly much attention. In this section the development of different perspectives on gender and power within development thinking is introduced.

2.3.1. From WID to GAD

Initially, development thinking was in principal gender-blind. However, since the 1970s gender equality has attracted considerable attention within development research and international development cooperation to the extent that women gradually almost became ‘the answer to everything’ (Baylies & Bujra 1995: 207). Roughly speaking, one usually distinguishes between two lines of thinking in this context: ‘Women in Development’ (WID) and ‘Gender and Development’ (GAD). The former, which was first articulated in the 1970s, is a liberal feminist framework which focuses on women’s visibility, status and access to resources. When the WID approach dominated, women’s projects and a women-only focus in research were on the top of the agenda. Any considerable amount of attention was paid neither to men nor to gendered power relations. This neglect of issues of power and conflict was questioned by the late 1970s and onwards by GAD theorists, who also considered power relations between different groups of

⁹ This definition obviously raises the question of how we know which actors have more or less power, which ultimately depend on how power is defined (Bendell 2006: 7).

women, based on e.g. class, ethnicity, age and sexuality (Antrobus 2004: 47, 76f; Rai 2002: 60ff, 71f; Razavi and Miller 1995: 2ff, 12ff; Erwér 2001: 241). Yet, even this move to the GAD framework 'did little to shake the overwhelming preoccupation with women' (White 1997:15). It is not until the latter half of the 1990s that theorists and practitioners within this framework became increasingly interested in men and masculinities. This is further explored in the fifth chapter which contextualises the male involvement discourse. Below, I look at how GAD deals with issues of power and gender constructions.

2.3.2. Gender difference and power in GAD

Influenced by Foucault among others, some theorists currently call for a complex power perspective in GAD thinking. In line with this, Andrea Cornwall criticises what she argues is the 'men as problem' discourse underlying much of the GAD framework. According to her, it builds on two interlinked premises. Firstly, it is assumed that gender relations are one-dimensional power relations. Secondly, there is a ready association between men, masculinity and power which is so strong that all men are thought to have power, and all those with power are assumed to be men (Cornwall 2000: 21ff). This inevitably relies on a simplistic power analysis. Cornwall writes about the complexity of gendered power relations as follows:

None of us lives every moment of our lives in a state of subordination to others. And the relationships we have with people around us may be 'gender relations' in the sense that these are relationships in which gender makes a difference /.../, but are in no sense merely one-dimensional power relations. (1997: 10)

She argues that if one avoids seeing the relationship between men and power as fixed, but instead recognises its contingency, one is able to 'focus on relations and positions of power rather than render maleness in itself powerful and problematic' (2000: 23). This does not entail giving up feminist claims. Indeed, it is not to deny that many men occupy positions of power, but questions the assumption that all men have access to as well as would want to have access to those positions (Cornwall 1997: 12).

Essentialising men's and women's positions as perpetrators and victims, respectively, risks leaving men without much space to act, whereby men cannot be held accountable. Moreover, such a perspective ignores women's complicity in oppressive structures and in the reproduction of inequitable gender relations (Cornwall 2000: 23; Greig 2000: 29; Lingard & Douglas 1999: 46f). In addition, such thinking in GAD is premised on and reproduces the dualistic view that humanity consists of two basic groups defined by sex. While a strategic use of the categories 'women' and 'men' indeed can be crucial in struggles for gender justice, it is important to avoid constructing an oppositional distinction between 'women' and 'men' which fails to acknowledge the diversity of real men and women (Cornwall 2000: 24f; White 2000: 37).

3. METHODOLOGY, METHODS AND MATERIAL

In this chapter I present the research process on which this qualitative study is based, from the framing of the research problem, via selection of discourse theoretical framework and collection of empirical data, to the actual process of analysis. These issues are dealt with in the mentioned order. Methodological considerations are discussed continuously.

3.1. Background to selection of research problem and context

There are three main background factors explaining how I came to choose the specific research problem, research questions and context of this study. This section treats each in turn, namely my personal background, the conclusions drawn in my previous bachelor's thesis and the research project of my supervisor Håkan Thörn.

I identify as a feminist woman striving to challenge sexist and heteronormative power relations and norms, as well as hierarchies these intersect with based on sexuality, 'race', ethnicity, age and class, for instance. For this reason, I am an activist and educator in the gender and SRHR field, thus similarly to many of the research participants¹⁰ but in a Swedish context as a working member of the Swedish Association for Sexuality Education (RFSU). Moreover, I have had a close connection to Southern Africa ever since I first went to Botswana in 1999. I have been to Southern and/or Eastern Africa nearly every year since, and all in all I have spent a couple of years in the region, mostly in Zimbabwe.

My interest in gender and SRHR contributed to the choice of research topic for my bachelor's thesis in Development Studies (Dahné 2006). It explores the tension between the need for involving men in SRHR and not losing focus on women. It does so by investigating the gender and power analyses of the Young Men as Equal Partners Programme (YMEP) implemented by RFSU and their partner organisations in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia and, to a somewhat lesser extent, EngenderHealth's Men as Partners Programme (MAP) in South Africa. The thesis was not based on a field study, but on qualitative text analysis of programme and donor documents, as well as interviews with professionals at RFSU and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). The main conclusions drawn indicate the complexity of these matters. MAP and YMEP do have a very strong commitment to gender equality and changing certain masculinity ideals, and women's participation is not left out. Simultaneously, I argue that they build on and reproduce male power. They do so partly by encouraging men to use their power and masculinity to take responsibility for SRHR issues, but also by focusing on men's vulnerabilities and lacking self-confidence at the expense of women's vulnerabilities and disempowerment. These conclusions, as well as the fact that women also participate in these programmes, aroused my interest in the linkages between work with men and women's gender activism, both within the programmes and in collaboration with women's rights organisations.

The third main factor which has influenced the framing of my research problem and choice of context is the connection to my supervisor Prof. Håkan Thörn's research project 'Aid and AIDS Governance: Global Influences and Local Strategies in the Context of South African Civil Society'. In brief, it explores power relations in transnational partnership networks in connection to HIV/AIDS work in the context of South African civil society. An analysis of international development cooperation and related power relations was unfortunately lacking in my bachelor's thesis. In order to deepen and contextualise the analysis, I have chosen to add such a perspective

¹⁰ The term 'research participants' refers to interviewees, key contact persons as well as participants in the meetings and workshops I observed. The term is not chosen to indicate an inclusion of the 'researched' as 'equal participants' in the research process as such a reason for using the term obscures actual power relations (cf. Letherby 2003: 7).

to this thesis. Initially this was a major focus included in the purpose of the study. However, mainly due to the limitations of my data (cf. p. 17), the aid aspect was later on limited to one of the research questions.

3.2. Discourse analysis

The power perspective clarified in the previous theory chapter, which emphasises the complexity of power in human relations, is intrinsically connected to the development of discourse theory. Since I am interested in how power relations are articulated, resisted and reproduced in the male involvement discourse, I consider discourse analysis to be a suitable methodology for this study. This choice is based on what I argue is its potential in exploring power relations as well as in studying linguistic and non-linguistic practices in tandem. In this section I have a closer look at the concept of discourse and the framework chosen which is inspired, in particular, by the influential discourse theorists Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe and Foucault. To begin with, I give a brief definition of discourse as well as consider the issue of discourse and practice. In relation to this, it is explained how I approach non-linguistic practice in the analysis. The following section deals with the conflicting nature of discourse, paying attention to agency and resistance as well as to how subject positions are constituted and negotiated. Lastly, I describe how I go about delimiting discourses in relation to my data.

3.2.1. An introduction to discourse

Discourse can in this context be defined as a *certain* way to think about and understand the world. Put differently, it is a temporary closure of meaning which implies an exclusion of other potential meanings. Hence, there are limits determining whether particular ideas and practices should be considered true, reasonable or even possible (Börjesson & Palmblad 2007: 13; Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000: 7). Yet, in accordance with Foucault's understanding of power as productive rather than merely constraining, discourse is not only limiting human thought and action, but also producing these very thoughts and actions (Börjesson & Palmblad 2007: 12).

It is important to explore the material anchoring of discourse and to determine how to approach non-linguistic practices in the analysis. According to Laclau and Mouffe, discourse should be seen as practice and all practice as discursive. Viewing discourse as constitutive of the social, it defines practice as it makes various actions possible and others not. Moreover, all practice is associated with the production of meaning (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 107ff; Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000: 25f; Eriksson *et al* 1999: 22; Hall 1997: 44f). Therefore, this study does not solely deal with linguistic aspects of the male involvement discourse, but it also looks at how these notions and meanings inform practices within the organisations. The underlying gender and power analyses employed by the actors in focus here are institutionalised and materialised, and these aspects of discourse should preferably not be silenced or excluded from analysis (cf. Eriksson Baaz 2005: 12f). However, due to the main reliance on interviews and that most observations were not relevant enough in relation to my research questions, my data are fairly limited concerning non-linguistic discursive practices. The extent to which I do analyse such practice, I focus on how arguments regarding the relationship between organisations focusing on men and the women's movement are intentionally translated into actual collaborations and structures in the NGOs, as well as the role of donors in relation to this. Thereby, I analyse the gender and power analyses underlying the non-linguistic practices my interviewees describe. Yet, my data is too limited to analyse potential gaps between rhetoric and practice concerning partnerships with women's organisations, which some research participants have indicated exist among certain NGOs (cf. e.g. email correspondence 2). Moreover, I do not look further into how power structures, underlying power analyses and potential conflicts are

reflected in actual collaborations and other non-linguistic practices.¹¹ Concerning the analysis of linguistic discursive practices, however, I pay a great deal of attention to conflict and resistance.

3.2.2. Conflict, agency and resistance

Foucault is mainly interested in identifying larger regimes of knowledge and how discourses live themselves out through people, rather than in how people actively employ discourses. This does, however, not necessarily mean that he neglects human agency. More accurately, he argues that people, given the right circumstances, are able to critically analyse and claim or resist the discourses framing their lives. Social change is enabled by opening up marginalised discourses, which are important sources of resistance. Thereby, alternatives to the dominant discourse are provided (Burr 2003: 78f, 120ff). According to Foucault, not only power, but resistance too, exists everywhere in society; ‘there are no relations of power without resistances; the latter are all the more real and effective because they are formed right at the point where relations of power are exercised’ (Foucault 1980a: 142; cf. Mills 2004: 37; Burr 2003: 69, 79f, 110f). Accordingly, the premise that power relations are ‘everywhere’ does not imply that there is no space for resistance. This is not a contradiction, as sometimes assumed, since power ‘never [can] be so total, coherent and exhaustive as to preclude resistance occurring within its own space’ (Knights & Vurdubakis 1994: 191). In brief, Foucault deconstructs the dualistic view of ‘Power versus Resistance’ (ibid.: 168f, 177).

Paying attention to human agency opens up the possibility of viewing discourse as less homogenous. Accordingly, discourse should be perceived as sites of contestations of meaning as even the most powerful discourse is open to resistance and different interpretations (Mills 2004: 12ff, 114). Following Laclau and Mouffe, among others, I concentrate on this conflictual nature of discourse. In their view, discourse analysis should aim at mapping out the processes in which we contend for the ways in which meaning is fixed. Some of these fixations become so conventionalised that we consider them natural, but meaning can never be permanently fixed (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000: 32ff). Instead, there are always cracks and weak points in a certain discourse, and dominant positions are continually under implicit threat from others. Foucault argues that it is by studying this implicit resistance in one discourse or position that one can uncover the power implicit in another. Rather than analysing a specific power relation and its rationality on its own, one can locate and explore power by studying the resistance to it (Foucault 1986: 178; Burr 2003: 69, 110f). I use this perspective as an analytical tool when studying ambivalences in the male involvement discourse in order to reveal how power relations are articulated in the discourse.

Understanding discourse as conflictual is also fruitful when looking at identity constructions. The concept of ‘subject position’ is used here to refer to this production of identity. This is a conflictual process whereby identities are constructed, negotiated and resisted, since we may claim, accept or resist the subject positions on offer. The way the concept of positioning is used in this thesis recognises both the power of discourse to frame and constrain the identities made available and people’s potential to actively engage with those discourses and thereby negotiate subjectivity. Put differently, I analyse both how the male involvement discourse constitutes certain gendered subject positions, and how particular gendered positions are resisted and adopted in the texts by drawing upon particular arguments within the discourse (Burr 2003: Chapter 6; Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 115; Hall 1999).

¹¹ These could be other potentially interesting research topics. Yet, it would require observations of actual collaborations, such as consultative meetings and work which is carried out in collaboration, to which I did not get sufficient access during my fieldwork.

3.2.3. *Defining and delimiting discourses*

In Foucault's view, it is crucial to avoid employing a simplistic understanding of discourse as merely groupings of statements linked to either a theme or a certain institutional setting (such as disciplines, authorities or professions). Moreover, discourses are open-ended and related to other discourses as well as being regulated by these relations (Mills 2004: 43). Given this, how can one know where one discourse ends and another begins? Marianne Winther Jørgensen and Louise Phillips suggest that this problem can be solved by treating discourse as an analytical concept, i.e. as constructs of the researcher rather than as objects in the real world for the researcher to identify. This implies delimiting discourses strategically in relation to the aim of the study. It does not, however, mean that anything could be defined as a discourse, or that they lack actual content. Rather, one needs to demonstrate why it is a reasonable delimitation, based on previous research and one's own data (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000: 137, 140).

During the process of analysis I identified several potential discourses in my material. I found various positions concerning to what extent and for what reasons one should create linkages between men's and women's gender activism, different ways of relating to the notion of gender difference, as well as a language of partnership and accountability. All of these could, arguably, be demarcated as discourses. I hesitated over whether to elaborate with several discourses or with one and explore tensions and different positions within it. Given the irregularities and ambivalence found, I chose to focus on one in order to avoid ending up concentrating on categorising various statements into different discourses and thereby to some extent loose focus on my research questions. I use the concept of position to refer to those clusters of related arguments and practices within a certain discourse.¹²

I realised that all arguments appearing in my preliminary analysis were related to male involvement. Furthermore, I found a number of similarities between these and the different positions articulated in the literature on male involvement in a global context. I therefore chose to analyse what I argue is a male involvement discourse with the limitation that I do so to the extent that it has links to arguments and practices related to the bridging of women's and men's gender, antiviolenace and HIV/AIDS activism. To make this focus explicit from the start, I adjusted the purpose and research questions, which initially only mentioned views regarding such bridging without referring to a specific discourse. As demonstrated in the analysis chapter, the male involvement discourse overlaps with the partnership discourse and the currently common language of accountability.¹³ In this thesis I have chosen to analyse these only to the extent that they overlap with the male involvement discourse rather than drawing considerable attention to partnership and accountability at large (although I do contextualise them briefly in 2.2.2. and 2.2.3.).

In the following, I describe my fieldwork and the collection of data on which the discourse analysis is based.

3.3. **Fieldwork with gender, antiviolenace and HIV/AIDS activists in South Africa**

During three months, from September to December 2007, I conducted fieldwork with gender, antiviolenace and HIV/AIDS organisations in South Africa for the purpose of this thesis. I participated in meetings and workshops, studied numerous NGO documents and conducted

¹² The concept of position, as defined here, should thus not be confused with the concepts of 'subject position' and 'positioning' discussed in section 3.2.2. above. However, they are obviously related. Drawing on and constructing a certain *position* within a discourse implies a *positioning*, i.e. that *subject positions* (identities) are constituted and negotiated.

¹³ Potentially, this could be conceptualised as an 'accountability discourse'. However, I have chosen not to understand accountability as a discourse on its own here, primarily as the ways in which the concept is used in this context clearly have major similarities to the partnership discourse. Hence, I argue instead that this language of accountability is part of the partnership discourse in my material (cf. 6.1.).

interviews with key persons in the field. I was based in Cape Town but for the purpose of interviews and observations I also travelled to East London, Pretoria, Johannesburg and George. In this section I describe how I went about selecting organisations, methods, interviewees, observation settings and documents, as well as the process of gathering data. I begin by explaining on which grounds I selected the NGOs. This is followed by one section each on the three sources of data, i.e. written sources, participatory observations and semi-structured interviews.

3.3.1. Selection of organisations

There are a number of NGOs in South Africa which focus on work with men on gender, anti-violence and/or HIV/AIDS. When planning my fieldwork I contacted a few, as well as similar organisations and programmes in other Southern African countries.¹⁴ The ones I got the most positive and helpful response from were Sonke and EngenderHealth, which both proved to be good cases to study. First of all, they are currently two of the major stakeholders in work with men in South Africa. EngenderHealth is a pioneer in this field in South Africa as it is the main founder of the MAP network. Sonke was founded in 2006, but it has in a short period of time grown tremendously and has extended national and international networks. Initially, I also thought the differences between the two would be interesting for comparison, given my intended focus on international development cooperation. EngenderHealth is a large INGO which relies almost solely on foreign funding, approximately half of which is from the U.S. Government through United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) (Ntanyiya, personal correspondence). By contrast, Sonke is a South African NGO and has a more diversified funding from private foundations, UN agencies, the South African government and bilateral donors (Sonke 2008b). In spite of these and other differences, a focus on comparing the two did not prove fruitful as I decided to pay less attention to aid than initially planned. Moreover, there turned out to be major similarities between the two in regard to their perspectives on their relation to the women's movement. These similarities are likely to be partly due to the overlap of Sonke and EngenderHealth, whereby several of EngenderHealth's employees (including the country director) and consultants left to co-found and/or work for Sonke (email correspondence 1).

Both EngenderHealth and Sonke are committed to work together with women and in collaboration with women's rights organisations. Three of EngenderHealth's and Sonke's partner organisations focusing on women were also included in the study, although to a somewhat lesser extent; these are POWA, Masimanyane and Yabonga, and they were selected on the basis of the contacts I was provided by my contact persons from EngenderHealth and Sonke.¹⁵ The fact that all NGOs included in the study to some extent work with both men and women as well as engage in collaborations across the gender binary, obviously affects the results of the study. This is not a problem given that the purpose of the thesis is to explore the bridging of men's and women's gender activism. Yet, the reader should be aware that far from all gender, anti-violence and HIV/AIDS organisations focusing on men and women respectively have a similar commitment to working together across the gender divide. Hence, they do not necessarily share the same belief in work with men, work with women or partnerships between the two. Consequently, if doing research with such organisations, a different set of research questions would be necessary. It was therefore early in the research process that I defined an investigation of such organisations as being outside the scope of this study.

¹⁴ Apart from EngenderHealth and Sonke, I also contacted Hope Worldwide (South Africa), Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa (PPASA, South Africa), Padare (Zimbabwe) and RFSU's YMEP programme (Zambia, Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania).

¹⁵ A further background to the selected NGOs is given in 5.2.2.

As this thesis is based on a study of five specific NGOs in South Africa, the conclusions drawn are not likely to apply to all gender, antiviolenace and HIV/AIDS organisations focusing on men and women respectively. Yet, I argue that the results indeed have a more general relevance. The particular people I met in this particular South African context as well as the particular documents I have analysed, indeed draw on more general discourses which clearly have global dimensions (cf. Eriksson Baaz 2005: 29f). I demonstrate this by linking the analysis to the contextualising of the male involvement discourse and the partnership discourse with its language of accountability provided in sections 2.2.2., 2.2.3 and chapter five respectively.

3.3.2. *Written sources*

For the purpose of this study I have read a large number of documents from EngenderHealth and Sonke. I have had a look at nearly everything I have come across, such as reports (e.g. Sonke 2007a; Sonke 2007b; EngenderHealth 2005c), project proposals (Sonke 2007c; Sonke 2007d; EngenderHealth 2007; EngenderHealth 2005b; EngenderHealth 2005d; EngenderHealth undated), a capacity statement (Sonke 2008a); a donor memo (Sida 2005), articles (e.g. Peacock 2003; Peacock 2005; Peacock 2006; Peacock 2007; Peacock *et al* 2006; Peacock & Bafana forthcoming; Levack 2006), materials (e.g. Sonke undated; EngenderHealth 2005a) and web pages (e.g. Sonke 2008g; Sonke 2008d; EngenderHealth 2008b; EngenderHealth 2008d). I studied these to get a background understanding before entering the field, as well as to deepen my understanding during the process of analysis. I refer to some of them in the analysis, but only chose two texts for the actual in-depth discourse analysis. These were included on the basis that they explicitly discuss links between men's and women's gender, antiviolenace and HIV/AIDS activism. The first one is selected parts of the 161 pages long EngenderHealth guidebook *Men as Partners Programme: Promising Practices Guide* (EngenderHealth 2005a).¹⁶ Being based on interviews with staff, volunteers and beneficiaries of the MAP programme partners, it discusses lessons learnt from the implementation of MAP in South Africa. Moreover, it includes extracts from group interviews with and quotes from a number of people within the network (*ibid.*: *About the Promising Practices Guide*). The second text is a case study of Masimanyane Men's Programme by Interfund (Interfund undated: 54ff), based on a reading of documents as well as semi-structured interviews with staff members in 2002 (*ibid.*: 48). When I decided to link my research topic to the male involvement discourse at large, I realised that several of the other documents would be potentially interesting for detailed analysis as well. However, at that stage I had enough material already.

Another way to get a background understanding of the field, besides studying various documents, was to conduct observations at the chosen NGOs.

3.3.3. *Participatory observations*

By participating in 'natural situations' and continuously asking questions to research participants, my understanding of the context evolved with time. This was also the main purpose of conducting observations, i.e. to get to know 'the field'. My contact persons from Sonke and EngenderHealth assisted me in getting access to relevant meetings and workshops. I did not select the observation settings, but participated in all I was referred to and could get access to for practical reasons such as time and place.

All in all I conducted seven participatory observations of meetings, workshops and a demonstration (cf. Appendix). Mostly, I did not participate actively in these, but instead concentrated on continuously writing field notes. While all meetings and workshops were held

¹⁶ These selected parts are the following chapters: *Why is MAP programme needed in South Africa?*; 1. *Working with men as part of the solution*; 2. *Working for personal and social change*; 3. *Working on accountability*; 5. *Broadening work on violence*; and 10. *Working collaboratively*.

mainly in English, some mixed with Xhosa and Afrikaans to a limited degree. In these cases the workshop facilitators frequently paraphrased in English. I wrote extended notes only after observing a round table meeting with Sonke and nearly twenty donors (observation 4) as I judged this to be of particular value for my analysis. These notes were also included in my in-depth discourse analysis. However, the other meetings and workshops were still of great importance, giving me crucial background information and allowing me to get to know the context better. Of most importance in this regard was a two day MAP workshop with the men's group Men In Action at Walter Sisulu University in East London, arranged by EngenderHealth (observation 3), as well as a three day One Man Can workshop with inmates and staff at George Correctional Centre being part of Sonke's prisons project (observation 7). When I later on decided to analyse the male involvement discourse at large, I realised that these two observations could in fact have been useful to analyse in-depth as well. However, the notes were generally not detailed or clear enough for discourse analysis and, moreover, I had more than enough material already. Occasionally, I do refer to them in the analysis though.

While observations helped deepen my understanding of the context, the main method used in this study was semi-structured interviews.

3.3.4. Semi-structured interviews

The qualitative semi-structured interview is often a useful method if aiming at understanding how people in a chosen field experience and interpret the world. It allows the researcher to register unexpected answers, follow up interesting topics and ask again if meaning is unclear (Esaiaasson *et al* 2003: 279ff). In addition, to conduct interviews was in my case necessary as I could not get access to enough naturally occurring data (observations or texts) to be able to answer my research questions about bridging women's and men's gender activism.

