



Male

Powerlessness:

Men and

Intimate Partner

Violence

**Emmanuel
Rowlands**



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To the I Am.

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Foreword

The Blind Spot in Intimate Partner Violence Research: Towards a Holistic Narrative

In Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), intimate partner violence (IPV) remains an epidemic despite the ratification and enactments of different laws and legal instruments to curb its spread. IPV has social, economic (e.g., cost of care and burden on health systems), and psychosocial (e.g., depression, anxiety, trauma) impacts on survivors. Oftentimes, many survivors and their families are unable to access quality care and effective support. Traditionally, IPV is often associated with the experiences of women as victims and men as perpetrators in intimate relationships. Limited studies have investigated men's experience of IPV. Several IPV studies in SSA have portrayed men as perpetrators and this has advanced unidirectional narrative in IPV research and programmes over the years thereby overshadowing men's experiences of IPV (*the blind spot*) in violence research. As our understanding of human relationships deepens, it becomes increasingly apparent that this narrative is far from complete. Furthermore, this unidirectional narrative mainly focuses on heterosexual relationships and does not wholly account for IPV in same-sex relationships. Although women are mostly affected by IPV, addressing the blind spot by investigating men's experience of violence in intimate relationships is necessary for violence reduction programmes and interventions. Against this backdrop, this book is timely and important. It illuminates the less-trodden path, revealing men's profound struggles in intimate relationships.

Emmanuel Rowlands's authorship of "Male Powerlessness: Men and Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) in Johannesburg" arrives at a pivotal juncture in the global

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discourse on violence. Recent public and academic debates have been catalysed by the Covid-19 lockdown, which witnessed a surge in cases of IPV especially in South Africa. Within this landscape, South Africa, the backdrop of this research, occupies a significant position in the narrative of violence. The nation grapples with a disconcerting prevalence of interpersonal violence, particularly the grim realities of women's bodily and existential violations. In the realm of IPV, this book provides crucial nuances that enrich our comprehension, focusing specifically on heterosexual men—a demographic that has predominantly been scrutinised as perpetrators rather than victims. A meticulously researched and intellectually coherent account unfolds, shedding light on the experiences of black African men subjected to IPV and the subsequent impact on their masculine identities, social status, and sense of power.

In the pages that follow, the author delves into an essential and often overlooked aspect of our society's intricate tapestry. With a piercing gaze into the dynamics of intimate partner violence, this book takes a courageous step towards unravelling the complexities that shroud the experiences of men as both survivors and victims of IPV. Unmasking male powerlessness demands a bold examination of societal norms, perceptions, and expectations that often leave men feeling trapped within a web of silence and isolation. With each turn of the page, the reader is invited to join a journey that seeks to dismantle stereotypes and amplify the voices that have long remained unheard.

While much theorisation of IPV has historically focused on gender hierarchies favouring men and disadvantaging women, Emmanuel Rowlands deftly weaves three distinct theoretical perspectives together. This synthesis unveils the intricate contextual complexities and disruptions to established gender orders, revealing instances where men, too, are disadvantaged and oppressed. Even more compellingly, the book exposes how men's perceptions of power relations are often contested.

Foreword

Guided by a robust qualitative methodology, this book adequately captures the lived experiences of twenty-five black African men hailing from seven different African countries. Through their narratives, the pages unveil the unsettling reality of men enduring severe physical violence coupled with insidious forms of coercive control from their female partners. It unearths the multifaceted catalysts behind violence directed at men and underscores the intricate dance men engage in with the notion of hegemonic manhood—navigating victimhood while redefining their identities as men.

This book comes highly recommended for researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and other key stakeholders at the forefront of addressing gender-based violence. These pages' personal stories and experiences are nothing short of staggering. Once more, it focuses on the urgent need to combating domestic violence, pursuing gender justice, and fostering harmonious interpersonal relationships within both domestic and public spheres worldwide. As the narratives of these men echo through the chapters, we are reminded of the inexorable need for transformative change on a global scale.