My contact persons at Sonke and EngenderHealth referred me to potential interviewees within their respective organisations as well as representatives of their donors and women's organisations they collaborate with. From the number of contacts I got, ten were selected which I intended to conduct semi-structured interviews with. The selection was partly based on practical reasons, i.e. which persons it was possible to meet during my time in the respective South African cities. Most of all, however, I aimed at interviewing key persons in different positions who are strategically located in the discursive field and thereby have a general view of the field (cf. Stake 1994: 244). For these reasons I interviewed both representatives of organisations focusing on men, women's rights organisations and donors; both staff and persons in leading positions; and lastly, both men and women (cf. Appendix). The donor representatives interviewed were from Sida and USAID,¹⁷ both important donors of EngenderHealth.¹⁸ An additional interview with a representative of Ford Foundation, funding both Sonke and EngenderHealth, was planned but unfortunately cancelled. This implies that no interviews were conducted with representatives of any of Sonke's donors.¹⁹ All in all, I interviewed three men and six women. I would argue that this potential 'bias' of including more women than men as interviewees is compensated for by the inclusion of the EngenderHealth guidebook, with interviews with and quotes from a number of male gender activists. Moreover, workshop facilitators and the large majority of workshop participants were men (EngenderHealth 2005a).

¹⁷ Given the aspect of the thesis which focuses on international development aid, I only selected representatives of foreign donors and not anyone from South African governmental donors.

¹⁸ Approximately 50 per cent of South African EngenderHealth's funds are from the US government through USAID/PEPFAR, whereas Sida's support accounts for about 11 per cent of the total budget (Ntanyiya, personal correspondence).

¹⁹ However, I did observe a round table meeting with Sonke and a some of their actual and potential donors, as described in 3.3.3.

Even though most informants did not consider it necessary to anonymise their interviews, I chose to do so for ethical reasons. My choice was based on what I understand as tensions and a certain level of distrust between different actors in the field as well as some criticism raised. To avoid naming the NGOs was, however, not a feasible alternative given the fairly limited number of similar NGOs in South Africa. Partly in order to somewhat increase the anonymity of some of the interviewees, I decided not to mention their gender. This is also in line with my theoretical perspective, as it draws attention to how gender is constructed in the texts rather than positing gender categories as pre-given.

The interviews were approximately one hour long each and mostly conducted alone with the interviewee.²⁰ All were in English except from the one with the representative of Sida, which was in Swedish.²¹ The interviews were semi-structured and followed interview guides which were continuously developed along the way, based on the understanding I had gained from the literature review, readings of NGO documents, as well as previous interviews and observations. I also sought to adjust the interview guide to different positions of the interviewees. When conducting the interviews I found it difficult to draw attention to a number of topics and levels without making the actual interviews too structured and thereby not letting the interviewees talk freely enough. Partly as a consequence of this, this thesis focuses more on gendered power relations than initially intended, as these are more directly linked to the research topic. Unfortunately, it does so at the expense of intersecting power relations based on 'race', ethnicity, sexuality, class and Global North/Global South which were initially included in the purpose of the thesis. Out of these, however, I do pay attention to power relations between the Global North and the Global South when there is an obvious intersection of these and gendered power relations. This corresponds to my research question about the role of international development cooperation in relation to the bridging of women's and men's gender activism. Yet, as previously mentioned, I draw less attention to aid than initially planned, for reasons linked to my interview data. Not only was an interview with a donor cancelled, but some of my interviewees were also not sufficiently familiar with current discussions on donors specifically in relation to the bridging of men's and women's gender activism. In addition, one interview was cut short before we got the chance to discuss issues of international development cooperation in-depth (interview 5). Lastly, my interviewee from USAID had limited knowledge about the discussions on and practices of collaborations between organisations focusing on men and women's rights organisations (interview 9). In short, similarly to the documents analysed, the interviews did not contain enough data about the role of donors in relation to my research questions, for this topic to remain a main focus of the thesis.

The interviews were recorded and all except one (interview 9) were transcribed. I judged that this specific interview would not be useful enough as the interviewee was not very familiar with the research topic. Hence, I did not analyse it in-depth, unlike the rest of the interviews. A great deal of interpretation is done already when transcribing. I decided not to write down word for word exactly what was said, including for instance stammering, hemming and hawing, since this inevitably would create hybrids neither corresponding to the oral conversations nor producing a text which would do justice to the interviewees (cf. Kvale 1997: 149ff). Moreover, the kind of discourse analysis I undertook did not involve strict linguistic analysis. Therefore I chose an intermediate position instead, giving the transcriptions a fluent language and still trying to change as little as possible. The interview transcripts were then analysed together with the selected documents and field notes, a process described below.

²⁰ One exception is the interview with a representative of Yabonga where a MAP facilitator from EngenderHealth also was present as it was conducted in connection to a workshop which s/he facilitated at Yabonga. While this obviously is not ideal, I got the impression that the interviewee from Yabonga still could speak rather freely, also about organisations focusing on men.

²¹ The quotes from this specific interview included in the analysis have therefore been translated into English.

3.4. The process of analysis

The process of analysis, interpretation and reflection is continuous and began during observing, interviewing, transcribing, writing field notes, discussing and reading. This section deals with how I carried out the actual in-depth analysis of selected texts.

I began with reading and rereading interview transcripts, field notes and documents, seeking to identify relevant themes in relation to my research questions. Quotes and comments were coded and divided into categories, on which the first preliminary analysis was based (cf. Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000: 122). Initially, I asked fairly concrete and specific questions to the data. I tried to understand how research participants look at the relationships between men's and women's gender activism and comprehend meanings of central concepts such as accountability and partnership. I then realised that I needed to distance myself further from the texts, ask more discourse analytical questions and see discourse as less homogenous. At this stage, which represents a movement from the particular to the general, I decided to structure the analysis around ambivalences in the discourse. This also implied a stronger focus on power and resistance, thus in line with the research questions. In addition, I began to recognise the links (commonalities and tensions) between, on the one hand, arguments about partnerships between organisations focusing on men and women's rights organisations and, on the other hand, the male involvement and partnership discourses at large. Writing the literature review and the analysis chapter was a somewhat simultaneous process as both implied attempting to identify important themes and assumptions in the discourses articulated. Indeed, literature review is a critical undertaking and thereby a kind of qualitative analysis as well (McCracken 1988: 31).

The results of this study obviously depend not only on the questions asked during interviews, but importantly also on the questions asked to the actual texts (Kvale 1997: 195, 201). A number of discourse analytical questions were asked to the data after having decided to focus on the male involvement discourse, such as: Where are assumptions shared and taken for granted and where are definitions contested? How are the different positions constructed in the discourse related to each other? How are men and women constituted as gendered subjects by the discourse, and how do the research participants engage with or potentially resist these subject positions? Who draws on which positions in the discourse, and how is this related to power relations in the field?

Moreover, it is important to ask questions about my own role in producing discourse, a topic discussed in the next section, which also raises power relations in the research process.

3.4.1. Reflexivity

Researchers pay increasing attention to reflexivity, which implies considering one's own role in the research process and in relation to research participants. It frequently also means using one's theories to understand one's own research practices (Burr 1995: 180; Burr 2003: 156f). There are various aspects of this. Firstly, I consider power relations in the research process, followed by a discussion on how discourse and knowledge is jointly produced by researcher and 'researched'. Lastly, I position myself and briefly discuss how my personal and political identities and values might have influenced the research.

One aspect of reflexivity is to consider power relations in the research process (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000: 111f). Development research carried out by westerners frequently face particularly severe criticism regarding the reproduction of hierarchies. Since I am a privileged European student who did research in South Africa, this study risks reinforcing global power structures which recurrently position people from the Global North as research subjects and people from the Global South as research objects (cf. Scheyvens & Storey 2003: 2). This ethic dilemma is something I continuously struggle with. Yet, I argue that the male involvement discourse and creating links between male and female gender activists clearly have global dimensions, and to analyse these is of global interest. At least to some extent, I have also

employed a critical perspective towards development aid and thereby taken the role and power of the Global North into consideration in the analysis. To suggest that research carried out by people from the Global North in the Global South is at all times exploitative is, moreover, based on a simplistic understanding of power. As Regina Scheyvens and Donovan Storey argue, the researcher rarely controls the entire research process and research participants can exercise 'research resistance', for instance by withholding information (Scheyvens & Storey 2003: 5). In addition, the intersection of various factors such as age, gender, class, nationality and 'race' as well as position in the gender and SRHR field and position in the research project (as researcher or 'researched') contributed to the power relations between me and research participants being even more complex. Unlike much of development research, I can therefore not say that I consistently researched neither 'down' nor 'up'. Nevertheless, at the end of the day I was the one to finally decide research questions and draw conclusions from the material, and thereby I had the final power over knowledge production (cf. Skeggs 1997: 28ff). I sought to create a dialogue with research participants in order to deal with this, for instance by asking for feedback on my problem formulation in the beginning as well as on a preliminary version of the thesis (cf. Burr 1995: 181).

Another aspect of reflexivity is to recognise that knowledge and discourse is always jointly produced by the researcher and interviewee in the actual interview setting (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000: 120; Briggs 1986: 3, 25; Burr 2003: 152, 157). I have therefore aimed at contextualising interview extracts in the analysis chapter. By including or referring to my questions I intend to enable the reader to make relevant interpretations of the data her/himself. Like everyone, I do not have access to a position outside discourse (cf. Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000: 56f). While the context of my fieldwork was partly new to me and while I have tried to distance myself from the male involvement and partnership discourses, I also draw on and hence reproduce them. I do so both as an interviewer and as the author of this text. Indeed, the starting point of this research project was very much in line with the intersection of the male involvement and partnership discourses. In brief, it was based on the premises that work with men and male gender activism are possible and necessary but need to be in partnership with the women's movement, partly in order to avoid some of the assumed pitfalls of work with men.

To consider one's own personal and political values which inform the research, another crucial aspect of being reflexive, enables the reader to better understand and judge the claims made (Burr 2003: 157; Letherby 2003: 5f). My feminist conviction and my belief in the explanatory potentials of conceptualising power as complex, have obviously influenced the ways I have interpreted and (together with the research participants) produced the data. As postcolonial and feminist methodological approaches often emphasise, it is also of importance to position oneself in the research process in relation to one's privileges and lack of privileges, linked to our history and context. Although my subject positions as a white, middle class, queer, Swedish, young woman do not provide me with predefined interpretational frameworks, there is a history of colonialism, racism, (hetero)sexism and privileges in which these subject positions influence which discourses I have access to and draw on (cf. Mohanty 2003a: 191; Skeggs 1997: 18, 29; Laskar 2003: 13f; Mulinari & de los Reyes 2005: 92, 126; Scheyvens & Storey 2003: 3; Ambjörnsson 2003: 44). My aim is to produce transparent and 'accountable' knowledge, whereby I recognise that this text is indeed not politically neutral. Rather, through discursive practices it both challenges and (unintentionally) reproduces power relations, both of which I am fully responsible for.

4. THE POLITICS OF GENDER AND HIV/AIDS IN SOUTH AFRICA

The purpose of this chapter is to give a background to the politics of gender, gender-based violence²² and HIV/AIDS in South Africa. Firstly, it explores the links between these in society. In the next two sections, I continue with how these issues are dealt with by the women's movement and international development cooperation respectively.²³ While the focus is on South Africa in the first two sections, the former in particular is also of relevance for many other countries.

4.1. Gender, HIV/AIDS and gender-based violence – exploring the links

As mentioned in the introduction, gender, HIV/AIDS and gender-based violence are intrinsically linked to one another although gender is far from being the only crucial power relation regarding the spread of, impact of and responses to the epidemic.²⁴ In this section I focus on gendered aspects of HIV/AIDS in relation to the spread of the virus and how this is linked to gender-based violence.

From the mid-1990s onwards, a significant body of research has been generated concerning gendered barriers to HIV prevention in South Africa, corresponding to similar findings from other African countries (Mbali 2008: 195). Currently, it is mainly women's vulnerability and lack of power which is stressed, as well as prevailing norms of masculinities and, to a lesser extent, femininities. These norms and power relations manifest themselves in a variety of ways in different contexts and are clearly also contested. It is of great importance to contextualise and historicise them rather than assuming their universality. Nonetheless, there are some elements which seem to appear frequently in research from different contexts, including South Africa, leaving women especially vulnerable to HIV/AIDS.²⁵ These are, for instance, virginity ideals for girls, the idea of female passivity and male activity/dominance, the primacy of male desire, the acceptance of men having multiple sexual partners and the simultaneous control of female sexuality (Albertyn 2003: 600; Gupta 2000: 2f; Tallis 2002: 16f). Moreover, many have argued that women's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS is linked to their frequent lack of power over their bodies and sexual lives. This has partly to do with economic inequalities and poverty as many poor women depend on short or long-term sexual relations with men to sustain their basic needs (Albertyn 2003: 598; Susser & Stein 2000: 1044; Dunkle *et al* 2003).

Prevailing masculinity ideals have different gendered outcomes in relation to HIV/AIDS vulnerability. Paradoxically, some of these norms render men vulnerable to the epidemic as they frequently involve expectations on men to be sexually experienced, practice unsafe sex and not seek advice on sexual health issues or receive care in case of disease (Gupta 2000: 2f; Tallis 2002: 17; Campbell 2001; Silberschmidt 2004; Foreman 1999a: ix). However, certain masculinity norms obviously also put women at risk. Hegemonic masculinity is at times defined as a man's ability to 'control' his girlfriends, which Katharine Wood's and Rachel Jewkes'

²² I use the term 'gender-based violence' generally rather than 'violence against women'. The purpose of this is to make clear that it refers to physical, sexual and psychological violent acts which are 'perpetrated and (to some extent) socially tolerated because the targets are female' (Dunkle *et al* 2003: 8). Hence, other violent acts which may affect women but are seemingly not related to their gender (e.g. robbery) are excluded.

²³ Given my focus on civil society and international development cooperation, a background to the politics of gender and HIV/AIDS of the South African government is largely excluded.

²⁴ South Africa is a clear example of how the intersection of gender and constructions of 'race', ethnicity, sexuality and class play a role both in the spread of HIV (e.g. Campbell 2001; Wood & Jewkes 2001) and in the responses of the government and civil society to the epidemic. In the latter case, several scholars have pointed at the importance of drawing attention to the legacy of apartheid and colonialism, its racist discourses as well as the anti-apartheid struggle (e.g. Robins 2004, Mbali 2003: 320f).

²⁵ There are also physiological factors, such as women's larger mucous membrane, which contribute to women being more vulnerable than men to contracting HIV from heterosexual vaginal intercourse with an infected person (Baylies 2000: 5; Foreman 1999b: 6ff).

research from South Africa indicates. This sometimes includes perpetrating physical and sexual violence against female intimate partners in order to portray themselves as ‘men in control’ (Wood & Jewkes 2001: 319, 324). Even though the statistics of various forms of violence against women in South Africa, including sexual violence, are dated and incomplete, it is clear that it has reached crisis proportions. It has so in spite of constitutional commitment to gender equality and sexual rights as well as a number of gains in relation to gender-based violence at the level of law and policy (Vetten 2007: 425, 429f, 442; Morrell 2001: 20). Men’s violence against women is widely recognised as a key aspect of gender injustice across the globe, being an expression of men’s power over women and simultaneously a means to maintain that power (Flood 2005: 459). This violence, and not merely rape and sexual assault is essentially connected to women’s vulnerability to HIV/AIDS as actual, threatened or fear of male violence makes it difficult for many heterosexually active women to negotiate sexual activities. Thus, many heterosexually active men can determine the timing and nature of sexual intercourse, including whether safer sex should be practiced or not (Dunkle *et al* 2003; Wood & Jewkes 1997: 41ff; Leclerc-Madlala 2008: 145). Research from South Africa indicates that women in abusive and violent relationships are twice as likely to be HIV positive as women in non-violent relationships (Dunkle *et al* 2003).

To sum up, all the gendered factors mentioned here often put women at risk of HIV and contribute to the difficulties many women face if wishing to negotiate safer sex with men or abandon partners who put them at risk (Baylies 2000: 5ff; Gupta 2000: 2f; Tallis 2002: 16f; Wood & Jewkes 1997). As Catherine Albertyn says, ‘HIV/AIDS thus reinforces old inequalities and introduces a wide set of direct costs for women as a result of these inequalities’ (Albertyn 2003: 602; cf. Tallis 2002: 1). Below, I give a short introduction to the South African women’s movement as well as to how and to what extent it has dealt with HIV/AIDS and gender-based violence as important aspects of gender inequality. In addition, the role of women and how gender issues are dealt with in the HIV/AIDS movement are briefly touched upon. Organisations focusing on men in South Africa also play an important part in civil society responses to these issues, but these are dealt with in section 5.2.1. instead.

4.2. The South African women’s movement

The women’s movement in South Africa is widely recognised as a success given the many gains achieved when engaging with the state during and after the transition to democracy. Tremendous attention has been drawn to its contributions concerning the constitutional commitments to gender equality, progressive legislation and policies and the large number of women in elected political positions (Hassim 2006: 349). Nevertheless, apart from the short period of transition to democracy in the early 1990s, the South African women’s movement is historically and currently not known to be strong (*ibid.*: 349f, 367f; Leclerc-Madlala 2008: 146). Like elsewhere in the world, it should not be understood as a homogenous entity. Instead it comprises heterogeneous organisations embracing various organisational forms and ideologies. Shireen Hassim identifies three levels of the movement: national policy advocates; issue-based networks and coalitions; and community-based organisations. The necessary synergies between these levels have not been created and thereby they have failed to form a common strong movement. Even though parts of the women’s movement have been able to ensure constitutional commitments to gender equality, the movement at large is currently too weak to ensure that these commitments are acted upon accordingly (Hassim 2006).

Linked to the fact that the struggle for gender equality mainly has taken place in the public domain of the state and has emphasised issues of public policy and law reform rather than private issues, there has been a lack of focus on norms, practices and the structural basis of inequalities (*ibid.*; Albertyn 2003: 603, 607). Any organised feminist response to HIV/AIDS and its gendered nature has until recently been largely absent (Albertyn 2003: 610; Mbali 2008: 182ff). Currently,

however, there is a much greater consensus over the link between gender-based violence and women's gendered vulnerability to HIV infection (Mbali 2008: 192; Leclerc-Madlala 2008).

While the women's movement in South Africa is not so strong and only to a limited extent has worked on HIV/AIDS, there is a strong HIV/AIDS movement in the country. Consisting of thousands of non-governmental and faith-based organisations, including large NGOs, INGOs as well as small community initiatives, it mobilises in relation to various HIV/AIDS related issues such as prevention, care, support, training, advocacy and treatment (Chazan 2008: 202). A very large majority of its volunteers and activists are women, mainly black unemployed women, many of whom are HIV positive (ibid.: 202, 212; Robins 2004: 663ff). The political dimensions of such mobilisations of women should not be overlooked (Chazan 2008: 206). Yet, as Mbali states, feminist women activists still find it difficult to establish an independent and unified voice in HIV/AIDS activism (2008: 178, 189). Not only is there a lack of gender politics in most HIV/AIDS organisations. Several researchers have also pointed at the prevailing sexism within the HIV/AIDS movement, similar to other social movements (ibid.: 190ff; Leclerc-Madlala 2008: 143, 149; Hassim 2006: 361). This has convinced some to call for women's autonomous organising around the disease with a stronger focus on gender inequality and gender-based violence (Leclerc-Madlala 2008: 143).

So far, I have described gender and HIV/AIDS politics in South Africa primarily as a national concern. However, it is of important to pay attention also to the role of development aid.

4.3. Transnational dimensions: international development cooperation

The politics of HIV/AIDS and gender has become increasingly transnational and development aid plays a crucial role in this development. As previously mentioned, gender is paid tremendous attention to in international development cooperation (cf. 2.3.). Moreover, funding for HIV/AIDS work has increased dramatically of late (Birdsall & Kelly 2007: 1). According to Alex de Waal, about 80 per cent of Africa's HIV/AIDS programmes are financed from international sources and is expected to rise. Some expect aid for HIV/AIDS to amount to a third of Africa's aid by the end of the decade (de Waal 2006: 114). Corresponding to a general focus on civil society in international development cooperation (cf. p. 7), NGOs are crucial actors and recipients in this sector as well (Birdsall & Kelly 2007: 1). Hence, political power in relation to gender and HIV/AIDS becomes distributed in transnational networks consisting of national and foreign governments, INGOs, NGOs, donor agencies, private foundations, multilateral institutes, global advocacy networks, pharmaceutical companies, scientists, faith based organisations among others (cf. de Waal 2006: 59f; Campbell & Williams 2001: 140; Webb 2004: 19).

The various donors funding gender, antiviolenace and HIV/AIDS work are not homogenous. The main actors are international donor institutions, national governments, and private sources such as foundations, private sector companies, NGOs, INGOs and churches (Birdsall & Kelly 2007: 27). Among these there are differences in terms of how the support is channelled. While most bilateral agencies continue to fund some NGOs directly, the current trend is to pool assistance with one another or through nationally led processes. Such joint funding agreements occur primarily among the so-called 'like-minded donors' comprising the Netherlands, Sweden, Ireland, Norway, Canada and sometimes the UK. By contrast, the US government (USAID and PEPFAR), which is the single largest source of HIV/AIDS funding, instead channels funds through direct project support (ibid.: 28, 90ff; de Waal 2006: 61).

The large INGOs working with boys and men in South Africa, such as EngenderHealth and Hope Worldwide, are primarily funded by foreign donors, especially USAID and PEPFAR (Peacock *et al* 2006: 75)²⁶. The South African government also gives financial support to some

²⁶ In this section I refer to a report from Sonke (Sonke 2007b) and an article by its co-directors (Peacock *et al* 2006) in spite of the fact that Sonke is one of the NGOs studied here. The reason for this is that I have not been able to find

programmes. Yet, similarly to some foreign funding, this tends to be short-term, event specific and ad-hoc, which implies an increasing dependency on foreign donors (Sonke 2007b: 8f, 53). Indeed, the growth in funding for NGOs has not implied more sustainable or long-term support (Birdsall & Kelly 2007: 2). Moreover, requirements of accountability, efficiency and measurement of impact are increasingly raised by donors (ibid.: 32). Reflecting this general development, several researchers have pointed at how gender in the actual field of development aid has been turned into a matter of planning and monitoring rather than struggle, in spite of the attention paid to power in GAD literature. As gender equality thereby is reduced to a technical issue, the potentially radical political implications are, according to some scholars, neglected (Hannan 2000: 244; Arnfred 2004: 75, 81; Crewe and Harrison 1998: 87, 90).

any literature on the role of international development aid in relation to work with men in South Africa. Similarly, I have not found anything on this topic in relation to women's rights organisations in South Africa, which is reflected in the lack of attention drawn to this issue here.

5. CONTEXTUALISING THE MALE INVOLVEMENT DISCOURSE

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first section deals with the issue of male involvement in GAD and male gender activism globally. I have chosen to discuss these together as similar questions are at issue, both concerning the actual work and feminist responses to it. Furthermore, male gender activism is a key issue for GAD, especially given the role of international development cooperation in supporting organisations focusing on men. The second part of the chapter is a review of men's gender oriented mobilisations in South Africa. In addition, it provides a background to the gender, antiviolence and HIV/AIDS organisations in this study.

5.1. The global male involvement discourse

In the past decade, rising attention has been drawn to men, masculinities and men's potential role in contributing to gender equality. This section, which aims at giving an introduction to this evolving global male involvement discourse, is divided into four parts. Firstly, I give a brief introduction to male gender activism, how men first got involved in GAD and what arguments this involvement of men is based on. The current focus on men and masculinities has not been unchallenged, however; subsequently I therefore turn to some concerns articulated among feminists. Thirdly, the different ways in which men's gender interests are constructed in the discourse are discussed as these frequently are at issue in different approaches to male involvement. Lastly, an introduction is given to the topic my research questions focus on, i.e. partnerships across the gender divide in the gender struggle. These themes have been selected on the basis that they are central in the male involvement discourse, and proved to be so in my data in relation to chosen research questions.