As you embark on this enlightening voyage, be prepared to challenge your assumptions and bear witness to the resilience and courage of those who have dared to share their stories. “Male Powerlessness: Men and Intimate Partner Violence” is more than a book; it is a catalyst for change—a reminder that acknowledging vulnerability is an act of strength and that understanding transcends gender boundaries.

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1

Male Power and Intimate Partner Violence

“My profession is that of a mechanic. On Fridays, my co-workers and I always get together after work to buy beer and braai. As a result, I arrive home every Friday at least half-past 10 o’clock. She (my partner) is always angry as a result of this. She assumes I’m on my way back from seeing my girlfriends. I believe she is jealous. Last Friday, I came in very late, so she poured me hot water.” (Simba)

Most discussions on intimate partner violence (IPV) tend to treat it as a unidirectional issue, one of male dominance over female companions and the manifestation of power and control. However, there are situations where the power of men is ineffective, as shown in the example of Simba above. Thus, the idea that we can understand and define males in terms of some discernible component is problematic - because it implies that the conflation of manhood and power is timeless and universal.

In this book, I examine this assumption in the context of men who have experienced abuse from their female partners in Johannesburg, South Africa. This is not meant to refute the assertion that women comprise the vast majority of IPV victims, particularly in the more severe and pervasive forms. At the same time, men constitute the vast majority of the perpetrators. In fact, according to Statistics South Africa’s report - *Crimes against Women in South Africa* (STATS SA 2020 - one in five women will have experienced physical abuse by a partner in 2020. A woman was murdered in South Africa every four hours in 2016, with the country’s femicide rate being nearly four times higher than the global average in 2015. These murders were directly connected to an intimate relationship in at least half of the cases. For example, Karabo

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Mokoena, a 22-year-old woman, was killed by her lover in his Sandton apartment in 2017. In May 2018, two days after Karabo's murderer received his sentence, Zolile Khumalo, a 21-year-old female student from Durban, was murdered in her apartment. Her killer could not understand why she had dumped him. In another horrific incident, Tshegofatso Pule, a 28-year-old woman who was eight months pregnant, was discovered hanging from a tree in Durban Deep, Roodepoort, in June 2020. The court convicted Ntuthuko Shoba as the mastermind of the gruesome killing of his very pregnant girlfriend (Mashego 2022).

However, I oppose dogmatic essentialism that would make it impossible to study men as IPV victims and put an end to the gaps in representation in gender-based violence literature. Though rarely the subject of research, concepts like Connell's masculinities framework seem to embody the duality of male power and powerlessness, which is pervasive and causes women to be subordinated (Rowlands 2022a). In terms of this paradox, men's identities and positions of authority in heterosexual relationships are shaky, changeable, and constantly subject to reinterpretation. There is little doubt that how males are viewed today in South Africa differs from how they were considered in the twentieth century. The ideological and cultural connotations of masculinity and femininity are constantly being debated and renegotiated in light of changing gendered norms. Contextual transformations and factors such as gender power dynamics, masculine precarity, and unemployment exert contributory pressures, together with the dynamic experiences in men's intimate lives and masculine identities that continue to evolve. This evolution is probably part of the changes in the context of IPV influencers. As men grapple with these new realities that reveal gendered conflict and contestations, more men, even men with high levels of public social standing, become susceptible to IPV (Rowlands 2021; Ratele 2008; Seidler 2006).

The reality, in South Africa the fact that men fall victim to IPV is evident in two well-known referenced incidents, that of Judge Patrick Maqubela of Cape Town, who was allegedly

murdered by his wife Thandi in 2013, and Nkululeko Hadebe, a 38-year-old musician known as 'Flabba', fatally stabbed by his lover in Alexandra, Johannesburg, in March 2015. While Flabba's girlfriend received a 12-year prison term, Thandi Maqubela was exonerated from her husband's murder by the Supreme Court and was instead found guilty of forgery and fraud for having her husband's signature forged on a will designating her as the sole beneficiary (ENCA News Report 2015). These tragic incidents, along with several other documented occurrences of IPV in which males were harmed, highlight the need for careful attention to IPV, particularly amongst migratory black African men who may be disadvantaged because of their migratory status. Addressing these research gaps and encouraging discussions around the invisibility of male IPV victimisation is necessary. This is pertinent within an evolving context of South Africa's gendered dynamics, especially in terms of state-led legal and social-economic frameworks that protect women in intimate relationships.