5.1.1. Male gender activism and engaging men in GAD

Historically and currently there is a wide spectrum of men's mobilisations dealing with gender and masculinities across the globe. Some have been outright antifeminist 'men's rights groups' which constitute men and boys as the new disadvantaged. However, since the 1970s there have also been progressive men's groups which support feminist goals and seek to change men and hegemonic masculinities for this cause (Connell 2005: 220ff; Lingard & Douglas 1999: 4, 32ff, 156). Notwithstanding these men's movements and the past couple of decades of Men's Studies, men were until the latter half of the 1990s fairly absent in GAD thinking. They only occasionally appeared as oppressors, custodians, promiscuous, unfaithful partners, and as perpetrators of gender-based and sexual violence (Cornwall 2000: 18f). For many years, family planning, SRHR and gender projects had a major focus on women. What many theorists and practitioners concerned with gender and development currently argue, is that working with women's empowerment alone does not suffice if we are to transform unequal gender relations. For women to be able to exercise the rights they have learnt about rather than encounter a male, sometimes violent backlash, men need to be involved in gender work (Chant 2000: 11, 13; Greig 2000: 28). Moreover, HIV/AIDS has called attention to links between the spread and impact of the epidemic and masculinity norms, triggering the involvement of men in HIV prevention and AIDS work. Work with men has since become the flavour of the month. No longer being limited to radical NGOs, it is also argued for and supported by some bilaterals as well as multilaterals such as the World Bank and UNAIDS (Cornwall 2000: 19; Flood 2005: 462). Work with men is still fairly restricted to certain fields nevertheless. So far, most programmes focus on the level of the personal, primarily within SRHR and work against gender-based violence, emphasising individual behaviour change rather than equity issues, advocacy and rights-based activism (Esplen 2008: 1f; Greig & Esplen 2008: 3, 50; Pearson 2000: 44). The new focus on men has not

only been approved of; there are still ambivalent feelings concerning work with men among many feminists.

5.1.2. Feminist responses and concerns

Feminist responses have not been uniform to male gender activism and the current 'trend' of male involvement in GAD. While many do welcome it, sceptical voices argue that it inevitably involves conflicts of interests and is a matter of modernising patriarchy rather than fundamentally challenging it (Connell 2005: 41f; Chant 2000: 9; Lingard & Douglas 1999: 47). At present, most seem to agree that to avoid working with men is actually not an option. If the various goals of feminisms are to be reached, men too have to change and thus need to be involved in one way or the other. With this said, ambivalence towards this work is still common, whereby both the need for work with men and the hazards involved are acknowledged (Cornwall & White 2000; White 2000; Lingard & Douglas 1999: 47f, 156f, 169). There are several interlinked concerns articulated among many feminist theorists, activists and practitioners, all relating to the fear that the focus on women and women's disprivilege in gender work is at stake when 'bringing men in'.

An issue frequently raised is whether engaging men would lead to a situation whereby scarce resources are redirected back to men and men take up positions of power and control, robbing women of hard-won social and political spaces (Kaufman 2004: 20; Cornwall 2000: 20; Flood 2005: 462; Greig & Esplen 2008: 12; Ruxton 2004a: 4). Related to this is a fear that the focus on women and gendered power relations risks being overshadowed by the increasing attention paid to men and masculinities. This is argued to be the case in particular in relation to the attention frequently drawn to men's gendered subjectivities, experiences and personal motivations (White 2000: 35f; Gender and Development 1997: 6; Cornwall & White 2000: 2; Greig & Esplen 2008: 7).²⁷ Hence, there is a caution that involving men might lead to a dilution of feminist analyses and agendas. Indeed, it has repeatedly been suggested that patriarchal values and practices underlie male gender activism and work with men, which thereby unintentionally risk reinforcing men's power and privilege (White 2000; Flood 2005: 464). According to the influential masculinity theorist Robert W. Connell, evidence from men's own mobilisations against gender inequality also suggests caution. While there have been progressive men's movements based on feminism and these have transformative potentials, the general pattern has been and is likely to continue to be one of small-scale and not very stable men's groups. Moreover, he describes how many such groups, although initially supporting feminism, have a tendency to turn essentialist, conservative and anti-women over time (Connell 2005: 235f, Chapter 9; White 2000: 34; Lingard & Douglas 1999: 6, 170).

What is at issue in these various approaches to work with men and male gender activism is partly the different ways in which men's gender interests are constructed in the male involvement discourse. Whereas some fear that male gender activists might incorporate their articulated patriarchal interests in entrenching their gender privilege, others argue that men too have an interest in gender equality (Pearson 2000: 46; Flood 2005; Kaufman 2004: 21f).

5.1.3. Contested definitions of men's interests

As raised in the methodology chapter, identities are constituted by discourse rather than emanating from our inner selves (cf. p. 12). In this conflictual process, where subject positions are constructed, negotiated and resisted, our interests are simultaneously constituted by discourse and its political practice. An essentialist understanding of interests should thus be avoided as 'political practice constructs the interests it represents' (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 120; cf. *ibid.*:

²⁷ Interestingly, a similar exploration of female subjectivities has according to Sarah C. White so far been largely absent in the GAD framework (White 2000: 35f).

xi). In other words, gender identities and gender interests are constructed in a parallel process. Accordingly, men's 'interests in the gender order are not pre-given but constructed by and within it' (Caroline New quoted in Gullvåg Holter 2005: 15). As this section points at, definitions of men's interests in the male involvement discourse are indeed contested.

Although emphasising multiple masculinities and power relations between these, Connell argues that it is a structural fact that a gender order of male domination 'cannot avoid constituting men as an interest group concerned with defence, and women as an interest group concerned with change' (2005: 82). Presumably it is this idea which underlies some of the scepticism raised in relation to work with men. In short, it is believed that men have certain patriarchal interests which influence their gender activism and work with gender issues (ibid.: 236; Flood 2005: 458f). Yet, these are contested assumptions.

It is frequently reasoned that men too have an interest in changing the current gender order. Many male gender activists and scholars within Men's Studies not only claim that men share the fruits of gender privilege unequally given the intersection of gender with, for instance, 'race', ethnicity, class and sexuality. They recurrently also argue that there are hidden injuries of gender for many men and boys (Lingard & Douglas 1999: 4; Flood 2005: 459; Greig 2000: 29). Currently, there is a growing discussion on 'men at risk', 'men in crisis' and 'crisis of masculinity'. In relation to this, it is often asserted that there is an important link between men's vulnerabilities and sexist oppression. Men's anxiety is arguably growing because of decreasing self-esteem and fear over men's loss of power, which in turn can trigger increases in violence against and oppression of women (Chant 2000: 8, 13f; de Keijzer 2004: 32). Michael Kaufman talks of this assumed paradox of men's gender interests as 'men's contradictory experiences of power'. This concept deals with what he argues to be a crucial link between men's power and 'men's pain' as a result of gender relations. He states that it is precisely:

the ways in which we have constructed our dominant definitions of masculinity, the institutions of patriarchy, and the relations of power among men and with women which are, paradoxically, the sources of disquietude, pain, fear, insecurity, and alienation for many men. (2004: 22; cf. Kaufman 1999; Kaufman 2003: 11ff; Flood 2005: 459; Lingard & Douglas 1999: 39; Chant 2000: 14)

Kaufman maintains that efforts to involve men to promote gender equality need to deal with these contradictory experiences of power, i.e. simultaneously challenge men's power and speak to their pain (Flood 2005: 459). Simply inviting men to join the gender struggle without dealing with some of their concerns as well is argued not to be very likely to mobilise enough numbers of men (Cornwall and White 2000: 3; O'Brien & Armato: 285). Some choose to conceptualise what is claimed to be men's interests in overthrowing patriarchy as 'emancipatory interests' or 'long-term enlightened self-interest' (Gullvåg Holter 2005: 15; Flood 2005: 459). However, not only definitions of men's interests, but also ways of dealing with these in the actual work with men, are contested in the male involvement discourse. Critical voices have been raised in relation to the strategy of emphasising men's self-interests in changing gender relations and certain masculinity norms in order to attract rather than alienate men. It is reasoned that men's self-interest often is stressed at the expense of the mutuality of interests of both sexes (Baylies 2000: 23). Alan Greig and Emily Esplen argue that emphasising men's vulnerabilities risks drawing 'a false equivalence which ignores the real differences in power and privilege experienced by women and men on the basis of gender' (Greig & Esplen 2008: 32).

In short, while some argue that men indeed have an interest in changing the gender order there are also fears that men may incorporate what is argued to be their patriarchal interests in their gender activism. Related cautions sometimes raised concern the common distance between, on the one hand, work with men and male gender activism, and, on the other hand, the women's movement.

5.1.4. Partnerships with women

In the literature on work with men and male gender activism there is surprisingly little written on collaborations across the gender divide in gender activism and gender work. Some assert that there is need for such partnerships, but this is rarely (if ever) developed in-depth (e.g. Esplen 2008; International Center for Research on Women & Instituto Promundo 2007: 2; Kaufman 2004: 24, 27; Flood 2005: 463; Ruxton 2004b: 215). As previously mentioned, I have not come across any research on actual collaborations (cf. 1.4.). Very few organisations focusing on men seem to have direct and close relationships with the women's movement (Esplen 2008; Cornwall, personal correspondence; Greene, personal correspondence). Esplen argues that 'this creates a discernible danger that "masculinities" will become - or has become already - a discrete field of thinking and practice, somehow disconnected from the women's movement and from gender and development more broadly' (2008: 1). Arguably, there are several benefits of creating stronger links between work with men and the women's movement. For instance, it is argued to be important for those working with men to learn from existing work on gender, rather than 'reinventing the wheel'. If the women's movement would have some influence over the male involvement discourse, this is also presumed to lessen the risk that work with men and male gender activism reinforce oppressive forms of masculinity or portray men as the 'new victims'. Moreover, it is maintained that such links are needed in order to develop our knowledge of gender inequities more generally (ibid.: 2f; Greene 2000: 56; Flood 2005: 463; Ruxton 2004b: 215). Focusing on masculinities without such connections to women's gender activism is argued to risk rendering femininities invisible. The relational nature of gendered power might thereby be lost once again, similarly to when men were excluded from gender work and theory (Esplen 2008: 1f).

Although seemingly few groups and organisations focusing on men have close collaborations with women's rights organisations there are important exceptions, such as EngenderHealth and Sonke. In an article on male antiviolence activism drawing on examples from different parts of the world, Michael Flood claims that most of those men's groups and organisations work in alliance with women and women's groups to a greater or lesser degree. Some more radical groups position themselves as accountable to feminist constituencies. This means, for instance, consulting with women's groups before initiating campaigns, making sure they do not compete with women's groups for resources and aiming at building communication and trust between the two (Flood 2005: 463). As I show in the analysis chapter below, this has great similarities to the discourse employed by EngenderHealth and Sonke. This language of partnership and accountability brings a number of questions to the fore, such as '*which* women (feminists) men should enter into alliances with' (Lingard & Douglas 1999: 52; cf. ibid.: 49, my emphasis) and '*which* feminism /.../ [they are] accountable to /.../ given the diversity of feminisms' (Flood 2005: 463, emphasis in original).

I now leave the global dimensions of the male involvement discourse in order to return to the South African context introduced in chapter four.

5.2. The South African context

Before moving on to the analysis chapter we need to have a look more specifically at men's mobilisations around gender in South Africa and the specific gender, antiviolence and HIV/AIDS organisations I did my fieldwork with for the purpose of this thesis.

5.2.1. Men's gender oriented collective action

In South Africa, like many other parts of the world (cf. Connell 2005: Chapter 9), there is a wide spectrum of 'masculinity politics', which Connell terms 'those mobilizations and struggles where the meaning of masculine gender is at issue, and, with it, men's position in gender relations'

(2005: 205). Robert Morrell has divided men's organised responses to gender related changes in South Africa into three categories (which obviously overlap and contradict sometimes); these are reactive or defensive, accommodating and responsive or progressive. The first category, i.e. men who attempt to reassert their power, includes a wide variety of mobilisations. For instance, there are organisations fighting for what is argued to be discrimination against men and others advocating rape in order to discipline women. This category also includes men's movements dedicated to protect, for instance, women from rape and society from lawlessness, thus portraying men as protectors. Accommodating responses involve apparently traditionalist and defensive activities, which also could be understood as resuscitate non-violent masculinities. Certain initiation practices belong to this category. To responsive or progressive responses, Morrell counts the gay movement and those organisations working for gender equality and against gender-based violence (Morrell 2001: 26-33), i.e. the type of gender organisations working with men in focus here.

The fact that men's mobilisations around gender differ extremely in their gender analysis and goals was brought to the fore during and in the aftermath of the 2006 rape trial of the former Deputy President of South Africa and current ANC president Jacob Zuma; a woman, publicly known as 'Khwezi' charged that Zuma had raped her.²⁸ In relation to the trial, very conservative popular responses mobilised, resisting the changes in the status of women which have been introduced in post-apartheid South Africa. Like Zuma, when he described his sexual behaviour in court, these conservative voices frequently draw on discourses of 'African' or 'Zulu' tradition or culture. By contrast, changes towards gender equality are accepted and celebrated within other sections of the public and the notions of 'traditional' Zulu or African masculinity presented and performed by Zuma and his supporters are indeed contested (Robins 2008; Vetten 2007: 438ff; Leclerc-Madlala 2008: 150ff) – they are not only resisted by women's organisations, but also by men's groups. According to a report by Sonke in order to map male involvement activities in South Africa, the numbers of men who actively take a stand against gender-based violence and for gender equality is rising (Sonke 2007b: 6, 20ff). Steven Robins has shown how hegemonic masculinities are beginning to be challenged 'from below' by small community-based men's support groups which attempt to create 'alternative masculinities' (Robins 2008). One also finds these men in government departments as well as in NGOs and large INGOs operating in South Africa (Sonke 2007b: 6, 20ff), as the ones in focus here.

5.2.2. *The NGOs in this study*

The NGOs I conducted my fieldwork with were briefly presented in the introduction and methodology chapters. Here I give some more, although concise, information about their work, beginning with Sonke and EngenderHealth, followed by their partner organisations POWA, Masimanyane and Yabonga.

Both Sonke and EngenderHealth strive towards achieving gender equality and reducing gender-based violence as well as the spread and impact of HIV/AIDS. They do so by encouraging men to respond to these and challenge certain attitudes and behaviours held by men that threaten their own as well as women and children's health. Both are part of MenEngage, a global alliance of NGOs involved in research, interventions and policy initiatives seeking to engage men and boys in order to reduce gender inequalities (MenEngage 2008). However, there are also some major differences between Sonke and EngenderHealth.

EngenderHealth is a large New York-based international SRHR organisation founded in 1943. They aim at improving the quality of health care, ensuring rights and creating sustainable change in poor communities across Asia, Africa and the Americas (EngenderHealth 2008c). While they do work with both women and men, the focus area of the South African branch is

²⁸ In May 2006, Zuma was acquitted of the charge.

work with men. In 1996 they established the *Men as Partners Programme (MAP)*, which so far implements programmes in over 15 countries in all the above mentioned regions (EngenderHealth 2008b). In collaboration with Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa (PPASA), it was launched in South Africa in 1998 as a network of approximately 30 organisations (EngenderHealth 2008a; Sida 2005; EngenderHealth 2005c). At present, the South African network no longer meets regularly, but various NGOs, including EngenderHealth, still carry out MAP activities (Sonke 2007b: 21). Although having a clear focus on carrying out MAP workshops, EngenderHealth also attempts to mobilise men in Community Action Teams and engage in advocacy work (EngenderHealth 2005a: *How did the MAP Programme Begin and What Does It Do?*).

Unlike EngenderHealth, Sonke is a South African NGO, founded in 2006. While it has offices in Cape Town, Johannesburg and Pretoria, they work in all of South Africa's nine provinces and a number of other SADC countries (Southern African Development Community). The name Sonke means 'together' and one of the ideas behind its foundation was to look at the intersection of gender, HIV/AIDS and human rights as well as to link work with men with work with women and work with youth and children. Sonke employs a human rights framework and use a variety of strategies, such as community mobilisation, community education, research, working with government to promote change in policy and practice and building networks and coalitions (Sonke 2008f; interview 4). Their flagship initiative is a male involvement project called the *One Man Can Campaign*, which was created and is implemented in partnership with other national and international organisations. Its purpose is to provide different groups of men with concrete suggestions for actions they could take towards gender equality and to end domestic and sexual violence (Sonke 2008d; Sonke 2008f).

EngenderHealth collaborates with Yabonga, Masimanyane and POWA. The latter is also one of the women's organisations Sonke network with. All of these partners seek to empower women by working primarily with women on gender equality, gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS, acknowledging the links between the three. Whereas Masimanyane and POWA focus on gender-based violence, Yabonga is most of all an HIV/AIDS organisation. They all also involve men in their work in different ways through training and public awareness projects and/or as peer educators.

Established in 1979 and based in Johannesburg, POWA serves the Gauteng province. They mainly work with education, gender-based violence prevention, advocacy and lobbying, as well as providing counselling and shelter for abused women (POWA 2008). Masimanyane, established in 1995, also provides counselling services and engages in advocacy and public education. While being based in East London, they have projects in both urban and rural areas around East London (Masimanyane 2008a; Masimanyane 2008b). Yabonga, founded in 1998, concentrates on providing support for HIV-positive mothers and their children. They have several HIV/AIDS support centres in disadvantaged Cape Town communities. Each centre has a team of HIV positive peer educators, which have support groups and provide HIV education as well as income generating skills programmes (Yabonga 2008a; Yabonga 2008b; Yabonga 2008c; Yabonga 2008d).

6. BRIDGING MEN'S AND WOMEN'S GENDER ACTIVISM

In this chapter, gendered power relations in the male involvement discourse are analysed in relation to the bridging of men's and women's gender, antiviolence and HIV/AIDS activism in South Africa. I begin by giving an introduction to this topic by exploring the language of partnership and accountability in the male involvement discourse. The outline of the whole chapter is given at the end of the following section.

6.1. Partnership discourse and the language of accountability

Unlike a number of other organisations focusing on men in gender, antiviolence and HIV/AIDS work, both Sonke and EngenderHealth have a commitment to work together with women and in collaboration with women's organisations. I conceptualise this commitment as part of a broader partnership discourse in the civil society sector and in international development cooperation at large where networking between NGOs among others is highly valued. When further exploring views specifically regarding partnerships between organisations focusing on men and women's organisations, a language of accountability turned out to be fundamental. Somewhat simplified, this is a type of rhetoric whereby organisations focusing on men consider themselves to be accountable to the women's movement. Sometimes this is (explicitly or implicitly) also translated into arguments for following the leadership of women or women's rights organisations within the gender sector. Both the broader partnership discourse and the language of accountability are ways to criticise power inequalities between partners by attempting to create non-paternalistic and equal relationships with mutual goals. While these similarities are of importance, there is arguably a crucial disparity between the two as well. In the broader partnership discourse these power relations are perceived to be overcome given the perception of donors and recipient NGOs, as well as collaborating NGOs, now being equal partners. As discussed in the theory chapter (2.2.2.), several scholars have demonstrated how such discourse frequently obscures actual power relations and conflicting perspectives between partners. By contrast, this chapter demonstrates that the language of accountability does not portray organisations focusing on men and women's rights organisations as equal partners. By drawing on this language, EngenderHealth and Sonke explicitly acknowledge current inequalities and attempt to find ways to deal with these within their organisations and in relation to women's rights organisations rather than conceal them. Given these commonalities and differences, I conceptualise the language of accountability as an implicit criticism of the partnership discourse as well as a position of resistance within it.

However, the language of accountability should, arguably, also be understood in relation to current developments in the field of international development cooperation. Following the rapid increase in funding to the civil society sector, many have in recent years questioned the legitimacy of NGOs and called for them to be accountable for their actions, as mentioned in the theory chapter (cf. 2.2.3.). Such requirements of NGO accountability are also raised by donors (cf. p. 23). Hence, while the language of accountability is a way to recognise and deal with gendered power relations in the field, it could also be a means for organisations focusing on men to deal with issues of legitimacy in a context of growing criticism concerning the legitimacy of NGOs in general.

This chapter aims at analysing a number of ambivalences, irregularities and discursive struggles in the male involvement discourse which in various ways are related to or part of the partnership discourse and its language of accountability. As explained in the methodology chapter, I focus on the male involvement discourse, but also analyse the partnership discourse

and its language of accountability to the extent that they overlap with the former (cf. 3.2.3).²⁹ The ambivalences analysed are not a matter of absolute contradictions; each of them could be conceptualised as a continuum where different positions represent somewhat different ways of relating to certain issues. Hence, I argue that it is important to see the positions in relation to each other. For the most part I therefore use the concept of ambivalence.³⁰

The themes of ambivalence explored here concern the relationship (1) between arguments which emphasise men's ability and willingness to change and be equal partners *and* the language of accountability which takes gendered power relations in partnerships into account; (2) between a focus on male subjectivities *and* calls for women's representation in work with men; and (3) between solidarity *and* distrust in the relationship between organisations focusing on men and women's rights organisations. This chapter deals with each theme of ambivalence in turn. Firstly, however, I attempt to contextualise collaborations between organisations focusing on men and women's organisations. This is done by discussing the role of donors and international development cooperation in relation to the partnership discourse and collaborations between NGOs in general, as well as power relations involved in this. Thereafter, I explore the first of the above mentioned tensions, thereby also giving an introduction to how the partnership discourse and its language of accountability are articulated in the intersection with the male involvement discourse. The two following main sections of this chapter then deal with the latter two themes of ambivalence in turn. Lastly, I turn to a number of other discursive struggles underlying the various arguments and practices explored throughout this chapter. More specifically, I analyse how gendered subject positions and definitions of gender difference and equality are contested in the male involvement discourse.

6.1.1. Partnerships and the role of international development cooperation

Unfortunately, my data is fairly limited concerning the role of aid in relation to the bridging of women's and men's gender activism (cf. p. 17). Yet, it is clear that donors play a role also in relation to partnerships and networking between organisations focusing on men and women's rights organisations. As previously stated, the partnership discourse prevailing in international development cooperation at large, indeed overlaps with the male involvement discourse in focus here. This section gives an introduction to partnership. It does so by exploring collaborations between NGOs, the role of donors in relation to these and then relations between donors and recipient NGOs.³¹ In the latter two cases I also look at power relations and tensions in these partnerships.

Formal and informal partnerships between NGOs are considered very important and frequently initiated by NGOs themselves. Such networking is often based on the understanding that synergy effects can be achieved by collaboration. For instance, a certain NGO can take additional methods and causes into account as well as draw on other organisations' expertise on linked issues which they are not specialised in themselves.³² Correspondingly, Sonke and

²⁹ Given my research questions, I have chosen to delimit the analysis to those themes in the male involvement discourse where I have found relevant links (commonalities or tensions) to arguments concerning collaborations across the gender divide. The numerous other potentially interesting themes are thus excluded.

³⁰ The concept of tension is frequently used interchangeably with ambivalence.

³¹ As mentioned in the theory chapter, donor-recipient categories are not dichotomous. Funds circulate in complex networks where most donors also are recipients and a number of NGOs (INGOs in particular) are donors funding other NGOs. When talking of donors and (recipient) NGOs here, without further specification, I refer to their specific position in the partnership described. Put differently, if an NGO also is a donor I still refer to it as an NGO if the relationship in focus is between the organisation and its donors or other NGOs they do not fund.

³² Links between, on the one hand, sexism and, on the other hand, racism, heteronormativity or homophobia, lack of social and economic justice etc., are sometimes raised and are seemingly taken seriously by both Sonke and EngenderHealth. These links are argued to be good reasons for partnerships with organisations focusing on these respective issues (EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 1 & 2; observation 4).

EngenderHealth can contribute with their knowledge of work with men to NGOs working within other areas or with different target groups. Moreover, organisations can develop their own expertise by collaborating with similar NGOs in the country as well as internationally (e.g. observation 4; interview 8; EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 10; EngenderHealth 2005c: 8; Sonke 2007a: 12).