This book explores the private lives of black African men (both local and foreign) in South Africa as they relate to IPV. I expose the neglect, abuse, and violence they endure at the hands of their intimate female partners, their feelings and thoughts of sadness, and their fear, shame, and powerlessness amid the shift in their understandings of themselves as black African men. I highlight the victimisation of traditional masculinities by highlighting IPV's effects on them through the oral narratives of the men themselves. I expand theoretical understanding of IPV by arguing for a more complex and nuanced view of the phenomenon in South Africa. I contextualise this discussion within existing theoretical conceptualisations on the existence of a multiplicity of black African masculinities and bring to the fore that masculinities are not fixed but relative to hegemonic understandings of the concept (Howson 2014). Overall, the book contributes nuances to the fragmented analysis, uni-dimensionality, and masculinity-blaming, which IPV experts continue to articulate within and outside of the South African context. To lay the

groundwork for the material in the ensuing chapters, let us turn to discuss some concepts and literature that provides a contextual framework for this research.

What is intimate partner violence?

Intimate partner violence is when one partner in a romantic relationship actively promotes the use of violent acts and destructive behaviours to control and dominate the other partner. This is done over a short or long time to gain control over the other partner's compliance and dependency, closeness and care, and respect and recognition. It can happen in partnerships such as marriage, cohabitation, or dating between heterosexual or homosexual couples (Burelomova, Gulina & Tikhomandritskaya 2018; WHO 2013; Lawson 2012; Heise 2011; Dienye & Gbeneol 2009). It lacks the face of a man or a woman as the perpetrator transcends gender binary classifications. Although it frequently occurs in domestic spaces, partners can also approve of the use of violence in public places. Accordingly, IPV should not only be regarded as domestic violence in a narrow sense.

The term "partner" in this violent type of relationship refers to current or previous spouses, boyfriends or girlfriends, courting partners, or sexual partners. The couples' connectedness and attentiveness characterise these partnerships in many ways, including physical, emotional, psychological, and sexual intimacy (CDC 2017; Strong & Cohen 2014). For instance, a partner's sense of emotional intimacy relates to how they feel via empathy, respect, and communication. Partners have expectations about how they want to be emotionally cared for, consciously and unconsciously. The forcing of intimacy by one partner becomes a method of communicating a clear and compelling statement when there is a lack of synchronicity and genuine emotional touch. Understanding each partner's power and how violence manifests in the relationship depends on how they advocate for their demands (Strong & Cohen 2014).

1 Male Power and Intimate Partner Violence

The World Health Organization (WHO) described the manifestation of IPV as:

“any behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, psychological or sexual harm to those in the relationship, including acts of physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse and controlling behaviours.”
(Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi & Lozano 2002)

An IPV is stated to have happened if the behaviour is toxic, destructive, and causes bodily, psychological, emotional, or sexual harm to the other partner. Instead of encouraging or promoting healthy intimacy in this situation, the partner is committed to cultivating their interests and desires through dominance. Abusers also adopt methods of controlling behaviour that are subtle, difficult to detect or prove, and even unknown to establish dominance. Does the WHO definition of IPV imply that only men can use violence to further their interests in a relationship? Definitely not. The fact that some women defy men in private shows how some men’s control in the home is being challenged. It also illustrates how not all men benefit from or can be located in structural relations of dominance, even though men can still dominate in other spheres - political, economic, and physical power (Morrell, Jewkes, Lindegger & Hamlall 2013; Albertyn 2011).