While partnerships, including informal networking, are valued and frequently initiated by NGOs, it is clear that some agencies, foundations and INGOs funding NGOs also play a crucial role. They do so by encouraging and at times enforcing collaborations between their partners and with other NGOs (e.g. interview 7 & 9; observation 4). Collaborations between organisations focusing on men and women's rights organisations, as well as the role of donors to encourage or enforce such cooperation, are thus linked to a broader partnership discourse which attaches importance to networking between NGOs in general. As a representative of POWA puts it, in relation to my question about the role of donors concerning collaborations specifically between organisations focusing on men and women's organisations:

Inf.³³: /.../ funders now are into this thing of integrated programming and everyone wants all of us to come together and be happy and work together. So there are a lot of battles, not just around men's groups.

A.D.: Yeah?

Inf.: It's also around other issues, that they want us to work with other people /.../. (Interview 7)

Accordingly, some donors have round table meetings with their different partner organisations, sometimes inviting both organisations focusing on men and women's rights organisations (interview 4 & 8). Funding can also be directly used to encourage such partnerships, by funding actual collaborations (such as collaborative workshops), or by funding a certain NGO via another (I)NGO. According to my interviewee at Sida, for instance, one of the main purposes of Sida's support to the INGO EngenderHealth is to connect them to Sida's other partner organisations. A certain proportion of the funds should therefore go to collaborations with the South African NGOs Masimanyane and Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) (interview 8). Another way for donors to encourage potential links between organisations focusing on men and women's gender activism is to demand that a certain percentage of the organisations working with men that they support are women-led. This is the case with one of EngenderHealth's donors (interview 2).

With this said, there appears to be considerable differences between donors concerning their role in relation to partnerships specifically between organisations focusing on men and women's rights organisations. According to some interviewees, there are donors which are quite 'visionary' and work actively with these issues by discussing them with recipient organisations. By contrast, others do not work with them at all (interview 2, 3 & 4).³⁴ Similarly, there are major differences between my interviewees from Sida and USAID respectively. The former is fairly well acquainted with current discussions on male gender activists' accountability to the women's movement (interview 8), indicating that s/he has discussed these matters with EngenderHealth. By contrast, the USAID representative is indeed not very familiar with these issues in spite of having worked for years both with HIV/AIDS and gender generally, and with EngenderHealth in particular (interview 9).

Regarding donors' engagement and the relationship between donors and recipients, thus another aspect of partnership, I have come across different views among NGO representatives. These can be conceptualised as a tension between, on the one hand, appreciating donors' involvement and the collective efforts 'as partners' and, on the other hand, power struggles between NGOs and donors. Some NGO representatives, indeed appreciate when donors are

³³ In the following extracts from various interviews the abbreviation 'Inf.' is used for 'informant', whereas 'A.D.' are my initials.

³⁴ Although the interviewees did not specify which these donors are, a representative of Sonke mentions that 'visionary' or 'activist' persons who work for donors 'can have a tremendous impact', such as two donors employed by The Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA) and Ford Foundation respectively (interview 4). Hence, it is not necessarily entire donor organisations which are 'visionary'.

active partners and engage in discussions with recipient NGOs (e.g. observation 4; interview 1). For instance, a representative of EngenderHealth considers it a problem that people working for organisations focusing on men tend to concentrate on donor deliverables rather than on the ‘bigger issues’, such as supporting the women’s movement and ‘initiating accountability’. Therefore s/he would like to see more donors including collaborations with women’s organisations alongside other deliverables, i.e. for them ‘to say: ‘account to us how you would work with /.../ women’s organisations’.’ (Interview 2). S/he appreciates such ‘collective efforts’, and when asked if it is the role of donors to engage with those issues, s/he states the following:

Inf.: Yah. Yes they are donors, but I think we should see ourselves in a partnership. Yah, why are they giving us money? Why are we doing what we’re doing? What would be the collective efforts at the end of the day? And... so, if the donor is also a partner, for me that’s greater. /.../ (Interview 2)

This clearly reflects the partnership discourse, whereby donors and recipients should work together with mutual goals. Nevertheless, there are power struggles involved in donor-recipient relations as well, undoubtedly demonstrating that it is not simply a matter of being equal partners. These battles are related both to power inequalities between donors and recipients, frequently corresponding to inequalities between the Global North and the Global South³⁵, and to gender relations. However, the latter aspect commonly related to the current trend of male involvement, will mainly be discussed in section 6.3.2. below.

Some feel pushed into collaborating with certain other NGOs, as is clear in the quotes of the representative of POWA above and below (p. 32, p. 34 and p. 49). My interviewee from Sida also expresses doubts about whether some collaborations are working out well (interview 8), which could be a sign of implicit resistance. More generally, some of my informants are critical of donors which are ‘inflexible’ and push for their own agenda without having the full understanding of why an NGO would want to work in a certain way. Indeed, some funding comes with strings attached, of which several are argued to fit poorly with local conditions and needs (e.g. interview 1, 3, 5 & 7; Sonke 2007b: 8f, 53). Firstly, there is an aspect of attempting to influence the values of recipient NGOs. Secondly, requirements about ‘measurable outcomes’ also seem to be a key issue, whereby the activities and their impact should be countable and possible to evaluate accordingly (interview 4 & 9). These two aspects are linked, USAID and PEPFAR being clear examples of both. They encourage organisations to promote individual responsibility and behaviour change such as abstinence, ‘being faithful’ and to a limited extent the use of condoms for certain ‘high risk’ groups. According to Sonke, they do so at the expense of a broader approach which attempts to tackle structural determinants contributing to gender inequality and the spread of HIV. Moreover, they argue that these donor preferences could be a reason why organisations working with men in South Africa work almost exclusively with community education at the expense of rights-based activism (Peacock *et al* 2006: 76; Sonke 2007b: 53; meeting 1; interview 4). Such tendencies are also linked to the second aspect of donor strings mentioned above, i.e. requirements about measurable outcomes. This is made clear in a quote by a Sonke representative when raising the difficulties they have in getting more politicised activist work funded:

Inf.: /.../ But instead [of doing the more politicised activist work we would like to do] we run workshops. You know why? Because that’s what donors fund. Donors say you’ve got to reach 800 men the next six months and you know, here’s your impact evaluation, here are the indicators and it’s very technocratic. And you know that’s ok, but it’s a different model. /.../ (Interview 4)

Hence, requirements about measurable outcomes have similar consequences as strings attached to aid with the purpose of influencing the values of recipient NGOs. Both imply a tendency of some donors to fund somewhat depoliticised work such as workshops. The informant indeed also states ‘I worry sometimes that part of why it’s [work with men] appealing to donors is that it’s depoliticised: ‘go and run a workshop with some men’.’ (Interview 4). In short, the above discussed different but interlinked aspects of donor requirement and strings are examples of

³⁵ This is not always the case though. For instance, the South African government is also an important donor.

intersecting power relations based, on the one hand, on the relation between donor and recipient frequently corresponding to inequalities between the Global North and the Global South, and, on the other hand, gendered power relations (among others). This is so, as these latter inequalities, according to Sonke, are not dealt with appropriately given the above mentioned donor requirements.

Donors' possibilities of deciding what to fund inevitably implies an unequal power relation between donors and recipient NGOs. This is also related to different ways of channelling funds. Some donors, including the South African government, tend to give short-term, event specific and ad-hoc funding (Sonke 2007b: 8). Similarly, USAID and PEPFAR, in particular, give project based funding (cf. p. 22). By contrast, core funding obviously implies increasing possibilities for NGOs to decide for themselves how they want to use funds. In a round table meeting with donors, Sonke raised the issue of their need of core funding and the difficulties they have had to be granted such financial support (observation 4). Concerning this issue, the interviewee from Sida states: 'Sida is one of the few donors giving core funding /.../ so in that respect we are popular' (interview 8). S/he also argues that it is not Sida's role to try to influence the messages of their partner organisations. Instead, they either decide to support a certain organisation or they choose not to. On the other hand, however, they do have discussions with their partners about, for instance, their messages and gender analysis, and they use funding to make NGOs collaborate with each other and thereby promote 'the gender agenda' from outside (interview 8). Even though USAID/PEPFAR and Sida can be seen in contrast to each other concerning donor requirements and to what extent they are 'hands-on' donors, both implies power relations and efforts to influence the values of the work of partner NGOs, although to a different extent and in different ways.

Yet, it is never a matter of simple power relations as there is also a certain space for resistance (cf. 2.2.1.). For instance, Sonke is openly critical of PEPFAR, its 'moral agenda' and 'abstinence only' component (Peacock, personal correspondence; cf. meeting 1).³⁶ Moreover, some NGO representatives feel they are able to articulate their own agendas, negotiate with donors as well as engage in donor education rather than simply respond to their wishes (interview 3, 4 & 7; observation 4). To give an example, POWA does not simply follow donors' requests that they should work more with men. Rather, they have open discussions and negotiate with them about these issues. In line with this, when asked how they deal with such requests, their representative points out the following:

Inf.: /.../ we could just tell them this is how much we work with the men's groups and this is how far we will go, but we don't allow to be pushed into [collaborations]. There's one thing about us, we just, you know, you take the risk and you just refuse. [Laughter] I mean, that's all you can do. It's like, no we're not going to do it. And sometimes the donors come around, sometimes we go to the next donor. (Interview 7).

In short, although there is a power relation, it is a complex one. There is space for explicit resistance, especially for fairly well-established NGOs like the ones studied here. Later on the interviewee continues, explicitly referring to the partnership discourse:

Inf.: /.../ now we're in a safe place enough to say this is what we want to do and we will search for that funder who is willing to be a partner, because /.../ the new language is partners. [Short laughter] You're going to be our partners, so we started challenging them and we asked: 'what's a partner?'

A.D.: Yah. [Laughter]

Inf.: So we tell... They come around now, which is quite interesting. More now, in fact more this year than before, like I mean

A.D.: Ok

Inf.: they actually sit down, even as funders groups and say: 'what is it that you're really into doing?' And then there are these consultative... I don't know how many consultative meetings we've been in with funders: 'what do you think we should do on the ground?', which is very new. (Interview 7)

³⁶ Sonke also has a research project which investigates experiences of NGOs in relation to PEPFAR and US policy on HIV/AIDS (Sonke 2008e).

This quote could be interpreted as a criticism of the partnership discourse, indicating that donors and NGOs are in fact not true or equal partners as such a partner would not try to push them to work in certain ways or collaborate with others. Simultaneously, however, s/he also expresses trust donors which are willing to be partners and attach greater importance to POWA's requests. Hence, the quote exemplifies the tensions explored above between, on the one hand, the appreciation of certain donors' active involvement and collaborative efforts as partners and, on the other hand, the recognition of and resistance to power relations between donors and recipients. Hence, in spite of the partnership terminology, it is clearly not a matter of being equal partners, which the resistance articulated indeed reveals. A similar theme of ambivalence is explored below, but in relation to partnerships between male and female gender, antiviolence and HIV/AIDS activists.

6.1.2. Power in partnership and accountability

This section begins by giving an introduction to how the partnership discourse is articulated in its intersection with the male involvement discourse in relation to partnerships between male and female gender activism. After this I look at linked arguments emphasising that men are able and willing to change and play a crucial role in promoting gender equality. Subsequently, an introduction is given to how the concept of accountability is used in this context. I demonstrate how this position implies taking gendered power relations in partnerships into account and how it therefore should be conceptualised as a position of resistance within the partnership discourse. This is followed by an exploration of the actual tension between the two.

There are major similarities between, on the one hand, the partnership discourse concerning the relationship between donors and recipients, and, on the other hand, the type of arguments employed in my material concerning the relation between organisations focusing on men and women's rights organisations. According to Sonke and EngenderHealth, men's role is to support women and be their allies. Indeed, the concept of 'partner' is frequently used when referring to men's position in the gender struggle. Men are presented as potential partners, and men's ability and willingness to be partners in the gender struggle are stressed (e.g. EngenderHealth 2005a: *Why is the MAP Programme Needed in South Africa?*, Chapter 1 & 3; Peacock 2003: 43; Sonke 2007b: 29; EngenderHealth 2005c: 5).³⁷ The name of the network Men as Partners indeed points at the prevailing language of partnership as well. Mokgethi Tshabalala, former executive director of Hope Worldwide as well as former country director of EngenderHealth, employs such a language of partnership when quoted in *Men as Partners Programme – Promising Practices guide* (henceforth 'the EngenderHealth guidebook'):

.../ In terms of sexual violence, what we are doing is to make sure that whatever we do, we do not become patronizing and that we are aware of our role as allies to women. We are just there as equal partners. We are going in to fight a 'beast' as equal partners; a man is not this knight in shining armour that's going to come and solve the problems of the world. .../ (EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 3)

Hence, he explicitly uses the term 'equal partners' when describing men's role in relation to women's role in the fight against sexual violence, as in contrast to having a patronising attitude thinking that they can solve this problem alone. Clearly then it has aspects in common with the ways in which drawing on the partnership discourse implies a questioning of paternalism in aid.

This explicit terminology of 'equal partners' is quite rare in my material concerning the relation between organisations focusing on men and women's rights organisations. However, I argue that a number of arguments emphasising men's ability and willingness to change implicitly implies such an understanding. One of the key claims common in many EngenderHealth and Sonke materials is that masculinities are not static or fixed by nature. Rather, men can change

³⁷ This is not to say that only EngenderHealth and Sonke draw on the partnership discourse in my material. Other aspects of this discourse are, however, explored in the following two main sections instead (6.2. & 6.3.), thereby showing that it is employed by all interviewees.

and thus ‘men can, and often do, play a critical role in promoting gender equity, preventing violence, and fostering constructive involvement in sexual and reproductive health.’ (EngenderHealth 2005c: 4; cf. e.g. Peacock 2003: 34; EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 1 & 3; Sonke 2007a: 18; Sonke 2007b: 9, 57; observation 3). This is for instance the type of rhetoric in Sonke’s One Man Can Campaign where the slogan is that one man *can* ‘love passionately’, ‘stop aids’, ‘end domestic violence’, ‘break the cycle’, ‘demand justice’ and ‘stop rape’ (Sonke 2008d). Thereby they underline men’s ability to be something else than oppressive and take an active role in promoting equality. Men are assumed to be able to genuinely ‘rethink’ masculinities. This is for instance the case when contesting the link between masculinity and power in arguments for women’s leadership or shared leadership (cf. 6.2.1.), claiming that men should be women’s allies rather than taking the lead in the gender struggle (e.g. EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 1 & 3). There is also a strong focus on men’s willingness to support change (e.g. *ibid.*: *Why is the MAP Programme Needed in South Africa?*; interview 6). Many men are frequently argued to be eager to challenge and change harmful aspects of masculinities if they are only given the opportunity and know-how to do so, which is exactly what male involvement initiatives potentially offer them (e.g. EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 1; Peacock 2003: 43; Sonke 2008f; interview 3). Hence, the assumption that men at all times are unwilling to challenge their gender privilege is questioned.

I argue that there is to some extent a tension between, on the one hand, this way of emphasising men’s ability and willingness to change and implicit or explicit arguments about being equal partners, and on the other hand taking gendered power relations in partnerships into account. The latter is reflected in the language of accountability. My research topic – creating links between men’s and women’s gender activism – is frequently framed not only as partnership but also as male gender activists being accountable to the women’s movement (e.g. Sonke 2007b: 7, 9, 57, 59; Sonke 2007c; Sida 2005; Levack 2006). This language of accountability proved to be salient in both Sonke and EngenderHealth. For instance, there is a whole chapter on accountability in the EngenderHealth guidebook (EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 3). Similarly, in a round table meeting with Sonke and a number of donors, collaborations with and accountability to women’s rights organisations were brought up as the first of three important principles underlying Sonke’s work (observation 4). Meanings of and ways of framing accountability are not fixed, but differ both between and within the documents and interviews. At the same time it is often used without clarification, indicating that the meanings are taken for granted. Frequently, but not always, accountability concerns actual partnerships with women’s organisations. Among other things, however, it tends to vary in terms of whom or what male gender activists and organisations focusing on men are argued to be accountable to. Some ways to use the concept is to say that they are accountable to women, the women’s movement, women’s organisations, people in feminist organisations who believe in work with men, as well as to women’s rights, feminist thinking and practice, gender equality, and not to promote or maintain patriarchy or male privilege (e.g. interview 1, 2, 3, 4 & 7; EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 3).³⁸

Arguably, employing the concept of accountability is a way to signal being progressive as all the various modes of framing accountability are means to demonstrate taking gendered power relations into account as male gender activists. The ways in which the term is used in relation to collaborations with women’s organisations, in particular, also recognise gendered power relations in actual partnerships. As stated in the theory chapter, one aspect of NGO accountability is to be accountable to those who are affected by and have less power than them (in contrast to upwards accountability to donors for instance, cf. 2.2.3.). Not surprisingly then, the concept is used here as a means of recognising the association of men, including male gender

³⁸ These different ways of framing accountability could, arguably, be divided into two groups corresponding to Unerman & O’Dwyer’s distinction between relational and identity accountability (cf. p. 8).

activists, with power and dominance. This is especially clear in arguments for women's leadership in the gender sector and in arguments against 'mutual accountability'. The former, sometimes put forward as an aspect of accountability (e.g. interview 8; EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 1), is used by male gender activists to acknowledge and resist gendered power relations in partnerships by questioning masculinity ideals associated with leadership, and by arguing that women should set the gender equality agenda since they are the disadvantaged group (e.g. interview 2; EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 1). These lines of reasoning are further explored in a discussion on leadership in section 6.2.1. below. Here, I instead focus on how arguments against mutual accountability clarify how the language of accountability deals with power relations in partnerships. I demonstrate that unlike partnership, accountability is usually not considered to be mutual. This disparity indicates a difference concerning how to look at power relations between partners.

During my second interview, the representative of Yabonga argues for mutual accountability as opposed to claiming that organisations focusing on men should be accountable to women's rights organisations only (interview 5). I explicitly ask about this in the following interviews and, with one exception (interview 3), no one entirely approves with this use of the concept. Although they relate differently to it, all link their arguments to gendered power relations. For instance, two representatives of EngenderHealth and Sida respectively argue that given the prevailing unequal gender order, one cannot talk of mutual accountability *yet*. Rather, it is male gender activists who should be accountable *first* in order to ensure that women's rights organisations know that these organisations focusing on men are true allies rather than a threat (interview 2 & 8). Another partly reluctant response is to distinguish between the language of accountability and some kind of practice, which in the case of male gender activists' relation to women's organisations, would be termed accountability. For example, one way of interpreting male gender activists' accountability to the women's movement is that they should listen to and be ready to learn from women's organisations, and that the latter should challenge organisations focusing on men when they fall back into patriarchal behaviour or thinking (cf. p. 40). Although EngenderHealth and Sonke could find themselves questioning women's organisations and it could sometimes be argued that women's organisations should listen to and be ready to learn from organisations focusing on men, this is rarely termed accountability. The reason put forward is, indeed, that women are argued to be the disadvantaged and oppressed group (interview 4 & 7). An interviewee representing Sonke makes such a distinction between language and practice and thereby clarifies the power analysis underlying the argument that male gender activists should be accountable to the women's movement:

A.D.: But would you say that it's a mutual accountability or is it just one way? Is it just men's programmes that should be accountable to women's organisations or is it the other way around too?
[short silence]

Inf.: It's a complicated question. I mean, you know in South Africa during the anti-apartheid struggle I don't think white activists would have said, oh well black activists have to be accountable to us. They'd say we have to be accountable. So if you understand power and oppression, I think the group that has historically been oppressed is usually the one who gets to demand accountability from the oppressive group. So that's the analysis we bring to our work. In reality and in fact... when... something happens that we find problematic, ways in which women's rights organisations talk about work with men, we might choose to do something but we are more likely to do it informally through a phone call or, you know, call and say we don't understand where you are coming from on this, can you articulate that a little more clearly. /.../ (Interview 4)

Later on, s/he explicitly says that s/he does not use the language of accountability to refer to this practice of potentially questioning women's rights organisations, but would rather talk about it in terms of strategic work or partnership (interview 4). Partnership is hence an expression of mutuality, whereas accountability, as it is used in this context, usually is not. In short, then, arguments against the use of the concept of mutual accountability clarifies the difference between the language of partnership and the language of accountability as used in relation to

collaborations between organisations focusing on men and the women's movement. As the latter is a way to deal with prevailing power relations in these partnerships, it could be understood as an implicit criticism of the broader partnership discourse. Arguably then, this criticism reveals power relations in partnerships which the broader partnership discourse, with arguments concerning men's willingness and ability to change and be equal partners, disguises and thereby fails to challenge.

Hence, drawing on both these different lines of reasoning, as primarily EngenderHealth and Sonke do, implies a certain degree of ambivalence in the intersecting male involvement and partnership discourses. Those men who are portrayed as equal – the ones who are accountable to women and have been able to change oppressive patterns – are the same men who need to be accountable and, as argued by some, follow women's leadership in the gender struggle. By doing so they become equal at the same time as this is a way to recognise gendered power relations in partnerships, thereby indicating that they in fact are not. Thus, the language of accountability as such, also encompasses the ambivalence in focus here. On the one hand, it recognises the risk that male gender activists, knowingly or unknowingly may maintain male supremacy as they otherwise would not need to be accountable. On the other hand, it is argued that 'Only if it is possible for men to change can they be held accountable and it is this accountability that will help to ensure that men make the change that is possible.' (EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 3).

In sum, I argue that the language of accountability should be conceptualised as a position of resistance within the partnership discourse. The tension between the two corresponds to an ambivalence pointing at the relationship between recognising male power in partnerships and arguing that many men indeed are able and willing to change, thereby presenting men as equal partners in the gender struggle. This ambivalence is particularly clear when employing the actual partnership terminology. However, although I maintain that there are some frictions between the extreme points of these respective arguments, it is not necessarily a matter of outright contradiction. In fact, it could be argued that this sometimes is a way of focusing on positions of male power without assuming that all men have access to or are wishing to take up these positions (cf. p. 9).

Moreover, even though both the partnership terminology and the language of accountability are means to resist power relations between male and female gender activists – and accountability could be interpreted as an implicit criticism of the broader partnership discourse for yet obscuring these – none of them are mere expressions of potential resistance. Instead, as previously pointed out, both the broader partnership discourse and its language of accountability should also be understood in the light of current developments in international development cooperation. Not only is the partnership terminology used in relation to links between female and male gender, antiviolence and HIV/AIDS activism similar to the one employed when referring to partnerships between donors and recipients of aid. Networking between NGOs are also, although valued and initiated by NGOs as well, frequently encouraged and at times enforced by donors. In addition, the language and practices of accountability should probably be understood as a means to gain credibility and legitimacy in a context where the legitimacy of NGOs in general is put into question. Related to this development, there are increasing calls for NGOs to be accountable for their actions in a more general understanding of the term. In short then, the language of partnership and accountability concerning the relation between organisations focusing on men and women's rights organisations should also be understood in relation to inequalities in international development cooperation. Above, I demonstrated that these exist in spite of the new language of being equal partners and although it is never a matter of simple power relations, as there is space for resistance as well. Indeed, the ambivalence of partnership and accountability is somewhat similar to a tension between, on the one hand, the appreciation of donors' active involvement 'as partners' and, on the other hand, the recognition of and resistance to power

relations in these partnerships. Both concern the tension between obscuring power relations in partnerships and recognising and resisting these.

There is another theme of ambivalence in the male involvement discourse, namely the relation between the strong focus on men and male subjectivities, on the one hand, and calls for increasing women's representation in work with men on the other.

6.2. Leadership and representation

In the previous chapter, which aimed at contextualising the male involvement discourse, I mentioned the criticism raised in the literature that work with men frequently concentrates on men's subjectivities, experiences and personal motivations to the extent that women's disprivilege and gendered power relations risk being overshadowed (cf. p. 25f). Sonke and EngenderHealth also pay fairly much attention to male subjectivities. However, not only do they also consider gendered power relations, as demonstrated above, but another crucial part of the intersection of the male involvement and partnership discourses are calls for and practices of increasing the representation of women in work with men. While exploring male subjectivities and taking women's representation in work with men into account surely should not be seen as contradicting – I argue that it is important to see the two positions in relation to each other. Both deal with the representation of men's and/or women's voices and experiences in gender work, and as demonstrated in the following there are some frictions between the two. These are particularly obvious in relation to the issue of leadership in the gender struggle. The first subsection below deals with the contention between arguments for women's leadership and shared leadership respectively. Subsequent sections treat the two sides of the broader ambivalence this contention reflects, i.e. firstly, the exploration of male subjectivities and, secondly, calls for and practices of women's representation in work with men. I demonstrate how increasing women's representation in work with men partly can be seen as a criticism of too strong a focus on male subjectivities without taking men's relation to and impact on women and gendered power relations into account. The main thread in all the various arguments and practices concerned with leadership and representation is the question of who – and whose experiences – should define and inform gender work.

6.2.1. Women's leadership versus shared leadership

As part of the partnership discourse and its language of accountability and as a means to question paternalism in partnerships, male gender activists frequently explicitly and implicitly argue that they should follow women's leadership in the gender struggle. In brief, men's role is to support women and be their allies, rather than take the lead themselves or come up with independent guidelines for their work (e.g. interview 2, 3 & 8).³⁹ As an informant from EngenderHealth asserts in relation to describing their internal discussion on including women in their work and collaborating with women's organisations:

Inf.: /.../ So for a long time that's been our position, it still is, to say we cannot set the agenda for the emancipation of women. We need to be partners; we should follow the women's leadership. They should tell us how they want us to do certain things. /.../ (Interview 2)

Although employing the terminology of being partners, it is not a matter of having equal positions. Instead, women should lead.⁴⁰ This could be interpreted as a way of resisting positions

³⁹ This language of women's leadership and men's ally role is not specific for Sonke and EngenderHealth in South Africa, but probably has a global scope among certain factions of the men's movement (cf. Kaufman 2004: 19f).

⁴⁰ Although this is frequently understood as an important aspect of accountability, and similarly to the language of accountability is a way of recognising power relations in partnerships, there are also clear links with the broader partnership discourse. As the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) writes about the partnership discourse concerning the relationship between donors and recipients: 'Paternalistic approaches have no place in this framework. In a true partnership, local actors should progressively take the lead, while external partners

of male dominance, similarly to the language of accountability in general. As is stated in a quote by Mbuyiselo Botha of the South African Men's Forum (SAMF) when describing 'the importance of a practice of accountability' in the EngenderHealth guidebook:

We must also be conscious that we do not take over the gender struggle as men. We must always be conscious. The temptation is there, because of men's tendency to take over. We must be constantly vigilant and remind ourselves that this is a struggle that has to be led by women. The same as in the anti-apartheid struggle, it was black people who had to lead that struggle. (EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 1; cf. *ibid.*: chapter 3)

The argument for women's leadership is thus linked to rethinking masculinities (cf. p. 36) as leadership is associated with men and power. Later on he accordingly continues: 'being led is also part of healing ourselves and listening to what the cries are all about' (*ibid.*: chapter 1). Hence, women's leadership in the gender sector is argued to be a way to change men's and women's gender roles and thereby strive for equality. While this explicit language of women's leadership is employed by some, similar lines of thinking also appear without using the expression of leadership, frequently referred to as practices of accountability as well. For instance, women's definitions of gender equality should, according to some, be guiding in gender work. A representative of EngenderHealth gives the example of an encounter with a group of men whose definition of gender equality did not focus only on the equality of women. S/he continues:

Inf.: /.../ And obviously, if I was to go to a women's rights organisation, that's not the definition. So for me, accountability says, if we define gender equality, are we defining it the way that women understand it? (Interview 2)

According to this argument, male gender activists should follow what is assumed to be women's definitions of equality rather than activists and organisations defining for themselves what their goals are in terms of creating a more gender equitable world (e.g. interview 8). Correspondingly, the EngenderHealth guidebook states that 'MAP should develop ongoing relationships with these [women's advocacy and service organisations] to inform their work and to make sure that it is consistent with the needs of the women's movement.' (EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 3). Likewise, Masimanyane Men's Programme is 'implemented in conjunction with a women's support organisation [Masimanyane] to enable the goals, philosophy and activities of the organisation to impact on the men's programme' (Interfund undated: 54; cf. interview 8). What is made clear in all these arguments is that it is work with men which should be consistent with the needs, definitions and goals of the women's movement. No one in my material argues that it does not need to be consistent, or that it is everyone's responsibility to change in order to make women's rights organisations and organisations focusing on men consistent with one another.⁴¹ Somewhat similarly, it is at times argued to be the role of women or women's rights organisations to challenge organisations focusing on men and male gender activists. According to this line of reasoning, women should tell male gender activists when they are doing things right and when they are doing wrong or 'thinking mannish' so that male gender activists can act upon that. As a representative of EngenderHealth states:

Inf.: /.../ If we are not doing /.../ what we've said that we're going to be doing, /.../ if we have said we're setting this for us as men's movement, and if we fail to [inaudible] that, let them [women's organisations] tell us that, so that we can pull up ourselves. (Interview 1)

Hence, women should challenge male gender activists who do not 'walk the talk' but still behave according to unequal gender roles (interview 1). Similarly, some argue that women should tell them if the messages, visions and objectives of organisations focusing on men are reasonable or not (interview 2 & 3). What all these implicit and explicit arguments for women's leadership

back their efforts to assume greater responsibility for their own development.' (OECD quoted in Crewe & Harrison 1998: 70).

⁴¹ Implicit and explicit arguments for women's leadership are linked to a more general call for creating a unified gender equality movement. It is important to contextualise this as the South African women's movement so far has been fairly divided rather than having a common strong voice (cf. p. 21; interview 8).

have in common is the urge for increasing and privileging women's voice and representation in gender work.

Whether explicitly employing the language of women's leadership, or more implicitly arguing that it is women's role to define and challenge, this line of reasoning surely contradicts with arguments for shared leadership. These latter arguments are, indeed, also raised by some, both explicitly and implicitly. When asked if the gender struggle should be led by women or men and women together, an interviewee from Sonke reasons that gender work needs to be informed by both work with women and work with men. S/he argues that if people who are involved in a social struggle (here: male gender activists) do not get to define their own work, it might not fit. It should, however, always be in partnership (here: with women) (interview 4). This corresponds to the common line of reasoning, mostly brought up in relation to arguments for women's representation in work with men (cf. p. 45), that both women's and men's voices, perspectives and experiences should inform gender work (e.g. interview 1, 3, 4 & 7; observation 4; Interfund undated: 54; EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 3). As another informant from Sonke states, when arguing for including women in work with men: 'you always need both the male and the female perspective in these things. You can't just go with one perspective, then we're going to lose it somewhere somehow' (interview 3).

Arguably, there is a tension between this position and the argument that it is women's definition and perspectives which should inform gender work, including work with men. Others more explicitly use the concept of shared leadership, hence clearly conflicting with explicit arguments for women's leadership. In an interview with a representative of EngenderHealth, s/he discusses the above mentioned task of the women's movement to challenge male gender activists. When asked whether s/he sees this as 'women's leadership' in the gender sector (hence imposing my own understanding of leadership), s/he states the following:

Inf.: No, it should be a common leadership, you know. I don't want to see... the imbalance, you know, and somebody leading the other one /.../. The common lead is fine with me, I believe in that, I firmly believe in that /.../. Unlike the androcentric perspective we had for ages, you know, we've changed that. (Interview 1; cf. interview 5)

Thus, as in arguments for women's leadership, shared leadership is also understood as a means to achieve equality.⁴² Others too explicitly argue that leadership should be shared, although they also have some cautions about it (interview 3, 6 & 7). Both positions, i.e. implicit and explicit arguments for women's leadership and shared leadership respectively, deal with issues of women's and/or men's respective voices and representation in gender work. As mentioned in the introduction to this section, the contention between the two reflects a more general theme of ambivalence in the intersection of the partnership and male involvement discourses. While both positions are linked to calls for women's representation in work with men, arguments for shared leadership should arguably also be understood in relation to the frequent focus on male subjectivities in work with men. This latter issue is turned to in the next section. As demonstrated below, the different positions share a tendency to draw considerable attention to men's and/or women's gendered experiences, and implicit or explicit arguments for these to inform gender, antiviolenace and HIV/AIDS work.

⁴² Hence, at issue here are also contested definitions of equality, as discussed in section 6.4.1. below.

6.2.2. Men's subjectivities⁴³

Focusing on men's subjectivities in work with men can potentially take a number of different shapes. It is discussed here, firstly in relation to encouraging men to talk about their gendered experiences in workshops and, secondly, in relation to emphasising men's self-interest in changing contemporary gender roles. Both concern the representation of men's experiences in gender work.

Both EngenderHealth's MAP workshops and Sonke's One Man Can workshops explore men's experiences of and feelings related to gender, violence and HIV/AIDS (EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 1 & 5; observation 7; Sonke undated: 27). In the EngenderHealth guidebook it is argued that MAP's role is to create a safe space for men, where they can be emotional and vulnerable, and share personal experiences of gender and violence. It is maintained that 'there is a continuing need to better equip and support MAP facilitators to be able to hold an emotional space for men in which they can be more honest and vulnerable about their experiences of and questions about sexuality' (EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 6). It is often claimed that men need to discuss their own understandings of how gender influences their lives as well as their negative gendered experiences, for instance of violence. Moreover, it is argued to be important to discuss men's feelings related to working for gender equality. This implies acknowledging and working on men's fears about gender equality and losing power to women, as well as 'talk[ing] about what it feels like to become an ally who supports rather than leads women's struggle for gender equality' (ibid.: chapter 1).

Another expression of this focus on male subjectivities is the emphasis on men's self-interest in gender equality since it implies an exploration of men's negative gendered experiences. As brought up in section 5.1.3., fairly much attention is, according to some scholars, drawn to men's vulnerabilities in research on and work with men and masculinities. Highlighting the costs to men of male socialisation is indeed common in my material as well, and it takes a number of different shapes. A case in point is the issue of HIV vulnerability. While it is frequently recognised that men's violence against and power over women leave women more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS (e.g. EngenderHealth 2005b: 1; Sonke undated: 3, 28f), EngenderHealth also repeatedly argues that contemporary gender roles 'leave men especially vulnerable to HIV infection' (EngenderHealth 2005b: 1; EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 1 & 7; cf. Sida 2005). This is claimed to be the case since a man who abstains from sex, uses condoms or seeks help in case of disease frequently is considered 'less of a man'. By contrast, a man who has unsafe sex with multiple (female) partners and dominates women is viewed as masculine (e.g. EngenderHealth 2005b: 1f; EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 1). Men's violence against other men is an additional issue where men's self-interest in changing certain masculinity ideals is explored. While it is insisted that this needs to be taken more seriously (e.g. interview 4; observation 4; Sonke undated: 4), it is also argued that men are affected badly by domestic violence and rape committed by men against women. As is written in the EngenderHealth guidebook:

After all, countless men are devastated by the pain suffered by victims they know and care about - daughters, mothers, sisters, friends, colleagues. Countless others are cast as potential perpetrators and have their relationships with intimate partners and acquaintances infused with fear and distrust by the constant perceived threat of violence (EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 2; cf. Sonke 2008f).

In short, it is not only claimed that dominant masculinity norms jeopardise men's health, but also that men are affected badly when women are victimised. It hurts to see women one cares for being abused and it hurts not to be trusted because of the abuse committed by other men (e.g. interview 1; Sonke 2007a: 18; Sonke undated: 4, 9, 25; EngenderHealth 2005a: *Why is the MAP*

⁴³ To examine the focus on men's subjectivities in work with men was not my intention with this thesis as I initially intended to focus merely on arguments and practices related to the bridging men's and women's gender activism. However, when I decided to analyse the male involvement discourse I realised that this is a crucial aspect to explore also in relation to such bridging, as discussed in this section. Moreover, while I did not explicitly ask questions about this during the interviews, it turned out to be a theme both in some documents and interviews.

Programme Needed in South Africa?). Moreover, it is argued to be strategically crucial to stress men's self-interest when attempting to involve them in the gender struggle. Hence, it is also explicitly reasoned that men's experiences should inform the work, similar to arguments for shared leadership. As a representative of Sonke asserts when answering a question about which the main opportunities are in relation to work with men:

Inf.: I think we are pretty clear that the most effective way to do that [work with men to address masculinities, HIV and gender-based violence] is to invite men in and to say as men, male socialisation affects you pretty badly too. (Interview 4; cf. EngenderHealth 2005a: *Why is the MAP Programme Needed in South Africa?*)

Quite frequently, men's self-interest is also explored directly in relation to women disprivilege, gendered power relations or the need for men to give up certain privileges (e.g. interview 4 & 9; EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 2; observation 3, 4 & 7). The EngenderHealth guidebook, accordingly, states:

The MAP approach is to be real with men about both the privilege that patriarchy gives them and the harm that society's ideas about masculinity can do to them. Rather than trying to get men involved by simply describing gender equality as a "win-win" situation for both women and men, the MAP approach is to talk with men about what they will gain and what they might have to give up if they are to make the vision of justice and equality a reality. (EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 1)

This way of discussing men's self-interest in changing gender relations and men's current privileges in tandem should arguably be seen in relation to the concern raised by some that work with men stresses men's self-interests and explores male subjectivities at the expense of gendered power relations and women's disprivilege (cf. p. 25f). I argue that calls for increasing women's representation in work with men, which is a significant aspect of the partnership discourse and its language of accountability, should be considered part of such criticism as well. Thereby, it could also be conceptualised as resistance to gendered power relations potentially reproduced in work with men.

6.2.3. Women's representation: collaboration and participation

EngenderHealth's MAP programme and Sonke are overwhelmingly male in both who delivers and who receives their work. Yet, the argument that women and men have to work together, and that they 'can't continue working in silos' (interview 1) is very frequently raised. This is, thus, in line with some calls within GAD for strengthening partnerships between work with men and the women's movement (cf. 5.1.4.). In the overlap of the male involvement discourse and the partnership discourse, there are common calls specifically for increasing the representation of women and women's voices, experiences and perspectives in work with men. One aspect of this is the issue of women's leadership and shared leadership, as explored above. In practice, women's representation is achieved by women's participation in work with men and by collaborations with women's rights organisations. After describing such practices below, I turn to different arguments for including women in work with men. Thereby, I demonstrate how arguments for and practices of the inclusion of women are linked to the criticism that work with men potentially focuses on men's experiences to the extent that it does not adequately consider the impact on and experiences of women.

While Sonke has an ambition to work with men and women as well as girls and boys, they have not yet managed to get work with women or integrated work funded as they are known for work with men (interview 4). However, although focusing on men, women participate to some extent in both EngenderHealth and Sonke. They do so as workshop participants, volunteers, staff and board members (e.g. EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 3; interview 1, 3 & 4; observation 3 & 7). Moreover, both NGOs collaborate with women's rights organisations, which is the most frequently mentioned way to work on what they frame as accountability to women's rights organisations in practice (e.g. interview 1, 2, 4 & 8; EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 3). They cooperate in various ways, of which one is to carry out actual work together. To give two

examples, EngenderHealth runs workshops together with Yabonga and Masimanyane (interview 1 & 6; observation 2), and Sonke works with POWA in a refugee project in Gauteng and across the SADC region (interview 4 & 7; Sonke 2007a: 22). Moreover, both Sonke and EngenderHealth are part of broader networks and campaigns together with women's rights organisations. A case in point is the *One in nine campaign*, which consists mostly of women's organisations and was launched in 2006 to demonstrate solidarity with women who have experienced sexual violence and speak out (interview 2 & 7; One in nine campaign 2008; Sonke 2008b: 16). Consultation processes and report-backs are put forward as other ways to work on accountability and to cooperate. Accordingly, Sonke consult with women's organisations continuously when, for example, developing a curriculum, writing reports or making materials. They conduct key informant interviews, have workshops with representatives of those organisations and ask for feedback on materials (interview 4).⁴⁴ Similarly, EngenderHealth has invited a representative of POWA to give a presentation on how they view MAP (interview 2; cf. EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 1).

Hence, there are major similarities between EngenderHealth and Sonke concerning how they understand accountability to and partnership with women's organisations as well as regarding how they increase the representation of women in work with men in practice. Yet, there are also differences. EngenderHealth did not have such structures in place from the start (interview 1; meeting 2; EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 3), whereas in the case of Sonke (which is newer), accountability to women's organisations is argued to have been one of the guiding principles since its foundation in 2006. According to one of its representatives, 'the entire vision of the organisation has been shaped in collaboration' and to work in dialogue with women's rights organisations is something they 'structure into how the organisation is put together' (interview 4). Some of the people on the board of directors accordingly come from women's rights organisations. Half of the board are women and in the executive committee two thirds are women, in spite of the focus on men within the organisation (so far) (interview 4; Sonke 2008c).⁴⁵

Women's representation in work with men is argued to be important for various reasons. These frequently have in common that they build on the criticism that work with men at times not sufficiently considers men's relationship to gender and women. As summarised in the EngenderHealth guidebook, there is a tension within MAP and gender work with men in general 'between focusing on men and focusing on men's relationship to and experience of gender'. A reason for women's participation in MAP is, therefore, to avoid the danger that their work 'can become about men *per se* rather than about the gender system of power and men's relationship to it' (EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 3; cf. Kaufman 2004: 24). There are several interlinked arguments drawing on this caution.

Firstly, some explicitly or implicitly argue that since the relationship *between* men and women needs to be changed one ought to work with men and women together. According to an informant from Sonke, transformation comes from working with women and men together as gender is relational, i.e. gendered attitudes and behaviours are constructed in relation to the other gender (interview 4). It is also sometimes argued that men and women need to understand each other better and therefore need to work together, thus also stressing the actual relation between men and women (e.g. EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 8; interview 5 & 6).

⁴⁴ To give an example of such consultation, I got access to two documents with feedback from women's organisations on a One Man Can material about what men can do to support survivors of domestic or sexual violence. Sonke then used the feedback to develop the material.

⁴⁵ Hence, shared leadership is arguably to some extent operationalised in Sonke and EngenderHealth through consultations processes and, in the case of Sonke, by including people from women's rights organisations on the board of directors.

Secondly, there is a more common idea emphasising that women's experiences, perspectives and ideas, as well as the impact on women, need to be taken into account when working with men. Related to arguments both for shared leadership and women's leadership in the gender sector, it is maintained that women and the women's movement need to inform work with men (e.g. interview 1, 3, 4 & 7; observation 4; Interfund undated: 54; EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 3). This line of reasoning thus resembles the criticism within GAD that the male involvement discourse risks becoming a discrete field disconnected from work with women, as well as related arguments that the women's movement ought to have some influence over the male involvement discourse (cf. 5.1.4.). For instance, when Masimanyane Men's Programme was instituted within Masimanyane, thus within a women's organisation, the purpose was to integrate experiences of men and women. They argue that 'men's projects, run separately from organisations offering assistance to women, run the risk of offering services that do not take women's experiences into account' (Interfund undated: 54). Consequently, as many men's groups have no close relationships with women's organisations, they 'have little or no understanding of how men's participation in this form of activism impacts on women' (ibid.: 55). On the contrary, their men's programme indeed 'takes into account women's lives and their realities and does not only look at men and their lives, in isolation of women's lives.' (ibid.). Hence, calls for integrated work is in essence related to the criticism that work with men often focus on exploring male experiences at the expense of considering women's experiences. Thereby such arguments and practices also resist gendered power relations potentially reproduced in work with men.

Experience is thus a key concept both concerning the exploration of male subjectivities and in arguments for and practices of women's representation in work with men. When a representative of Sonke argues that both men's and women's perspectives need to inform their work (cf. quote on p. 41) and women therefore need to be involved in work with men, s/he underlines the importance of including women's experience:

Inf.: /.../ women bring a lot of value into the work because they know how it feels to be harassed, they've been through it /.../. So it can bring someone who knows what the experience is like /.../. (Interview 3)

In line with this, bringing in 'women's perspectives' is often essentially about letting men listen directly to women telling them about their personal experiences of oppression and abuse. This viewpoint informs EngenderHealth's and Sonke's actual work. It does so, for instance, when having female participants in workshops with mostly men and when including women's stories in the digital stories project, where activists get to tell stories about their lives in relation to violence, gender and HIV/AIDS (e.g. EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 2, 3 & 6; interview 2 & 4). It also informs certain workshop activities where men get to listen directly to women telling them about their gendered experiences and vice versa (e.g. EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 6; Sonke undated: 17f; interview 6). Letting men listen to 'women's voices' is, also a way of opposing methods of working with men where women's stories at all times are mediated by men, and women thereby are represented by men (interview 4).

To sum up, I have demonstrated in this section that the male involvement discourse in the context investigated here has a strong focus both on men's subjectivities and women's representation in work with men. While these positions do not contradict as such, I argue that they should be seen in relation to each other. The latter can be conceptualised as part of the criticism that too strong a focus on male subjectivities frequently implies lack of attention paid to the impact on and experiences of women. The risk that work with men begins focusing on men *per se* without sufficiently considering men's relation to and impact on women and gendered power relations, must be avoided. This is argued to be potentially achieved through integrated work. Such line of reasoning thus resists and arguably reveals gendered power relations potentially reproduced in work with men. In brief, there are some frictions between the positions. These are particularly clear in relation to the contention between arguments for women's leadership and shared leadership in the gender sector. The question at issue is, hence, whether it is women or women and men together who should inform gender work in general and work with

men in particular. In both these lines of reasoning, the representation of women's and/or men's respective voices and experiences is argued to be crucial.

Another tension in the male involvement discourse is the one between solidarity and distrust.

6.3. Solidarity and distrust

A number of the arguments and practices in the intersection of the male involvement and partnership discourses explored so far in this chapter could be interpreted as ways for male gender activists to express solidarity with women and female gender activists. The general goal of gender equality, the language of accountability and linked arguments for men's ally role and women's leadership in the gender sector are, as already discussed, ways of recognising gender inequality. Thereby, they also express solidarity with women in general and with women struggling for gender equality in particular. Similarly, solidarity with male gender activists is arguably also articulated. The need to change certain masculinity ideals and related behaviours, as well as the argument that men have a crucial role to play in regard to this, is never questioned in my material. Indeed, a shared assumption in the male involvement discourse is that work with men is both possible and necessary. Another shared premise is the idea that it is essential to partner with women in this work. Arguments for and practices of men and women 'working together' are ways of expressing solidarity with gender activists across the gender binary. So are arguments for and practices of shared leadership.

Nevertheless, concurrent with this belief in work with men and cooperation across the gender divide, there are fairly high levels of distrust as well. Scepticism towards organisations focusing on men among women's organisations, frequently linked to notions of male dominance, is a topic spontaneously raised in nearly all my interviews, as well as in some documents and meetings. Among the representatives of women's organisations interviewed for this study, I encountered very ambivalent feelings about work with men. Moreover, people from both women's organisations and organisations focusing on men are ambivalent about this so called 'women's distrust'. They both position themselves against it and to some extent understand it, thereby expressing both solidarity and distrust. I argue here that this tension between solidarity and distrust somewhat resembles the first theme of ambivalence explored in this chapter, i.e. between the language of accountability which takes gendered power relations in partnerships into account and arguments which emphasise men's ability and willingness to change and be equal partners. By drawing on the partnership discourse with its language of being partners working for mutual goals, people clearly express solidarity. On the other hand, the distrust articulated can be conceptualised as resistance to this discourse revealing actual inequalities and tensions in partnerships. Hence, there are some similarities between this distrust and the language of accountability, although the latter is a way of expressing solidarity as well. In brief, both resist the notion of male and female gender activists as being equal partners. The theme of ambivalence in focus here also involves a language of emotions and trust/distrust.

Below, I begin by analysing notions of male dominance and interlinked arguments for women's own space. I argue that they could be understood as a position of resistance in the intersection of the male involvement discourse and the partnership discourse. Subsequently, I raise the discussion on competition for funding between organisations focusing on men and women's organisations. This is followed by a last subsection on the ambivalent feelings I have come across concerning notions of women's scepticism about work with men, whereby people both position themselves against it and express fairly sympathetic attitudes towards it. These latter two subsections deal with issues where both distrust and solidarity are manifested, pointing at the tension between, on the one hand, the intersection of the partnership and male involvement discourses and on the other hand positions of resistance within them.