Moreover, the WHO IPV description does not suggest that some men are ceding control of the family or the home, which is a common assumption in patriarchal societies. The ability to express masculine dominance may have rather altered male power. In other words, although male identities can change over periods and in different contexts, the essence of male power often does not (Kimmel 2008; Brittan 1989). So, when males avoid dominating their spouses, they may just be redefining the space in which that power is used and showing restraint rather than communicating a loss of their need for it (Rowlands 2022c; Hamlall & Morrell 2012). However, some men might not have what it takes to perform at a gender power level, and research on gender has shown a clear correlation between male power and authority behaviour and

IPV towards women (Shefer, Stevens & Clowes 2010; Morrell 2007). Others reference that some men circumstantially assume subordination in intimate relationships, particularly in a transnational environment, making them more vulnerable to IPV behaviours (Igbanoi 2018; Eckstein 2010; Pease 2009).

There is no universally accepted direction regarding acts that qualify as IPV by criminal justice systems, scholars, and social practitioners across societies (Heise 2011; Buzawa, Buzawa & Stark 2012). Buzawa and Stark (2012) noted correctly that subtler acts like emotional abuse, stalking, and other acts of omission and malevolent behaviours are included in the range of actions that constitute IPV yet are excluded in the criminal legal statutes of many countries around the world, unlike more common crimes like rape, murder, assault, and property damage. Buiten and Naidoo (2020) draw attention to practitioners' divergent opinions on the problem and the complexity of the activities that cause IPV. In fact, the idea of IPV is transitory. For instance, as an example of IPV, there is ambivalence regarding one partner dominating the other partner's finances or making unreasonable financial demands beyond their means. Flood and Pease (2006) opine that IPV-constituent acts might be interpreted differently depending on the situation and the setting, particularly in various cultural contexts. They add that there is growing evidence that IPV is influenced by social norms, notably implicit and explicit views that are socially constructed, the former of which is challenging to measure. They contend that the prevalence of IPV transcends the socio-historical and economic conditions in which people live. For too long, IPV has been primarily regarded as tangible acts and mostly limited to physical violence. Scholars contend that combining physical harm with other forms of damage complicates what may be the cause of abuses (Gelles & Cornell 1985). However, Dekeseredy, Schwartz and Donnermeyer (2009) point out that the harm that emotional and verbal abuse causes to one's self-esteem and one's ability to relate to others has a long-lasting impact on people's lives. In a way, if a wide range of behaviours might be considered abusive or violent, it opens up scenarios where

one spouse may constantly identify the other's behaviour as abusive or violent. The lack of agreement over the behaviours that potentially make IPV unavoidable contributes to the inconsistency in estimating the prevalence of IPV and identifying susceptible groups. Be that as it may, IPV acts can occur in various trajectories of minor discordant episodes, which may eventually escalate to more severe forms, with lasting chronic impact on the victims (CDC 2017; McCarrick, Davis-McCabe & Hirst-Winthrop 2015).

Notwithstanding the complexity of the acts that make up IPV, the operationalised broad classification of IPV acts employed in this book is from the USA Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The CDC (2017) classifies IPV into four distinctive types, which are:

- Physical violence (including threats, attempts to, or using physical force to cause harm, injury, disability, or death).
- Sexual violence or coercion (including sexual assault, rape, sexual harassment, unwanted sexual contact, and sexual exploitation without the consent or induced consent of the victim, whether as an attempted or completed act).
- Stalking (following, spying, sneaking around the victim that raises safety concerns).
- Psychological or emotional aggression (includes verbal and non-verbal attacks to harm one's partner emotionally and mentally, coercive control to entrap a victim, intimidation, and exploitation of the victim's vulnerability).