6.3.1. Male dominance and the need for women's own space

This section explores the resistance articulated in relation to work with men and the partnership discourse by looking into notions of male gender activists as dominant and patriarchal⁴⁶, as well as interlinked arguments about women's need for their own safe space. One of the strongest and most common ways of articulating distrust is indeed arguments about male dominance. Clearly, there is a fear among women's organisations that men might take over, either in the gender sector at large (cf. 6.3.2.) or in the own organisation if bringing them in (e.g. interview 2, 3, 6, 7 & 8; EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 3). Given prevailing masculinity norms, where manhood is associated with leadership and domination, men are perceived to be likely to continue dominating, even when working for gender equality. At least some male gender activists are, accordingly, argued to have problems listening to women and accepting women asserting themselves or being in leadership positions (interview 5, 6 & 7). Two of the informants from women's organisations also describe actual experiences of male dominance in their own organisations when bringing men in (interview 5 & 6). A representative of Yabonga discusses such experiences in the following:

Inf.: /.../ I realised there's that struggle with our men. They are so used to be the head of the family, the head of the communities, the head of the church, and now they are coming to Yabonga where predominately the women are in charge, the women are leaders, it's the women who are in management. And now they have to change. And I'm not saying they are not willing, but it's difficult, it's different and it's strange. And you have these moments where you think, damn it, it works well with me at the head and you at the tail. /.../ [But] it's that, you know, negotiating settlement between the men and the women. There come these difficult moments where the women try to assert themselves, /.../ but the men are resistant to women asserting themselves. So you always have that tension. (Interview 5)

In short, there is a belief that men who are committed to work for gender equality and are willing to change also tend to dominate. The ideas that men are able to genuinely rethink masculinities, be equal partners and follow women's leadership or share leadership are thereby questioned. Related to this, some implicitly or explicitly express the concern that male gender activists might continue to act within the patriarchal system rather than overthrowing it. Hence, the concerns raised here are clearly in line with cautions about work with men in some GAD literature, arguing that patriarchal values and practices continue to also underlie this work which thereby risks reinforcing male positions of power (cf. 5.1.2.).

The interviewee from POWA accordingly cautions that male gender activists represent women to other men and in so doing make compromises in the name of women rather than really push for gender equality (interview 7; cf. quote on p. 57). Men representing women is arguably another expression of male dominance, and the assumption that they thereby compromise rather than push relies on a notion of men as, more or less, patriarchal *per se*. According to this line of reasoning, which in different shapes turned out to be fairly common, one needs to be particularly watchful about organisations focusing on men. This is both to make sure that their messages do not reproduce male dominance, and to ensure that they live up to goals of gender equitable behaviour in practice.⁴⁷ For instance, the informant from Sida talks about a group focusing on men which had a problematic gender analysis and another whose head was abusing his wife.⁴⁸ In relation to this s/he argues that 'especially when it comes to men's organisations, I think one has to be particularly careful and check what the guiding [gender] perspective really is' (interview 8; cf. interview 6 & 7). Such scepticism about work with men, based on notions of organisations

⁴⁶ When writing '*notions* of male dominance' or '*notions* of men as dominant' in the following, my intention is not to minimize people's experiences of male dominance, but to make clear that also such experiences of unprivileged power positions are constituted by discourse (cf. Eriksson Baaz 2005: 21).

⁴⁷ These ideas also underlie the argument linked to the language of accountability that women should challenge male gender activists if they continue thinking or behaving according to oppressive masculinity norms (cf. p. 40).

⁴⁸ This specific case was raised by a number of different people during my fieldwork, frequently as an example of lack of accountability (e.g. interview 1, 2, 6 & 8).

focusing on men as patriarchal, clearly contradict with the terminology of these being equal partners of women's organisations.

Viewing organisations focusing on men as likely to be patriarchal is also linked to the argument that women need their own space and therefore should mobilise autonomously and collaborate with these organisations rather than becoming involved in them themselves (interview 7). In relation to my question about whether women should be included in work with men, the representative of POWA argues:

Inf.: I think women need to have this space and their voice quite frankly. I'm not saying that only women should fight for women's rights but I think there always has to be a clear, concise and articulated space for women to say it's me, I'm impacted and I need this. /.../ [I]f women now need to go and work you know in a man's organisation for women, that's too convoluted. Because it's a man's organisation, Sonke Gender Justice and EngenderHealth are men's organisations, and just fall back into patriarchy whatever way they look at themselves. I think that we've all been brought up under patriarchy and I think there's a risk of women moving into a space that can become again patriarchal. (Interview 7)

This quote points out two interlinked ideas. Firstly, there is an assumption that organisations focusing on men are likely to be patriarchal because they consist of and focus on men. Secondly, there is a notion of women's safe space, based on the idea that such a space is free from patriarchy (or at least much less patriarchal). These notions, clearly representing distrust of men and trust in women, justify a somewhat separatist position in the male involvement discourse. This position also relies on the idea that some female gender activists, sometimes survivors of gender-based and sexual violence, simply are not thought to be ready to talk to men (interview 3 & 7). Suspicion of men can be linked to deeply personal subjectivities based on own experiences of male violence and abuse, and is argued to be difficult to come to terms with (interview 4 & 8). Hence, it is sometimes put forward as a reason for a certain degree of separatism.

The tension between solidarity and distrust can thus be exemplified by a conflict between two positions in the male involvement discourse. Firstly, there is an apparently dominant position with arguments for integrated work, explored earlier in this analysis chapter and clearly linked to the partnership discourse. Secondly, there is the more marginal position with arguments for women's safe space, often based on a notion of male dominance. Hence, it is an example of how even a very dominant position in a discourse is under constant threat from others, which I here conceptualise as a source of resistance. In sum, I argue that the partnership discourse is resisted here. Based on arguments about male dominance it does so, firstly, by challenging the notion of organisations focusing on men and women's organisations as equal partners. As previously demonstrated, this is somewhat similar to the language of accountability. Secondly, and unlike the language of accountability, this justifies a somewhat separatist position, clearly contradicting to the type of rhetoric emphasising the need for men and women to work together. Yet, both positions share the belief in partnership between organisations focusing on men and women's rights organisations, and neither question that work with men is needed. These shared values indicate that it is reasonable to analyse them as belonging to the same discourse in spite of the tensions between the two.

Another aspect of the concern about male dominance is the fear that men might begin to dominate in the gender sector at large, i.e. not only within NGOs. This is linked to donors, international development aid and competition for funding.

6.3.2. Competing for funding

The tension between solidarity and distrust can also be exemplified by different positions concerned with how resources are distributed between gender, antiviolence and HIV/AIDS organisations focusing on men and women respectively. Roughly speaking, I have come across two ways of dealing with this issue. On the one hand, both organisations focusing on men and women's organisations are argued to be striving for the same goals of gender equality, and both aim at meeting the needs of women and girls. Accordingly, the new focus on men is not a matter

of directing resources away from women (cf. Kaufman 2004: 20). As an interviewee from Sonke states, they need 'to demonstrate that it's /.../ not competing with resources, it's about the same goals' (interview 4; cf. EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 3). This position is rarely articulated explicitly in my data.⁴⁹ Arguably however, it is implicitly so when claiming that organisations focusing on men and women's rights organisations should have the same goals, use the same tools and definitions, and that work with men should be consistent with the women's movement (e.g. interview 2, 7 & 8; EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 3; cf. 6.2.1.). As previously shown, these arguments are part of the partnership discourse and/or its language of accountability and clearly ways of expressing solidarity.

On the other hand, the fear that it in fact is a matter of competing for resources is often brought up in both interviews and documents. The main caution is that organisations focusing on men now are receiving or will be receiving funding that otherwise would have gone to work with women. Representatives of women's organisations, organisations focusing on men and a donor all raise concerns about this, frequently linking it to the current 'trend' of working with men and the fact that it is fairly easy to get such work funded⁵⁰ (e.g. interview 2, 7 & 8; Interfund undated: 55; meeting 1). For instance, the representative of Sida argues that s/he would not like to see Sida support more organisations focusing on men than women's organisations in South Africa. Instead, it should be 'a balance' (interview 8).⁵¹ Similarly, EngenderHealth raises 'agreements with women's organisations on resource mobilisation, so as not to be in competition for resources' as a means 'to put in place a practice of accountability' (EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 1).

The interviewee representing POWA associates what might be or become the tendency of redirecting resources to work with men with the domination factor discussed above. Hence, male dominance is a concern not merely within NGOs but also in the gender sector at large. Since working with men has become the 'flavour of the month' in gender work, there is a fear that the focus on women in the gender sector might be lost (e.g. interview 7 & 8), similar to the criticism sometimes raised in the literature on male involvement (cf. 5.1.2.). Accordingly, when discussing challenges and difficulties in relation to collaborations with organisations focusing on men, the informant from POWA states the following:

Inf.: I think the caution, not so much a challenge or difficulty right now, the caution is around the... the focus going towards men's groups, therefore the abandonment... of women's groups in terms of their funding and attention and voice. /.../ Because now people might start saying: 'you women's groups are just making too much noise, why don't you work with men towards the problem?' Because it's the saying that... just working with women's groups is only half the solution. You have to work with men's groups and now people [donors] are trying to force for example POWA to work with men's groups. /.../ (Interview 7)

Thus, another expression of male dominance is argued to be the emerging focus on men in gender, antiviolenace and HIV/AIDS work as it could be at the expense of women's attention and voice. This could be the case as resources arguably are directed to organisations focusing on men and donors try to influence, for instance, POWA to work more with men. The issue of competition for funding between organisations focusing on men and women's organisations can thereby be seen as an articulation of intersecting power relations between men and women and between donors and recipient NGOs. The above quote is an example of enforced partnership, as

⁴⁹ The reason for this could potentially be that I unfortunately rarely asked directly about this specific topic during interviews.

⁵⁰ Correspondingly, Sonke has so far not been able to secure funding for projects which have an explicit focus on working with both men and women. Since start, they have had the intention of working with both men and women, but since their core expertise is known to be working with men it has been difficult to get work with women funded (interview 4).

⁵¹ However, s/he also thinks of this as a potentially simplistic argument. Arguably, this corresponds to the first line of reasoning discussed above, whereby it is not a matter of competition since organisations focusing on men and women's organisations all work for the same cause.

discussed in section 6.1.1., but is according to the interviewee also related to gender hierarchies. Hence, male dominance and the power of donors are resisted in tandem. Accordingly, this position not only influences POWA's relation to their donors, but also their partnerships with EngenderHealth and Sonke which s/he states are a matter of ad-hoc relationships. This is, indeed, the kind of cooperation they prefer as they are cautious about the risk that all the attention might be drawn to organisations focusing on men, thereby risking the attention and voice of women's organisations (interview 7).

In sum, the tension between solidarity and distrust can be exemplified by a tension between two ways of relating to funding and attention in the gender sector. Mokgethi Tshabalala, former executive director of Hope Worldwide as well as former country director of EngenderHealth, raises both sides of this ambivalence in the EngenderHealth guidebook:

At the organizational level, the question has come up: why should men's organizations get resources, are they not going to reduce the amount of resources that are available for women to actually continue their work? It was very interesting that in one of the discussions like those, a woman stood up and said: "But look: women's organizations have been doing so much work, but how far has that gotten us? This is not about women's organizations, it's not about men's organizations, it's about all of us pulling together and going forward." (EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 3)

On the one hand, it is seen as a common struggle. Accordingly, it should not be a matter of competing for resources, since they all work for the same cause. Such an argument obviously expresses solidarity and is clearly linked to the partnership discourse where partners are argued to work together for mutual goals. On the other hand, it is claimed that the attention, voice and resources of women's rights organisations are at stake with the attention and funding going to organisations focusing on men. This latter position should, arguably be conceptualised as an implicit criticism of both the male involvement discourse, with its strong focus on men, and the intersecting partnership discourse, with its language of being equal partners. The concern that attention and funding might be redirected to men could be viewed as a way of expressing distrust when articulated by women's organisations and, to the contrary, as a way of expressing solidarity, linked to the language of accountability when acknowledged by organisations focusing on men (cf. *ibid.*: chapter 1). In any case, it is an implicit criticism of the arguments claiming that organisations focusing on men are equal partners of women's organisations.

There is a common ambivalence about 'women's distrust', which indicates both solidarity and distrust and corresponds to the tension between the partnership discourse and what is, arguably, resistance to it.

6.3.3. Ambivalence about 'women's distrust'

What is claimed to be 'women's distrust' of male gender activists and work with men is raised in virtually all interviews. Yet it is clear that the representatives of women's organisations interviewed here are very ambivalent about work with men, thereby expressing both solidarity and distrust. Similarly, both male and female gender activists are ambivalent about 'women's distrust'. The focus of this section is this latter issue. I begin by demonstrating how people in the field position themselves against suspicions of work with men, arguably corresponding to the partnership discourse. Subsequently, I explore sympathetic attitudes towards potentially sceptical women and women's organisations, based on recognition of gendered power relations. The tension between the two somewhat resembles the first ambivalence explored in section 6.1.2. Yet, the one in focus here, as previously mentioned, also involves more emotional dimensions of trust and distrust.

In spite of the cautions about work with men raised by my interviewees from women's organisations, drawing on notions of male domination, they strongly disidentify with antagonistic women's organisations in a number of ways. This is arguably in line with dominant positions in the partnership discourse. For instance, the interviewee from POWA recurrently argues that Sonke and EngenderHealth 'do good work', that they are 'not coming from a bad

space' or 'trying to take over', that POWA is 'glad to work with them' and that it is important 'not [to] be antagonistic' (interview 7). Similarly, the representative of Yabonga describes the resistance which was articulated among their staff when they began working with men in very negative terms as 'anti-men propaganda' and 'bias, prejudice and stereotypes' (interview 5). In sum, they position themselves against the notion of antagonistic women's rights activists who do not believe in work with men, thereby expressing solidarity with male gender activists. Not only representatives of women's organisations dissociate themselves from 'women's distrust' in this way; others argue that such scepticism creates a breach between the sexes, and that it is an obstacle for organisations focusing on men when trying to work on accountability, partner with women's organisations or follow women's leadership (interview 1, 2, 3, 5 & 8; EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 1). In the words of an informant from EngenderHealth, when asked about the discussion on creating stronger links with female gender activists:

Inf.: /.../ So... when you deal with them [women who are sceptical of male gender activists] there's an element of distrust /.../. So we find ourselves willing to prove that we are well-meaning men and it's difficult therefore to be partners from that level where someone is like: 'can I trust you?'. And you have to prove yourself. So... I think those have been some challenges. /.../ (Interview 2).

This kind of reasoning, whereby 'women's distrust' is claimed to make it difficult to be partners, is arguably a way of expressing distrust of women's organisations. Indeed, some get offended when they feel they are not trusted (e.g. observation 4; interview 1). Others argue that this is an area where organisations focusing on men could choose to question women's organisations and demonstrate that men in fact can change, are concerned about gender-based violence and that they genuinely work for gender equality (interview 3, 4 & 5). In brief, these various criticisms of 'women's distrust' are clearly in line with arguments in the intersection of the male involvement and partnership discourses previously explored.

Concurrent with this strong positioning against scepticism among women's organisations, both female and male gender activists are frequently sympathetic to such expressions, generally based on recognition of gender inequality. For instance, the informant representing Yabonga finds the antagonism against men fully understandable, arguing that 'women are angry for genuine reasons'. Given the abuse most women within Yabonga have experienced, the 'anti-men bias /.../ made sense' (interview 5). Others too, from both organisations focusing on men, women's organisations and a donor, link distrust to women's personal experiences of abuse and thereby find it to some extent reasonable (e.g. interview 1, 4 & 8). Additional justification grounds are identified by representatives of EngenderHealth and Sonke, thereby expressing some sympathy with the scepticism of some women's organisations. One such reason is that men continue to exercise privilege. Distrust is therefore 'part and parcel' of coming to terms with the legacy of oppression' (Dean Peacock, former country director of EngenderHealth⁵², quoted in EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 1). It is argued that male gender activists do not show up when they are needed in important struggles, for instance during the rape trial against the current ANC president Jacob Zuma (interview 2). In addition, they have not articulated themselves clearly enough to convince people of the differences between them and reactionary 'men's rights organisations' which some women's organisations have bad experiences from collaborating with (interview 4; observation 4). All in all, these various sympathetic attitudes towards 'women's distrust' are frequently grounded in recognition of gender inequality similar to the language of accountability. Indeed, I have come across wishes to listen to (rather than question) women's rights organisations' distrustful opinions and take them seriously, which is an argument linked to the language of accountability (interview 2 & 4). As Dumisani Rebombo of EngenderHealth argues in a group interview quoted in the EngenderHealth guidebook:

As men, we are not victims of gender-based violence. I think women who lead many of the women's organizations have been victims of gender-based violence of some sort, hence they are extreme in terms of their (articulation of) feminism. So the approach doesn't tend to be 'let's work with men'. I

⁵² Dean Peacock is currently a co-director of Sonke, which he also co-founded.

want to listen, and together then devise the strategies that can involve both men and women. I think that would work better than women rejecting men, or men continuing with negative masculinities consisting of wanting to lead and take charge. (EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 1; cf. interview 2)

Even though he identifies ‘women’s distrust’ as an obstacle to building partnerships, he expresses solidarity by arguing that they, indeed should listen to what women have to say and still try to work together. Similarly, scepticism about work with men is argued to be an additional reason to work together with women (interview 1 & 4). This is thus an example of how women are associated with credibility and legitimacy in a context where, given current gender hierarchies, many express doubts about work with men. In short, while work with men is argued to be the current trend and this appears to be a ground for distrust among women’s organisations, organisations focusing on men still need women to gain credibility.

To sum up, although many of the arguments regarding linking women’s and men’s gender activism in the male involvement discourse are ways of expressing solidarity, corresponding to the partnership discourse, people vacillate between this and more distrustful sentiments. This is particularly the case among the representatives of women’s organisations, but also in Sonke and EngenderHealth. Distrust related to notions of male dominance in organisations as well as in the gender sector at large can be interpreted as articulations of resistance among women’s organisations, both to the strong focus on men in the male involvement discourse and to the idea of being equal partners with mutual goals in the partnership discourse. Based on these ideas, the strong language of women and men working together is also to some degree contested. On the other hand, representatives of both women’s organisations and organisations focusing on men are ambivalent about this scepticism, thereby expressing both solidarity and distrust. This ambivalence is, arguably, somewhat a reflection of the first tension explored in this analysis chapter, i.e. between taking gendered power relations in partnerships into account *and* arguments which emphasise men’s ability and willingness to change and be equal partners. However, the ambivalence in focus here also involves emotional dimensions, as issues of trust and distrust in partnerships are at issue.

The thesis now proceeds to the last section of this analysis chapter which investigates the underlying gender and power analyses of different arguments raised above, thereby showing how gender difference and gendered subject positions are constructed, reproduced and resisted.

6.4. Contesting definitions of gender difference and equality

Underlying various arguments in the male involvement discourse relating to the bridging of male and female gender, antiviolence and HIV/AIDS activism is a struggle over definitions of gender difference and equality. There are certain tensions between different gender and power analyses within the discourse. This contesting of definitions, of which all concern how to conceptualise women and men as social groups, is explored here. This section thus deals with how the discourse constitutes female and male subjects and how these subject positions are negotiated.

Gender constructions are fundamental when a person’s position in the gender struggle is constructed in the male involvement discourse. Mainly by referring to arguments and practices previously discussed, the first section below demonstrates how these reproduce the gender binary as well as how these ways of building on gender difference occasionally are resisted. I argue that definitions of equality thereby also are contested. The subsequent two sections deal with how female and male subject positions are negotiated. Interwoven in these is also a discussion on how gender interests are constituted by the male involvement discourse in these processes of identity construction. The tensions between the different ways in which men and women are constituted by discourse and position themselves through discursive practices help to bring to light how some arguments and practices related to bridging men’s and women’s gender activism are deterministic. Hence, I demonstrate how these reproduce gender difference not only by acknowledging gender inequality, but also in arguably rather deterministic ways. The below

three sections thereby touch on the classic question of how to balance an aspiration to escape the binary concept of gender and essentialist understandings of men and women with the need to recognise structural inequalities (e.g. Greig & Esplen 2007: 17; Cornwall 2000: 24f).

6.4.1. *Reproducing and resisting gender difference*

Virtually all arguments about bridging women's and men's gender activism in the male involvement discourse discussed throughout this analysis chapter are premised on and reproduce the notion of a gender binary. In other words, they reinforce the dualistic view that humanity consists of two basic groups defined by sex. Gender activists' positions in partnerships are generally based on how their gender is constructed in the discourse. Such gender constructions are essential in arguments about, for instance, who should be accountable to whom; who should challenge whom; who should lead whom; and whose experiences should inform the work. Many theorists and practitioners have put forward the argument that it can be strategically necessary to use such identity categories when engaging in struggles for equality (c.f. e.g. Cornwall 2000: 25; Ambjörnsson 2006: 199). As demonstrated previously in this chapter, the language of accountability and arguments about male dominance are after all a means to acknowledge and resist gendered power relations. As the next two sections point at some of these ideas also build on fairly deterministic notions of men and women, which to a great extent also are resisted. Here, I instead demonstrate how the building on gender difference as such is questioned, although to a lesser extent.

Occasionally, people to some degree resist gender difference and the notion that activists' positions in the gender struggle should depend on their gender. A case in point is when the interviewee from POWA argues that it is ideas which are good for women, independently of whose ideas it is, which should inform work with men. When I ask if work with men should be defined by men, thus reinforcing the gender binary myself, s/he questions this kind of reasoning: 'I don't know if we should be getting into who should define it. I think it should be more: is what we're defining appropriate for the women?' (interview 7). Here, there is still an assumption that there are certain ideas which are good for women as a group, thereby reproducing gender difference. However, this line of reasoning is still quite opposed to common arguments that it is women's or women's and men's perspectives, experiences and ideas, based on their gender, which should inform the work. Somewhat similarly, a representative of Sonke nuances her/his argument about being accountable to women and women's organisations when discussing women's organisations which are sceptical about work with men. When I again ask whom they are accountable to then, s/he reasons hesitatingly: 'I think we are accountable to... people within... feminist organisations who... believe in the possibility of work with men' (interview 4). Likewise, gender difference is also to some extent resisted when it is argued that we should all be accountable to women's rights, human rights, not to promote patriarchy or that we all should be accountable to each other. This is so, as these arguments sometimes are put forward as an explicit or implicit criticism of the common line of reasoning that it is men who should be accountable to women (e.g. interview 5 & 7). For instance, the informant representing Yabonga argues for mutual accountability when asked if she is familiar with the discussion on organisations focusing on men being accountable to women's organisations:

Inf.: /.../ I think that as human beings we are all accountable to each other. I don't necessarily see why men's organisations should be any more accountable to women's organisations than women's organisations are accountable to men's organisations. /.../ (Interview 5)

Similarly to some of the above examples, this should arguably be interpreted as a criticism not merely of the frequent manner of framing accountability as being 'one-way' only, but also the ways in which this language reproduces gender difference. Yet, if drawing on the language of accountability, as elucidated in section 6.1.2. when discussing arguments against mutual accountability, this criticism of gender difference is at the expense of acknowledging gendered

power relations in partnerships. Hence, at issue here are contested definitions not only of gender difference, but also of equality. The implicit question is whether equality in partnerships is achieved by giving men and women the same position in the gender struggle and in relation to each other, or if men and women should have different positions in order to deal with current inequalities. This tension also underlies the contention between arguments for shared leadership and women's leadership respectively, whereby both are argued to be ways to achieve equality (cf. 6.2.1.). The issue at stake is whether equality is believed to be realised by avoiding the association of leadership with any gender, claiming that we need to lead this struggle jointly, or if it is so by arguing for women's leadership based on the recognition of male dominance. Arguably, the tension between the two is also reflected in the reluctance expressed by some when arguing for shared leadership. Thus, some think leadership should be shared, but have cautions about if this sufficiently takes gender inequality into account (interview 3, 6 & 7). For instance, an interviewee from Sonke fears that men might take over and women's agenda might get diluted (interview 3). This issue of contested definitions of equality, possibly, corresponds to a tension in the partnership discourse. On the one hand, it is a matter of men and women working together with mutual goals as equal partners. Hence, leadership should be shared and men and women should have the same position in a joint struggle. On the other hand, paternalism and dominance in partnerships are questioned. It is so by arguing that it is men who should be accountable to women, and women who should lead the struggle.