Scholars have expanded the classification of IPV to include coercive control strategies some intimate partners use to obtain control over the relationship, such as money abuse and legal administrative abuse (Hines, Douglas & Berger 2014; Ludsin & Vetten 2005; Krug *et al.* 2002). Stark (2007:229) refers to coercive control forms of abuse as "microregulating a partner's behaviour". Ludsin and Vetten (2005) believe that a partner with control over money, property, and other financial resources has an unfair advantage and is more likely to exert control over the relationship. Hines *et al.* (2014) similarly include actions by one partner to intimidate the other or

achieve judicial action under pretences to acquire control over the situation as IPV. Marganski and Melander (2015) note a new trend of intimate partner cyber violence. The expansion of IPV acts demonstrates the dynamics of power and how various resources, including legal, economic, and even cyber skills, can be used to gain control. However, although these types of IPV are frequently not reported to the police and other government agencies (Krug *et al.* 2002), IPV is a rising occurrence in the broader milieu of gender-based violence. It is a problem for human rights and a substantial risk factor for worldwide public health (WHO 2013; Heise 2011).

Feminism and IPV: Gender, power, and patriarchy

Feminist activism has moved perceptions of IPV from being a domestic issue to the foreground of national social and health concerns, attracting deserving policy attention globally. This has been accomplished by launching effective campaigns and substantial research on domestic abuse (Dragiewicz, 2008). Gender, power, and patriarchy have been introduced as critical explanatory elements by feminists since they have approached the issue of IPV from the perspective of women's experiences of violence. The feminist perspective considers IPV as a gendered phenomenon that has its roots in the patriarchal values of men and the ongoing display of male domination and oppression of females in intimate relationships (Anderson 2005).

Most feminist accounts count the argument of fundamental gender representation in roles, relations, and identities that locate women in society as having inferior qualities, thus justifying their subservience to men and subjugation. For instance, Rossi (1977) connected the different biological functions of men and women and the various hormonal-determined developmental patterns that feed into childhood upbringing. She sees women as being placed in disadvantageous sociocultural roles of being required to care for infants and household tasks. She argued that these need to be adjusted and compensated for. These differences are

brought into play in various institutionalised sexual divisions of labour relationships and are linked to how masculinities and femininities are constructed along with production and reproductive functions (Kimmel 2017). West and Zimmerman (1987) have argued that gender is a setting for continuing interactional practices in which gendered cultural scripts are acted out, performed, experimented with, and even modified. They described men's and women's everyday life behavioural preferences and interactions as "doing gender". In a different argument, de Beauvoir (1949) examines how women are viewed as "other" in a male-produced society. She believes that the development of gendered behaviour and identities results from male-focused consciousness in a culture that men built. This culture places women's experiences and self-awareness as the "other", an objectified being with features subordinate to the agentic male subject. Therefore, women's experiences of differences and subjugation in relation to men stem partly from the fact that they were excluded from cultural constructions and partly from their internalisation of otherness (Ritzer 2007).

Feminists contend that men and women in society are situated differently in terms of power dynamics because of women's conditioned ways of being. Women get fewer structural determinants of power, such as material resources, social status, and economic opportunities for self-actualisation than men. In this sense, men and women are located unequally, whether it is locations based on religion, education, economy, or family. For instance, women are situated in domesticity in families where they are expected to continue to be dependent, and the idea of the breadwinner is used to define men's masculinities. This, in a sense, undermines and structurally excludes women from production and as economic contributors in the home. This significantly explains the male de facto headship engendered by religion and culture in the gendering of masculine identities and power relations in many societies (Gibbs, Sikweyiya & Jewkes 2014; Lindsay 2007; Miescher 2005). Morrell (1998) speaks of the manifestation of gendered power relationships in black African

societies as a privilege for men to fully assert their authority over wives, children, and other women. Women are expected to primarily submit to their husband's authority and sexual desires. This practice has a strong resonance in many South African contexts where women are undoubtedly undervalued in community rhetoric and institutions and yet serve as their husbands' property (Sathisparsad, Taylor & Dlamini 2008). Hearn (2007:14-15) refers to such practice as the promotion of "hetero-social power relations", whereby the imbalance of power manifests in men's discrimination, objectification, and violent oppression of women.

This pattern of gender discrimination, inequality, and differences between genders is most deeply and widely ingrained in pervasive ways into society, a fundamental structure of dominance known as patriarchy. Feminists will argue that patriarchy is a universal system prevalent in its social organisation and gives males in families the ultimate and legitimate power, dominance, and social advantage (Sathisparsad *et al.* 2008). Connell (1995:82-83) views this as the "patriarchal order" that validates the general dominance of men as a group by which all men stand to gain as beneficiaries from this gendered order. Similarly, some researchers argue that men's concrete interests, whether individually or collectively, have remained constant over time and space, perpetuating the practice of making women, whether individually or collectively, the subordinate and refusing to acknowledge the subordinates' independent subjectivity (Kimmel 2008; Dekeseredy & Dragiewicz 2007). The upshot is a direct power relationship between men and women, in which men have a fundamental and real interest in controlling, employing, subjugating, and oppressing women (Kimmel 2008; Dekeseredy & Dragiewicz 2007). Thus, IPV is a spill-over of patriarchal values and attitudes into the domestic space, furthering women's subordination and creating social inequality.

However, while the relationship between manhood and power does appear to have persisted over time, the universal understanding of the patriarchal dividend restricts

our comprehension of the dynamics of power relationships because it ignores the oppositional interactions that men may have with less submissive and opposing women. As a result, power relationships must be understood in various masculine constructions, emphasising the emotional experience of emasculation when women exert some power or threaten men's presumptive sense of dominance. According to Seidler (2006), sentiments of uncertainty and powerlessness that different men may experience in contrast to women also play a significant role in the formation and practices of gender and the operation of patriarchy. Thus, because of the complex interactional experiences that shape how men may perceive themselves, the understanding of masculinities is better appreciated as a relational construct. For this reason, Scott and Schwartz (2006) warn against overstating the influence of men and hint that not all men control and dominate women. However, researchers continue to foreground IPV in the power imbalance between intimate partners, wherein men arbitrarily assume social privilege, and masculine power is inextricably linked to IPV outcomes (Mathews 2010; Jewkes, Levin & Penn-Kekana 2002; Dobash & Dobash 1979). Therefore, using phrases like 'wife abuse', 'wife battering', 'violence against women' and 'patriarchal terrorism' serve to reflect gendering as fundamentally the main driving force behind IPV (Lawson 2012; Campbell 2002).

Gendering and IPV outcomes against women: The global context

Most IPV research has been conducted globally and has shown that violence against women is frequently severe and persistent and typically occurs in patriarchal gendered systems (WHO 2013, Heise 2011). For instance, a 2013 research by the WHO found that an intimate male partner commits 38 per cent to 50 per cent of homicides of women, and 30 per cent of women globally had suffered IPV in their lifetimes. According to the same WHO (2013) survey, over 36 per cent (slightly more than 1 in 3) of women in sub-Saharan Africa had been victims of physical and sexual abuse at the hands

of their male intimate partners. The survey indicates that unequal gendered patriarchal practices and macho behaviours are the main factors contributing to the prevalence of IPV. The paper emphasises that attitudes and norms that support and accept violence are potential risk factors linked to IPV. Scholars opine that the formation of these norms and attitudes has been influenced by cultures that condone wife-beating, the socialisation of manhood to emphasise aggression and dominance, and other factors (Feder, Levant & Dean 2010; Ludsin & Vetten 2005). Heilman and Barker (2018) have also noted that men's emotional stoicism, gendered placement, patriarchal power reinforcing, and pressure to perform well as men are hegemonic processes that encourage males to use violence in intimate relationships in different countries around the world. These may have implicitly contributed to the one-in-three women's experience of physical and sexual violence at the hands of their intimate partners globally (WHO 2013). However, it is incredibly challenging to draw an empirical connection between norms, attitudes, behaviours, and IPV (McCloskey, Boonzaier, Steinbrenner & Hunter 2016). It is important to remember that the WHO report includes only nations with official crime documentation and draws data from roughly 80 other countries.