In sum, most arguments about creating links between male and female gender, antiviolenace and HIV/AIDS activism reproduce the gender binary. There are, however, occasional examples of how people's positions in the gender struggle not necessarily depend on how their gender is constructed in the discourse. The underlying gender and power analyses which function to justify a reproduction of gender difference in arguments for and practices of forming such links are thus contested. Yet, not only are there struggles over definitions of gender difference and equality, as demonstrated above. There is also resistance frequently articulated in relation to the particular ways in which men and women are constituted by discourse, discussed in the following. Arguably, this resistance helps to reveal the extent to which arguments and practices commonly build on deterministic notions of men and women. They are so as they frequently rely on assumptions about men and women as well as their perspectives and behaviours as belonging to two different and somewhat homogenous categories. Thereby they arguably fail to acknowledge the diversity of men and women respectively. In this conflictual process, activists are constituted by discourse as female and male subjects.

6.4.2. Negotiating female subject positions

In this section I point at two important ways in which female gender activists are constituted by the male involvement discourse in relation to the bridging of men's and women's gender activism. First of all, I return to the notion of female gender activists as distrustful of men and work with men, as introduced in section 6.3. above. Secondly, I have a look at the notion of women as a monolithic group having sound perspectives and challenging rather than reproducing gender hierarchies. This arguably builds on the idea that women know what is in their assumed collective interest and therefore act correspondingly. This section demonstrates how these females subject positions are both constructed and resisted in the male involvement discourse.

As previously discussed, the issue of scepticism and distrust among women's organisations is raised in virtually all interviews. Arguably then, one can talk of the male involvement discourse as frequently constituting female gender activists as distrustful and not believing in work with men based on assumptions about men as dominant and patriarchal. As demonstrated in section 6.3.3., all my interviewees continuously position themselves against such distrust and disidentify with those activists and organisations they view as antagonistic. The representatives of women's organisations do so, for instance, by talking about such distrust in negative terms or by

recurrently claiming that they enjoy working with men. Potentially, such positioning also helps to explain why it is mainly Sonke and EngenderHealth that draw on the language of accountability, since it could be interpreted as antagonistic if women's rights organisations would use a similar type of rhetoric. The representatives from Yabonga and POWA instead distance themselves from the view that they should 'hold male gender activists accountable' (interview 5 & 7). Indeed, the interviewee from Yabonga explicitly interprets the way accountability is used in relation to partnerships between organisations focusing on men and women's organisations as antagonistic. Therefore s/he instead argues for mutual accountability, as mentioned above (interview 5; cf. p. 37 & 53). This also applies to other arguments linked to the language of accountability. For instance, it is probably no coincidence that none of my interviewees from women's organisations share the view that it should be women's leadership in the gender sector, although the representatives of POWA and Masimanyane are slightly hesitant about the idea of joint leadership as well (interview 6 & 7). The interpretation of accountability as giving women the position of challenging organisations focusing on men is, correspondingly not shared by any of the informants representing women's organisations. For example, the interviewee from Yabonga maintains that they never felt the need to challenge EngenderHealth. Rather, s/he would have found it more reasonable for EngenderHealth to challenge Yabonga for their distrust of men when they were about to begin bringing men in (interview 5). Similarly, POWA has, according to its representative, not challenged or tried to influence organisations focusing on men directly or consciously (interview 7). In short, the representatives of women's organisations interviewed here continuously disidentify with this, arguably essentialist, notion of distrustful women's rights activists. Hence, the construction of them as such by the male involvement discourse is highly contested. Although everyone draws on ideas which constitute female gender activists as distrustful, the informants from women's organisations, in particular, negotiate this identity. While sometimes finding 'women's distrust' understandable, given current gender inequalities, they also disidentify with this position themselves, which is reflected in how they relate to the issue of creating links between men's and women's gender activism. This is, moreover, linked to the contesting of definitions of equality discussed in the previous section, as women drawing on arguments which assume different positions for men and women in the gender sector in order to achieve equality could be interpreted as antagonistic.

As mentioned above, there is also a notion that women or female gender activists challenge rather than reproduce sexist oppression as they are assumed to know what is in the collective interest of women and act correspondingly. A number of arguments linked to the language of accountability rely on these premises. In particular, this is the case in implicit arguments for women's leadership, such as when maintaining that organisations focusing on men should define gender equality as women do, that they should be consistent with the women's movement, and that it is women's role to challenge male gender activists when they think or behave in patriarchal ways. In short, it is arguably believed that this would lead to more rigorous work with men, which is more in line with what is in the assumed interests of women. This is based on the assumption that there is a direct connection between being a woman and knowing what is in the collective interests of women. Both aspects of this premise presuppose that women are a monolithic social group, i.e. both that they have the same interests and that women have the same understanding of which these interests are. Seemingly, this is the underlying analysis in the following quote as well. When asked what s/he thinks the expected impact of collaborating with women's rights organisations are, a representative of EngenderHealth states the following:

Inf.: Well, there are spin-offs in terms of accountability. You begin to be confident about what you are doing. You begin to say I can demonstrate it easily, because it has been verified and tested. /.../ But also, we are saying, what you are bringing is sound, because it's got the other [inaudible] from other parties you know, actually women's folks. (Interview 1; cf. interview 2)

Corresponding to the understanding of accountability as giving women the position of challenging male gender activists when they fall back into patriarchal behaviour or thinking, the

implicit argument is that women, unlike men, would know what male gender activists potentially do wrong. In brief, if something is approved by women, it is assumed to be sound. Thereby, an imaginary role of women as legitimate ‘judges’ is constructed. Arguably, this is linked to the concept of (gendered) experience, whereby women’s interlinked positions as ‘judges’ and ‘leaders’ in the gender struggle are justified in part by their experiences of sexist oppression.

As previously demonstrated, the concept of experience is, indeed, crucial in the intersection of the male involvement and partnership discourses. It is especially so in arguments for shared leadership, women’s leadership and increasing women’s representation in work with men. It is argued that men need to listen to women’s experiences of oppression and that work with men needs to take women’s experiences into account. This is in order not to focus on men’s gendered experience to the extent that the impact of the work on women is neglected. Yet, the way the concept of experience is employed sometimes also builds on the assumption that experiences of being a woman, firstly, are homogenous and, secondly, lead to a particular production of knowledge.⁵³ Put differently, being a woman means having certain opinions, perspectives, definitions of equality etc., which should inform gender work, and are assumed to be challenging rather than reproducing oppression. Linked to this notion of women as having monolithic and sound perspectives *per se*, is the somewhat separatist argument for women’s safe space as it does not only constitute men as dominant and patriarchal (as demonstrated below), but also women as non-patriarchal. Arguably, both notions build on the deterministic assumption that women are a somewhat monolithic interest group concerned with change, which would provide women, or at least female gender activists, with certain discourse and practice. These lines of reasoning are linked to the association of women with credibility and legitimacy, which partnerships with women arguably give organisations focusing on men (cf. p. 52).

All the above discussed premises are occasionally contested in different but interlinked ways in the male involvement discourse, thereby indicating that such deterministic thinking is resisted. Firstly, the notion that women do not reproduce unequal gender structures is sometimes challenged.⁵⁴ For example, the interviewee representing Masimanyane asserts that women also put men in leadership positions and that female gender activists often favour their sons over their daughters (interview 6). Moreover, it is argued that women, too, put pressure on men to behave according to certain masculinity ideals (EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 1; interview 1). In the EngenderHealth guidebook it is also claimed that women can be resistant to gender equality and reproduce unequal gender relations, as stated in the following:

Resistance can come from women as well. Women actively participate in reproducing the harmful gender norms that maintain men’s power and privilege, especially through their role in socialising young women and men. (EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 1; cf. *ibid.*: chapter 10)

Another argument criticising the idea of women as a monolithic group with ‘sound perspectives’, is raised in relation to claiming that there is, in fact, not one women’s movement but rather several movements with different visions and understandings of what is in the interest of women. Women’s organisations do, accordingly, not always have what is believed to be a sound gender analysis either (interview 4 & 8). The informant from POWA draws on this criticism when asked if s/he thinks organisations focusing on men should be accountable to women in general, to women’s rights organisations or to certain women’s rights organisations:

⁵³ This perspective also underlies certain feminist literature such as standpoint theory and is criticised by a number of theorists (cf. e.g. Skeggs 1997: 24ff; Eriksson Baaz 2005: 21, 181).

⁵⁴ Some of the criticism explored here is somewhat in line with Chandra Talpade Mohanty’s criticism of feminist assumptions about links between being a woman and assuming a politicised oppositional identity. She argues that these depend on the confusion of, on the one hand, experience of oppression and, on the other hand, opposition to it, whereby the latter is based on particular *interpretations* of experience (Mohanty 2003a: 49, 77, 109, 112; cf. Mulinari & de los Reyes 2005: 52).

Inf.: No, it should never be to women's organisations, because, I mean, the assumption is that women's organisations know it all, they don't. [Both of us laughing]. We don't. We're learning as we go, you know. We get it right sometimes but there are moments of challenge as well. (Interview 7)

Since women's organisations do not necessarily have a sound gender analysis either, given that they also are socialised in patriarchy and therefore might get 'tunnel visions', s/he argues instead that we all should be accountable to women's rights (interview 7). Similarly, the representative of Sida argues that given that the women's movement in South Africa is not very unified, it is even more important to ask which organisations that are more legitimate representatives of the women's movement and hence the ones they should be accountable to (interview 8; cf. p. 21 & 27). In short, these different and interlinked lines of reasoning shed light upon some of the implicit assumptions in common arguments linked to the language of accountability. I would argue that this kind of criticism of the notion of women and the women's movement as monolithic and having sound perspectives *per se* is quiet rare; however, it is clear that some of the assumptions about women, underlying various arguments and practices relating to the bridging of men's and women's gender activism, indeed are contested. In this process where female subject positions are constructed and negotiated, gender interests are also constituted by discourse. Actual constructions of specific interests are not analysed here. Yet, I argue that the premise that women have the same interests and the same understanding of which these interests are, and therefore challenge rather than reproduce gender inequalities, constitute gender identity and gender interests in tandem.

Assumptions of ready links between women, experience, knowledge and challenging oppression, on which the idea of women having homogenous and sound perspectives rely, arguably exclude certain groups of women. They do so, as only those with the 'right' experience can speak about it (cf. Skeggs 1997: 26).⁵⁵ Moreover, assuming such links obviously exclude men as well. Hence, the above discussed arguments in the male involvement discourse are not only based on deterministic notions of women, but also of men. These notions are clearly related to one another, pointing to the relational nature of gender, as is made clear in the following quote of the interviewee from POWA. When asked to develop her argument that male gender activists may have an attitude of representing women, s/he maintains the following:

Inf.: /.../ Because if I'm a man and I'm socialised in a certain way I'm not going to push a man further than I think I should push that man, you know what I mean. So if I don't feel comfortable pushing him totally to be [inaudible] it means that I'm going to chip away at the woman's right at some level. But if there's a woman in that community she'd challenge the man completely. Hopefully that's what would happen, that she can challenge the man from standing as a woman, and knowing what it means to be a woman in that environment. So to me a man would negotiate... and compromise. I think a woman would push because she knows... the extent of what she's looking for. (Interview 7)

The premise that a woman would know what is in her interest as a woman and push for it based on her experiences of being a woman, is thus related to the assumption that a man would not. Obviously, this is linked to notions of male dominance and constructions of male subject positions.

6.4.3. Negotiating male subject positions

The ways in which men and male gender activists are constituted by the male involvement discourse are highly contested. This section explores the tension between the constitution of men as patriarchal and as able and willing to change respectively. Hence, there are obvious links to the first ambivalence explored in this chapter, i.e. between taking gendered power relations in

⁵⁵ This has been comprehensively criticised by proponents of postcolonial feminism as well as black feminism, arguing that such a notion of women's homogeneity and universal sisterhood is based on particular rather than universal experiences. Thereby, it brings out gendered oppression at the expense of analysing how, for instance, 'race', ethnicity, class and sexuality influence women's lives (e.g. Mohanty 2003a: 17ff, 52; Crenshaw 1995: 360, 376; Mulinari & de los Reyes 2005)

partnerships into account and arguing that men are able and willing to change and be equal partners. Firstly, I summarise the notion of men as patriarchal, followed by a discussion on the ways in which assumptions of automatic links between men, masculinity and dominance are challenged. Subsequently, I turn to an issue where this ambivalence is particularly at stake, namely male resistance to gender equality. Thereby I also link the above tension to contested constructions of interests and the assumed influence of what is argued to be men's collective gender interests on their gender activism. Lastly, I show how people frequently draw on both positions of the continuum representing the ambivalence explored here, and frequently take up intermediate more nuanced positions.

As demonstrated in relation to the discussion on distrust, some talk of men's tendency to take over and dominate even when working for gender equality. Correspondingly, organisations focusing on men are sometimes, and mostly implicitly, assumed to be 'patriarchal spaces'. This is the underlying assumption in different arguments, such as that it is women's role to challenge male gender activists when they think or behave in patriarchal ways, that women need their own safe spaces or that one should be particularly watchful about organisations focusing on men. I would argue that such lines of reasoning build on the assumption that there are ready links between men, masculinity and dominance/power/patriarchal behaviours and that men cannot change or should not be assumed to change easily. As a representative of EngenderHealth puts it, 'men would want to commit to change, right? But men will be trapped you know /.../ to go back to their own boxes, their own comfort areas' (interview 1). These notions, which constitute men and male gender activists as dominant and patriarchal, are resisted in most interviews and documents. Male subject positions are thereby negotiated. They are so, firstly, as interviewees both explicitly resist these notions and, secondly, as representatives of organisations focusing on men position themselves actively against them by drawing on certain lines of reasoning.

My informants frequently question what they claim to be generalising statements about men as problems. It is considered crucial to recognise men's common abuse of women and that some men are dominant, but at the same time avoid sweeping statements which present *all* men as abusers or dominant (e.g. interview 2, 3, 4 & 5). Another interlinked way in which the language of men as dominant and patriarchal is challenged are the frequent arguments that men are both able and willing to change, as explored in section 6.1.2. Hence, it is argued that masculinities are not static. Instead, in the words of an EngenderHealth representative, oppressive behaviour 'is a learnt behaviour. And if it is a learnt behaviour we can unlearn it again' (interview 1; cf. Sonke undated: 10). Accordingly, men are presented as part of the solution rather than the problem (e.g. EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 1).

Notions of men as dominant, patriarchal and problematic are also potentially resisted by male gender activists when drawing on the language of accountability. This is so as it could be interpreted as a means for them to dissociate themselves from 'men's rights organisations', male backlashes as well as male dominance more generally. By employing the language of accountability they arguably attempt to demonstrate that men not always take up positions of dominance. This is, for instance, the case when arguing for women's leadership⁵⁶ or when saying that they should listen to women, also when they express distrustful sentiments (e.g. interview 2 & 4; EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 1). In so doing, they question the assumption that men automatically should be associated with leading or dominating. Indeed, rather than being on

⁵⁶ Arguments for women's leadership in the gender sector both build on and resist deterministic assumptions about women and men. On the one hand, it is a way of acknowledging male positions of dominance and that rethinking masculinities is both necessary and possible. Thereby, the assumption that there are automatic links between men, masculinity and leadership is questioned. On the other hand, and as demonstrated in the previous section, implicit arguments for women's leadership often build on deterministic notions of women as challenging rather than reproducing sexism and knowing what is in the assumed collective interests of women. Accordingly, the issue of women's leadership is an example of how the gender binary is reproduced both in order to resist gendered power relations and in deterministic ways.

women's organisations' initiative, it is activists within the men's sector who claim that they are or should be accountable and, at least to some extent, raise the issue in discussions with women's organisations (interview 2, 3, 5 & 7; cf. p. 55). In brief, the various ways in which male gender activists express sympathy and solidarity with women and female gender activists as well as arguments that men are able and willing to be equal partners, could be conceptualised as resistance both to male dominance and to notions of men as more or less dominant *per se*.

The tension between viewing men as more or less dominant and patriarchal *per se* and arguing that men are able and often eager to change is noticeably manifested when the issue of men's resistance to gender equality is raised. Linked to the claim that men are willing to change is the argument that men frequently are not opposed to gender equality. For instance, the experience of the MAP programme in South Africa is argued to be 'that men are not necessarily resistant to change', they just need a 'platform to discuss these issues' (EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 1; cf. e.g. Peacock 2003: 43; Sonke 2008f; interview 3). At the same time, however, male resistance to gender equality is fairly frequently drawn attention to. It is argued, for instance, that male workshop participants at times get defensive when discussing gender equality, claiming that their rights have been taken away from them or that women are taking over and oppressing men. Some state that it is difficult to make men come to workshops to discuss gender and HIV, others say that some men are not willing to listen to some women. Moreover, men are sometimes argued not to be willing to allow women to assert themselves (e.g. interview 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6; EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 1, 2 & 10). Hence, there is a notion of men as resistant,⁵⁷ although it is not argued that all men at all times are opposed to gender equality. This resistance is frequently understood in relation to what is constructed as men's collective interest in defending the current gender order. Here explicitly:

Resistance is about defending privilege and men's interest in keeping power. As Mbuyiselo Botha [of SAMF] says: "Our agenda as men will be to retain this power, which brings with it privileges. It is not easy for anyone on this earth to freely give away your privilege." (EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 1)

Consequently, the issue of resistance and the notion of men as patriarchal more generally, is linked to how interests are constructed in the male involvement discourse as well as to notions of how men's gender interest influence their potential to bring about change in gender relations. What underlies cautions about work with men is potentially the fear that male gender activists have an underlying gender analysis and behave in ways which are likely to entrench rather than challenge men's collective gender interests in defending the gender order. However, as pointed out in relation to the global male involvement discourse (cf. 5.1.3.), this is indeed a contested assumption. Whereas it is sometimes argued that men tend to defend and reinforce male privilege, and some seem to assume that this influences men's gender activism, it is also persistently contended by EngenderHealth and Sonke that men's mobilisations can be based on other interests. Such interests are, for instance, solidarity with women, a political commitment to women's rights, the fact that they care for women in their lives as well as their self-interest in changing current gender roles. As previously discussed, I have frequently come across claims that masculinity ideals leave men vulnerable to HIV, that men too are victims of men's violence, and that men are negatively affected when women they care for are abused (cf. 6.2.2.). A representative of Sonke summarises:

⁵⁷ Analogous to the resistance to gender equality articulated in mobilisations during and in the aftermath of Jacob Zuma's rape trial (cf. p. 28), it is in my material sometimes argued that male resistance to gender equality frequently draws on discourses of 'tradition', 'culture' or religion. Hence, it is an example of how gender identities and ethnical/'racial'/religious identities are constructed in tandem. However, as in the counter mobilisations during the trial, these discourses and stereotypes are also challenged in the data analysed here (EngenderHealth 2005a: Chapter 2; interview 2 & 4; Sonke undated: 9). For instance, an interviewee representing Sonke argues that the common discourse portraying men as problems, perpetrators and 'drivers of the [HIV/AIDS] epidemic', not only alienates men and builds on gender stereotypes, but also is racist as it portrays men in Africa or in the Global South in particular as 'almost by default problematic' (interview 4).

Inf.: /.../ you see gender roles are not working for men either. So you know, we think it's possible to invite men to do the work based on their sense of solidarity with women, their commitment to a rights' culture and their own self-interest. /.../ (Interview 4)

Hence, the tension between assuming male dominance and resistance to gender equality and arguing that men are able and willing to change, somewhat corresponds to a tension between constructions of men's collective interests in defending their privilege and other constructions of men's gender interests, such as their self-interest in change and political commitment to women's rights. The ways in which men are constituted by the male involvement discourse as patriarchal and able/willing to change respectively are, thus, intrinsically linked to the conflictual ways in which men's interests are constructed in the discourse.

If drawing on the perspectives of power and interests clarified in the theory and background chapters, both extreme positions in this tension arguably rely on a simplistic understanding of interests and power. Assuming that men only have an interest in maintaining the current gender order, or that organisations focusing on men are somehow inherently patriarchal spaces, relies on a one-dimensional understanding of power. Men's interests are thereby presumed to be pre-given rather than constructed. However, too much emphasis on men's eagerness to change, while challenging deterministic notions and probably strategic in order not to alienate men, conflicts with the argument that men's interests, after all, are constructed within and through an unequal gender order. The interviews and documents analysed here move back and forth on a continuum between these two extreme positions. This is, arguably, the case when considering it crucial to acknowledge symptoms of gender inequality, such as gender-based violence, without using sweeping statements about men in general as abusers and oppressors. Yet, such an argument divides men into two groups of equal men and oppressive men respectively, which is also a contested understanding in the male involvement discourse. Indeed, it is occasionally claimed that male gender activists too struggle with trying to be equal, and that it is actually not easy to bring about personal change in spite of being committed to do so (e.g. interview 1 & 2; EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 1 & 3). It is for instance argued that as a gender activist one has to start with oneself by looking at how one is socialised and by changing one's own oppressive attitudes, myths and stereotypes (e.g. EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 1 & 2). Indeed, an important aspect of the language of accountability is 'personal accountability', meaning that one has to 'walk the talk'. Male gender activists should behave at work and in their private lives according to how they teach and not act in abusive ways or exhibit oppressive behaviours (interview 1 & 4; EngenderHealth 2005a: chapter 3). As previously mentioned (cf. p. 38), the language of accountability thus recognises the risk that male gender activists knowingly or unknowingly may maintain male supremacy, as it otherwise would not be needed. In short, these different arguments continuously move back and forth on the continuum corresponding to the first ambivalence explored in section 6.1.2., thereby both challenging the notion that 'boys will be boys' and arguing that change, indeed, is not easily achieved.

In sum, arguments in the male involvement discourse linked to the partnership discourse and/or its language of accountability mostly reproduce the gender binary. The ways in which activists' positions in the gender struggle are constructed clearly depend on how their gender is constructed in the discourse. Thereby the dualistic view that humanity consists of two basic groups defined by sex is reproduced. It is so by acknowledging gendered power relations, but frequently also by building on fairly deterministic notions of men and women. However, both the gender binary as such and specific gendered subject positions are resisted, which implies that both subject positions and definitions of gender and equality are negotiated. In this chapter, I have pointed at various ambivalences in the male involvement discourse. It is clear that it would be very simplistic to say that people representing organisations focusing on men and women, respectively, draw on different positions within the discourse. Rather, most positions are constructed in most interviews and documents. Yet, some tendencies are observable. As I have demonstrated in the last two subsections, my informants draw on certain arguments relating to

the bridging of women's and men's gender activism in ways which implies negotiating the subject positions on offer in the male involvement discourse. Male and female gender activists thus position themselves actively and thereby resist the notions of the dominant and patriarchal male gender activist and the distrustful female gender activist. Deterministic notions of men and women, underlying a number of the arguments and practices related to the bridging of men's and women's gender activism, are thus resisted. This also applies to the idea of women as challenging rather than reproducing gender inequalities and as knowing what is in the assumed collective interests of women. I have also shown how these conflictual processes constituting gender identities construct gender interests in conflicting ways as well.

7. CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

The aim of this chapter is to draw conclusions by linking the findings in the previous analysis chapter to original problem formulation, research questions, theoretical perspective, literature review and methodology. I begin by returning to the starting point of the study, followed by a summary of some of the shared assumptions and values in the male involvement discourse analysed. In the next section I move on to further exploring the ambivalences found in the discourse by linking these to the overall analytical research question of how gendered power relations are articulated, reproduced and resisted in the discourse. Subsequently, I summarise and discuss how these gendered power relations intersect with power relations between the Global North and the Global South in international development cooperation. Lastly, some final remarks about the general relevance of the study and conclusions drawn are provided.