A recent population-based investigation by Wang, Fang & Li (2019) in roughly 67 communities in a county in China discovered a substantial correlation between men's IPV perpetration and rigid hegemonic masculinities. The survey received responses from 1 017 males and 1 103 women between 18 and 19 years of age, supporting their findings. The survey identifies some of the essential hegemonic components that males seem to have internalised, justifying their dominance and use of violence against their intimate partners, such as male dominance in decision-making, male honour and reputation, aggressive male behaviours, and heterosexuality. One in five men who participated in the survey acknowledged raping either a partner or a non-partner, and most said they had used physical and sexual IPV against their partners. Contrast this to most men and women who expressed support

for the egalitarian relational practice in household settings (Wang *et al.* 2019). The Wang *et al.* (2019) study supported the results of the WHO's (2013) global survey, which identified low educational levels, unemployment, poverty, child exposure to violence, alcohol abuse, and gender inequalities as common risk factors for IPV perpetration. It also identified a generational proliferation of violence, male dominance, toxic masculinities, partner quarrelling, and having multiple sexual partners as potential risk factors associated with Chinese heterosexual men's use of physical and sexual IPV against their counterparts.

Foregrounded in the above survey is the strong correlation between IPV against women's prevalence and acceptance of rigid hegemonic masculine norms, underscoring the fact that gendering and patterns of dominant masculinity and inequality operate at various relational levels in most societies where IPV is a problem. This is consistent with reports from the United States (Smith, Parrott, Swartout & Tharp 2015) and Australia (Flood 2018; Webster and Flood 2015), and the results of a UN multi-country research that included Bangladesh, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, China, and Papua New Guinea (Fulu, Warner, Miedema, Jewkes, Roselli & Lang 2013). However, McCarthy, Mehta & Haberland (2018) found several measurement irregularities in the empirical literature after conducting a systematic analysis of 23 studies examining the effects of cultural beliefs and power disparities on male IPV perpetration published between 2000 and 2015. Again, 2016 saw the emergence of a startling paradox regarding the prevalence of IPV amongst the Nordic nations, ie Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. Despite records of relatively high levels of gender equality policies, which is a critical preventive element in tackling IPV anywhere in the globe, the report in the region documented a disproportionately high rate of violence against women (Garcia & Merlo 2016). One explanation for this discrepancy is that these nations may encounter opposition and backlash in their efforts to dismantle traditional gendering norms that encourage IPV (Garcia & Merlo 2016). This pattern is prevalent

in sub-Saharan African societies. Despite shifting social demands and advocacies, men frequently adhere to traditional and cultural gendering standards.

In Africa

Compared to women elsewhere, about 45.6 per cent of African women had experienced IPV throughout their lifetime (Garcia-Moreno, Pallitto, Devries, Stockl, Watts, & Abrahams 2013). The prevalence of IPV varies from as high as 90 per cent in Zambia and 69 per cent in Zimbabwe to as low as 18 per cent in Nigeria and 31 per cent in Malawi (United Nations 2012). According to several studies (Durevall & Lindskog 2015; Dunkle & Decker 2013; Jewkes, Sikweyiya, Morrell & Dunkle 2011), IPV prevalence is linked to record-high HIV infections throughout sub-Saharan Africa, and risk factors for IPV perpetration in black African societies include poverty, unemployment, alcohol abuse, childhood experiences of violence, gender inequality, and traditional masculine norms that are prevalent in Western societies.

Often the high occurrence of IPV is attributable to the fact that most black African societies are typically quite patriarchal, with clearly defined gender roles and expectations for heterosexual men and women in intimate relationships front and centre in cultural and traditional beliefs. According to Dogo (2014), heterosexual women typically hold a subordinate position in these relationships while the men have the head status and exercise power and control over their partners. As a result, heterosexual women frequently adhere to the cultural justification of their partners' use of violence to "correct" them in many African countries (UNICEF 2017).