There is a growing awareness globally of how the HIV/AIDS epidemic, one of the major political challenges of today, is linked to gender-based violence and gender inequality more generally. Rising attention is drawn to how certain constructions of masculinity contribute to the spread and impact of the epidemic. Working with women's empowerment is no longer considered enough. Instead, men need to become involved in gender equality work as well if we are to come to terms with the inequalities which HIV/AIDS and gender-based violence reflect and accentuate. Yet, there are also a number of concerns raised in relation to male gender activism and work with men. Some caution that the focus on power and women's disprivilege in gender work might vanish, others that the male involvement discourse risks becoming a discrete field disconnected from work with women and the women's movement. For those reasons, among others, some call for building bridges between work with women and work with men, and between female and male gender, antiviolence and HIV/AIDS activism. This thesis has addressed these very links, i.e. between male gender activism and women's collective action and possibilities to continue defining objectives in the struggles against HIV/AIDS, gender inequality and gender-based violence. It has done so by analysing the global male involvement discourse in the context of the South African civil society and to some extent, by considering the role of international development cooperation.

There are a number of shared assumptions and values in the male involvement discourse analysed. Among the most essential ones are the recognition of gender inequalities, links between these, gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS, as well as the role of masculinity constructions in relation to these. Gender equality is a shared value which is constantly strived for, and work with men is considered both a possible and necessary part of this struggle. Moreover, partnerships across the gender divide are argued to be crucial in this work. I have demonstrated how the male involvement discourse overlaps with the partnership discourse in the civil society sector and international development cooperation at large. Pointing to the conflictual nature of discourse, there are a number of ambivalences and discursive struggles in the intersection of these discourses.

7.1. Gendered power relations articulated, reproduced and resisted

Throughout the analysis chapter I pointed at a number of ambivalences in the male involvement discourse, indicating tensions between different positions constructed in relation to building bridges between men's and women's gender activism. I argue that these themes of ambivalence are crucial to understand if intending to answer the overall analytical research question of this study, which follows: How are gendered power relations articulated, reproduced and/or resisted in the male involvement discourse in relation to the bridging of men's and women's gender,

antiviolence and HIV/AIDS activism in South Africa?⁵⁸ (cf. 1.3.) By returning to this question, I here attempt to explicitly link my findings to the theoretical and methodological perspectives I have found elucidative in relation to the data analysed.

My methodology has been inspired by Foucault's perspective that it is by analysing the implicit resistance in one discourse or position that one can uncover the power implicit in another (cf. p. 12). Accordingly, it is by studying the ambivalences in the overlapping male involvement and partnership discourses that I have been able to show how gendered power relations are reproduced in positions resisted in other positions. Hence, I have aimed at locating power relations mostly by looking at how certain positions implicitly or explicitly are resisted.

I have maintained that arguments for and practices of creating links between male and female gender activism, part of the partnership discourse and its language of accountability, frequently are a way of resisting gendered power relations potentially reproduced in the strong focus on male subjectivities in work with men. In the analysis chapter, I showed that such focus on male subjectivities and calls for women's representation should be seen in relation to each other. There are some frictions between the two, which appear most evidently in the contention between arguments for women's leadership and shared leadership. Through collaboration with women's organisations and women's participation in work with men, women's voices, perspectives and experiences are included in work with men. This is a way of opposing work with men, which concentrates too much on men's experiences and feelings. Such criticism reveals the gender inequalities potentially reproduced in work with men, which tends to focus on men *per se* rather than on their relation to women and hierarchical gender relations, thereby exploring men's gendered experiences at the expense of women's experiences and disprivilege.

While partnerships with women are a means to resist gendered power relations, this study has also pointed at how such inequalities are reproduced in these very partnerships. Inspired by research on power relations in the broader partnership discourse in international development cooperation (e.g. Eriksson Baaz 2005), I have pointed at a tension within this discourse between obscuring and recognising power relations in the partnerships. This discourse, as it is articulated in the intersection with the male involvement discourse, emphasises men's ability and willingness to change and to be women's equal partners in the joint struggle for gender equality. Unity, solidarity, mutual goals and cooperation between organisations focusing on men and women's organisations are stressed. This often resembles the partnership discourse in international development cooperation at large. In spite of this type of rhetoric, however, there are also tensions in relation to creating links between women's and men's gender activism. I have pointed at the construction of two positions which challenge this language of mutual goals and equal partners, thereby revealing power relations.

Firstly, there is a tension between partnership and accountability. Both the broader partnership discourse and the ways in which the language of accountability is used in this context are means to criticise inequalities between partners by attempting to create non-paternalistic and equal relationships with mutual goals. However, I have argued that the language of accountability can be conceptualised as a position of resistance within the partnership discourse. The reason for this is that it, in spite of its various and frequently not specified meanings, recognises gendered power relations in partnerships. This is the case, for instance, when arguing that accountability should not be mutual and that organisations focusing on men should follow the leadership of women in the gender struggle. The purpose of both is, indeed, to deal with gender inequalities in partnerships. *Secondly*, there is a position which emphasises male dominance in relation to bringing men in, either in their specific organisations or in the gender, antiviolence and HIV/AIDS sector at large. This position does not only resist gendered power

⁵⁸ I argue that answers to the second and third, more specific, research questions are discussed and summarised as well when taking this broader question as a starting point for the discussion. Issues related to the third question concerning the role of development aid are raised in the following subsection on intersecting power relations.

relations and male dominance as such, but implicitly also the notion of male and female gender activists as equal partners. Unlike the language of accountability (and the broader partnership discourse), it is a way of expressing distrust rather than solidarity, thereby also involving an emotional dimension. This understanding of male dominance to some extent justifies a somewhat separatist position, although marginal in the male involvement discourse, whereby the strong language of men and women working together is challenged to some extent.

By studying these two positions of resistance within the intersection of the partnership and male involvement discourses, this study has arguably demonstrated how these discourses disguises the fact that power relations exist in partnerships. Since it is stressed that men are able and willing to change and be women's equal partners or allies in a struggle with mutual goals, the fact that the structural contexts makes such equal partnership difficult to realise is arguably neglected. Thus, in so doing, they fail to challenge gendered power relations in the collaborative relations between organisations focusing on men and women's organisations. By studying the resistance implicit in the language of accountability and arguments about male dominance, it is possible to locate power relations in partnerships frequently obscured by the partnership and male involvement discourses at large. These implicit criticisms should, however, not be conspiratorially interpreted as the language of being equal partners being a matter of empty rhetoric masking true (patriarchal) motives. After all, there is not necessarily a direct link between outcomes and intentions (cf. p. 7).

The ways in which the language of accountability and arguments concerning male dominance in the gender sector are employed do not only resist gendered power relations in work with men and partnerships with women. As demonstrated in section 6.4., many of the arguments and practices in the male involvement discourse and its intersection with the partnership discourse reproduce the gender binary as people's gender and positions in the gender struggle are constructed in a simultaneous process. They do so, not only by recognising structural inequalities between men and women, but arguably also in deterministic ways since they frequently build on assumptions about men and women as belonging to two different and somewhat homogenous categories. They thereby fail to acknowledge the actual diversity of men and women, similar to the GAD discourse at large (cf. 2.3.2.). Hence, the language of accountability and the position emphasising male dominance have in common not only the resistance to gendered power relations and to the tendency within the partnership discourse to obscure these; they also share assumptions of ready links between gender and certain standpoints or behaviours. For instance, while arguments for women's representation or leadership are means to resist gendered power relations, I have shown that they frequently also assume a direct connection between being a woman, knowing what is in the assumed collective interests of women and challenging sexist oppression. Thus, it relies on the assumption that women have more or less the same homogenous perspectives and that these are sound *per se*. Related to this notion of women, there is an idea of men as more or less dominant and patriarchal *per se*, thereby presuming simple links between men, masculinity and power/dominance. Indeed, it is deterministic to presume that the structural fact that men often have certain privileges and take up positions of power in relation to women, makes it possible to predict men's discourse and practice. For women and men alike, our subject positions do not provide us with predefined perspectives or behaviours, even though we are positioned in a history and context of sexism and other hierarchies influencing which discourses we have access to and draw on (cf. p. 19).

I have also demonstrated how these gender stereotypes are contested. Both the gender binary as such and, more frequently, certain male and female subject positions constituted by the male involvement discourse are resisted. An analysis of how these deterministic understandings to a great extent are contested by male and female gender activists arguably reveals the power relations involved in the constructions of such subject positions. By emphasising men's ability and willingness to rethink masculinities and be equal partners as well as by drawing on the

language of accountability, the subject position of the dominant male gender activist is resisted.⁵⁹ Similarly, the notion of women as a monolithic group challenging rather than reproducing gender hierarchies is contested. Representatives of women's organisations, moreover, position themselves against 'women's distrust', thereby negotiating the notion of the distrustful female gender activist. Hence, by drawing on certain arguments, activists continuously negotiate the subject positions constituted by the discourses they draw on. In this conflictual process where gender identities are constructed, gender interests, too, are constituted and contested. This analysis corresponds to Foucault's perspective on discourse as not only negative and repressing, but also productive since it constructs, for instance, certain identities and knowledges (such as interests) (cf. p. 6).

To conclude, corresponding to a Foucauldian perspective on power, I have shown in this thesis that gendered power relations are continuous, diffused and negotiated rather than simply being a matter of men exercising power over women. Simplistic models of causal relations between gender and power should thus be avoided. Instead of viewing power relations as fixed in relations between individuals or groups, they are continuously negotiated and individuals simultaneously exercise and undergo this power (cf. e.g. Foucault 1980b: 98; Mulinari & de los Reyes 2005: 23, 87, 90; Mills 2004: 34f).

The power analyses underlying the arguments and practices in the male involvement and partnership discourses analysed here are quite different from this perspective. This is not to say that at all times there is a matter of one-dimensional power analysis with a dichotomous view of men as powerful oppressors and women as powerless victims. Although the above discussed deterministic notions of men and women arguably imply an understanding of power relations as fairly fixed, these notions are clearly questioned. Indeed, the discourses analysed here do not reflect a homogenous power analysis. Rather, the various positions imply different implicit understandings of power, frequently somewhat corresponding to the different dimensions in Lukes' three-dimensional view of power (cf. p. 5). I have pointed at how definitions of equality, and thereby power analyses, are contested. This is linked to the contesting of definitions of gender difference and the tension between obscuring and acknowledging power relations in partnerships. On the one hand, men and women are argued to be working together with mutual goals as equal partners. According to this line of reasoning, leadership should be shared and men and women should have the same positions in a joint struggle. On the other hand, paternalism and dominance are questioned by arguing that it is women who should lead the struggle and men who should be accountable to women. Yet, according to both these perspectives, men can deliberately resist power relations between male and female gender activists, by being equal partners, or by being accountable to the women's movement and/or following women's leadership. While it is sometimes reasoned that change is difficult to achieve, this arguably implies a dualist view of power versus resistance. By contrast, this thesis has shown that gender hierarchies are simultaneously reproduced and resisted in the articulations of positions related to bridging women's and men's gender activism. Hence, in line with a Foucauldian perspective, I argue that resistance should not be understood as outside the power relations it opposes (Knights & Vurdubakis 1994: 177; cf. p. 12). There is no outside of power, which both the partnership terminology and arguments for women's safe spaces might suggest. Instead, gendered power relations are simultaneously reproduced and resisted through discursive practices in gender activism and the creation of links between men's and women's activism. Not only are gendered power relations complex and distributed as such, they also intersect with other power relations.

⁵⁹ This is, thus, an example of how tremendously complex power relations are. Whereas the language of accountability, as demonstrated above, arguably reveals the power relations reproduced in the partnership discourse presenting men as able/willing to change and be equal partners, both these positions are used to resist the power relations involved in deterministic representations of men.

7.2. Intersecting power relations

The politics of HIV/AIDS and gender is increasingly transnational and international development cooperation plays a crucial role in this development. Gender is paid tremendous attention to in this aid, and funding to HIV/AIDS work has increased dramatically in recent years. Hence, it is important also to look at the role of development aid in relation to gender, antiviolenace and HIV/AIDS activism in South Africa. Accordingly, this thesis has looked into how gendered power relations intersect with inequalities between the Global South and the Global North in international development cooperation. As discussed in section 6.1.1., the unequal relation between donors and recipients is not overcome simply by employing the partnership terminology. I pointed at tensions between, on the one hand, appreciating the active involvement of donors as partners in a joint struggle and, on the other hand, recognising and resisting power relations between donors and recipients. Yet, there are major differences between donors and thereby between ways in which power is articulated in partnerships. Moreover, similar to gendered power relations, it is never a matter of simple hierarchies. Corresponding to previous research (cf. 2.2.1.), I have shown that there is manoeuvring room available for negotiating and resisting the different kinds of donor requirements. The ways in which these power relations are reproduced and resisted intersect with gendered power relations.

Not only do donors' requirements about measurable outcomes and their attempts to influence the values of recipient NGOs sometimes imply that gender inequalities are not dealt with appropriately; I have also demonstrated why the partnership discourse and its language of accountability should be understood in the light of current developments in international development cooperation at large. Whereas the terminology of partnership and (in particular) accountability is a way to criticise gendered power relations, it is clear that aid and power relations between donors and recipient NGOs also play a role in relation to these types of rhetoric and practice. They do so in various ways. First of all, the partnership terminology used in relation to creating links between female and male gender activism is similar to the one employed when referring to partnerships between donors and recipients of aid in terms of how they deal with power relations in collaborations. Moreover, corresponding to this broader partnership discourse, cooperation between NGOs is highly valued. Networking between organisations focusing on men and women's organisations are thus part of a more general trend. Such networking can, similarly to other formal and informal partnerships in the civil society sector, be encouraged or even enforced by donors.

In addition, the language and practices of partnership and accountability are probably employed as a means to deal with issues of credibility and legitimacy in a double sense. *Firstly*, given the fairly high levels of scepticism, primarily of women's organisations towards organisations focusing on men, partnerships with women and employing the language of accountability, are ways to increase their credibility and signal being progressive. This is so as women are associated with credibility given current gender inequalities. *Secondly*, as brought up in the literature review, the legitimacy of NGOs in general is currently put into question. Following the increase in the number of and funding to NGOs, many ask whom they represent to justify their potential political influence. Linked to these concerns are calls for NGO accountability, also articulated by donors. Hence, when EngenderHealth and Sonke draw on the language of accountability it is probably not merely a matter of resisting gendered power relations in partnerships and negotiating the subject position of the dominant/patriarchal male, as discussed above; rather, it is also likely to be a means of dealing with issues of questioned credibility and legitimacy as NGOs in general and as organisations focusing on men in particular. Similarly, when people from women's organisations position themselves against 'women's distrust', they both negotiate such a subject position and potentially deal with issues of credibility given the current 'trend' of working with men and pressures from the donor community on gender, antiviolenace and HIV/AIDS organisations to do so. This trend and

pressure is, however, also resisted. Linked to the fact that it seems fairly easy to receive funding and attention for work with men is, certainly, the issue of competition for funding. As demonstrated in the section on solidarity and distrust, there is a concern that resources are or might become redirected to work with men at the expense of women's organisations. When such concerns are raised, gendered power relations and hierarchies in international development cooperation are resisted simultaneously, thereby challenging the partnership discourse in a double sense.

In brief, the languages and practices of partnership and accountability concerning the relation between organisations focusing on men and women's rights organisations, should be understood in relation to both gender inequalities and inequalities in international development cooperation. However, one of the major limitations of this study is that it does not pay more attention to such intersecting power relations (as a result of the limitations of my data, cf. p. 17). Further research is needed that analyses the aspect of aid and global power relations in relation to partnerships between men's and women's gender activism more in-depth. This also applies to how power relations related to, for instance, 'race', ethnicity, class and sexuality are articulated, reproduced and resisted in such partnerships, as well as in collaborations between NGOs working primarily with these issues and gender, antiviolenace and HIV/AIDS organisations.

7.3. Concluding remarks

As mentioned in the methodology chapter, the results of this thesis are based on a study of five specific NGOs in South Africa and should not be assumed to apply to all similar organisations working with gender, gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS focusing on men and women respectively. Not only are EngenderHealth, Sonke, Yabonga, POWA and Masimanyane possibly exceptionally committed to collaborate across the gender divide⁶⁰, but there are also a number of particularities of the South African context as such. For instance, the magnitude of the 'twin-epidemics' of gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS in the country obviously impacts on different forms of gender activism. It is also likely to be related to the importance attached to rethinking masculinities in this work. Arguments for partnerships and for work with men to be consistent with the women's movement could be partly linked to the fact that the women's movement and the gender sector in South Africa are fairly divided rather than unified (cf. p. 21). Also, scepticism about male gender activists should possibly to some degree be understood in the light of the extremely reactionary gender oriented mobilisations among men in South Africa recently, especially during and in the aftermath of Jacob Zuma's rape trial (cf. 5.2.1.). In spite of these and other particularities of the South African context and the specific organisations studied here I have aimed at demonstrating how the particular people in this particular context draw on more general discourses, which have global dimensions.

It has been a struggle to attempt to distance myself from these discourses as I also draw on them and as I am part of the gender and SRHR field myself, although in a different context. Indeed, as previously mentioned, my starting point was very much in line with the intersection of the male involvement and partnership discourses. In brief, I believed that work with men and male gender activism are possible and necessary, but need to be in partnership with the women's movement partly in order to avoid some of the assumed pitfalls of work with men. The conclusions drawn on the basis of this study do not criticise these standpoints as such. I would still argue that there is a potential danger in the male involvement discourse and work with men being somewhat disconnected from work with women and the women's movement. As this study points at, increasing the representation of women in work with men is, indeed a way of resisting

⁶⁰ As mentioned in the methodology chapter, some of these similarities between Sonke and EngenderHealth regarding their relation to the women's movement are likely to be due to the overlap of these NGOs as far as staff and management is concerned (cf. p. 14).

gendered power relations in the male involvement discourse. Hence, more research on links or lack of links between male and female gender activism, an extremely under-researched field, is certainly needed.

I have in this study demonstrated how gendered power relations also are articulated in various arguments and practices related to partnerships between male and female gender activism. I have done so mainly by studying the resistance to power relations in partnerships and to certain deterministic notions of men and women often articulated in this very resistance. If we accept, as Foucault proposes, that both power and resistance are articulated 'everywhere', there are obviously multiple resistances which I have not been able to identify and which arguably would have revealed other power relations in relation to my research questions. The ones in focus here should be understood in relation to my feminist conviction and, possibly to some extent, my own subject position (cf. 3.4.1.). Yet, the resistances I have pointed at here do reveal that while equality is continuously strived for, the structural context to some extent undermines this struggle for equality and gendered power relations are still reproduced. I have shown, however, that it is certainly not a matter of organisations focusing on men being particularly homogeneously patriarchal or inevitably entrenching male privilege. The organisations studied are fragmented spaces where interests are constituted by discourse rather than pre-given and should, thus, not be assumed to influence men's and women's gender activism in any easily predictable way. Although it is mainly EngenderHealth and Sonke which employ the language of men's ability and willingness to change and be equal partners and the representatives of women's organisations which point at male dominance in the gender sector, it is clear that everyone employs arguments and practices that resist as well as reproduce gendered power relations. Moreover, I have shown how these positions where gendered power relations are reproduced and resisted, in complex ways, are related to inequalities in international development cooperation.

To conclude, I do argue that it is indeed important to strengthen the links between men's and women's gender, antiviolenace and HIV/AIDS activism. Such arguments and practices are clearly a way to resist gender inequalities articulated and reproduced in work with men which tends to focus on men *per se*. This resistance reveals how a focus on exploring men's experiences, feelings and perspectives risks leading to work with men which potentially neglects its relation to and impact on women and hierarchical gender relations. Yet, arguments for and practices of creating such links also recurrently fail to challenge intersecting power relations of gender and the Global South/Global North. Moreover, they frequently reinforce a dualistic view and deterministic notions of men and women. The underlying gender and power analyses in arguments for and practices of building bridges between female and male gender activism, and thus the ways in which these resist and reproduce power relations, are not necessarily linked to creating linkages as such. Rather, they are part of the more general male involvement and partnership discourses. Nevertheless, they clearly need to be reflected upon by the NGOs and donors engaging with creating such links between male and female activism in the struggles against gender inequality, gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS. By opening up some of the positions of resistance pointed at in this study, these struggles can be strengthened.

8. REFERENCES

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Peacock, Dean, Co-director of *Sonke Gender Justice Network*, email, April 24, 2007

Robins, Steven, Professor in the *Department of Sociology & Social Anthropology, University of Stellenbosch*, meeting, November 29, 2007

APPENDIX

Index for semi-structured interviews

No.	Date	Organization	Type of organization
1	October 12, 2007	EngenderHealth	Gender, antiviolenace and HIV/AIDS organisations focusing on men
2	November 2, 2007	EngenderHealth	
3	October 19, 2007	Sonke	
4	October 23, 2007	Sonke	
5	October 19, 2007	Yabonga	Gender, antiviolenace and HIV/AIDS organisations focusing on women
6	October 26, 2007	Masimanyane	
7	October 31, 2007	POWA	
8	October 29, 2007	Sida	Donors funding both organisations focusing on men and women's organisations
9	November 1, 2007	USAID	

Index for email correspondence with interviewee

No.	Date	Interviewee
1	June 18, 2008	from interview no. 4
2	June 23, 2008	from interview no. 4

Index for formal and informal meetings with key informants⁶²

No.	Date	Organization
1	September 25, 2007	Sonke
2	October 28, 2007	EngenderHealth

⁶² Of all formal and informal meetings with key informants, only those two which I refer to in the analysis are listed here.

Index for participatory observations

No.	Date and time:	Venue:	Organizations:	Type of event:
1	October 18, 2007 14.30-16.00	NEHAWU office (the National Education Health and Allied Workers Union), Cape Town	EngenderHealth & Union NEHAWU	Meeting to plan activities for 16 Days of Activism to End Violence Against Women. ⁶³ One male and two female participants.
2	October 19, 2007 11.30-13.00	Yabonga Office, Cape Town	EngenderHealth & Yabonga	A MAP facilitator gave a session for Yabonga's team leaders on domestic violence and 16 Days of Activism to End Violence Against Women. Two male and ten female participants.
3	October 27, 2007 9.00-16.00 October 28, 2007 9.00-12.30	Walter Sisulu University, East London	EngenderHealth & Men in Action	MAP workshop for the group Men in Action. 15-17 male and 3-7 female participants, mostly university students but also some university staff.
4	October 30, 2007 10.00-13.30	The Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA) office, Johannesburg	Sonke, OSISA and nearly 20 donors, both South African and foreign donors.	Round table meeting with Sonke and donors, arranged by OSISA. Twelve male and sixteen female participants.
5	November 22, 2007 10:00-11:30	Provincial government of the Western Cape, Office of the Premier, Cape Town.	EngenderHealth, Provincial Government of the Western Cape, Post Office, and various NGOs.	Last planning meeting for the men's march at the launch of 16 Days of Activism to End Violence Against Women, with representatives of the Provincial government of the Western Cape and various NGOs. Approximately ten participants, male and female.
6	November 25, 2007 12:00-14:30	Athlone Stadium, Cape Town	Sonke, EngenderHealth, Provincial Government of the Western Cape, TAC, and Khululeka Men's Support Group among others.	Men's march launching 16 Days of Activism to End Violence Against Women, with various people giving speeches, including the Minister of Finances, religious leaders, and representatives of Men as Partners and the Western Cape Network against Violence against Women.
7	December 4-6, 2007 9:00-15:00	George Correctional Centre, George	Sonke	One Man Can workshop with sixteen male inmates, four male staff and four female staff.

⁶³ The 16 days of Activism to End Violence Against Women is an international campaign, which takes place yearly between November 25 and December 10. The government, civil society as well as the private sector participate in the campaign in South Africa.