The UNICEF (2017) database suggests that heterosexual women between the ages of 15 and 49 in African nations are willing to accept correctional beatings from their spouses in specific circumstances. These statistics include 81 per cent in Laos, 86 per cent in Guinea and Timor-Leste, 87 per cent in Mali, 71 per cent in South Sudan, and 75 per cent in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). In the Central African

Republic, almost 80 per cent of heterosexual women consent to being beaten to conform to their husbands' control. In rural Egypt, 80 per cent of the women defended their spouses' use of force if they were denied sexual contact. According to research conducted in the Eastern Cape, Limpopo, and Mpumalanga provinces of South Africa, 84 per cent of the women interviewed approved and justified wife beating after the bride price (*lobola*) had been paid (Ludsin & Vetten 2005). Damaging cultural traditions and traditional proverbs like *mosadi o hwela bagadi*, which means 'a woman must endure the suffering of her marriage till she dies', further encourage women to be victimised in marital relationships in South Africa (CSVR 2016).

In Kenya, Owiti (2019) examined data from the Demographic and Health Surveys conducted in 2003, 2008/09, and 2014 and found that the income and education gaps put women at risk of IPV, especially when they are in a relationship with men of low socioeconomic status. Owiti went on to note that most patriarchal communities in Kenya have cultural ideas and expectations that males should be the providers of households. Thus, Kenyan men partnered with women with higher income levels are prone to feel threatened and employ the instrument of control. On the contrary, Gateri, Ondicho and Karimii (2021) observed that in Kirinyaga County, Kenya, IPV usually takes the form of psychological and other coercive control exchanges between partners, in which the man who fails in their provider responsibilities is more likely to be verbally abused. The findings of these studies resonate with the argument that offenders of IPV use psychological coercive control strategies, including isolation and manipulation, and physical violence to trap, deprive and punish their victims (Stark 2007).

Similarly, 70 per cent of participants in research conducted in Uganda by Koenig *et al.* (2003) agreed to physically and psychologically punish women who violated their gender roles. Men's support for using violence against women to enforce gender norms ranges from 40.9 per cent in Kenya to 58.8 per cent in Ethiopia, according to a cross-

national survey conducted in 17 sub-Saharan nations. Women who mistreat their children, argue with their spouses, leave the house without telling their spouses, burn food, or reject their spouse's sexual rights all contribute to this violence (Uthman, Lawoko & Moradi 2009). In a comparison between South Africa and Nigeria, Fakunmoju and Rasool (2018) showed that, according to the sample, 2.6 per cent of Nigerian teenagers are more likely than 2.21 per cent of South African adolescents to believe in patriarchal gender dominance and the discipline of women. These studies do not, however, show a solid empirical connection between perception and actual abuse because they are based on IPV-related views and attitudes. Significant studies have found a substantial link between IPV abuse, unequal gender relations, and men's power in South Africa. The following section briefly discusses this.

South African context

Before examining men's experiences, it is crucial to provide some insight into South African women's experiences with IPV. Compared to other non-warring nations, South Africa is thought to have one of the highest rates of violence, including IPV (Peacock 2012; Altbeker 2007; Moffett 2006). IPV is believed to be the main factor in both aggravated assaults and non-natural fatalities amongst women in South Africa (Joyner, Rees, & Honikman 2015; MRC 2014; Abrahams *et al.* 2013; Mathews, Abrahams, Martin, Vetten, Van der Merwe & Jewkes 2004). For instance, an alarmingly high rate (8.8 per 1000) of women and girls aged 14 and older in the female population were killed by their intimate partners in 1999. Six times more South African women were murdered in 2009 than anywhere else in the world, and 56 per cent of these killings were carried out by male intimate partners (Abrahams *et al.* 2013). According to reports, between 2016 and 2017 one in five South African women experienced sexual assault from their male relationships. (STATS SA 2017). According to numbers that were just recently made public by Statistics SA and the South African Police Services, about 2.01 million crimes were reported in South Africa during the 2018 - 2019

fiscal year. According to the data, contact crimes, including murder, sexual assault, and domestic abuse, have increased significantly - five times the global norm. The perpetrators in 72 per cent of the reported assault instances were the victims' friends and romantic partners (STATS SA 2019; SAPS Crime Annual Stats 2019).

South African women have organised protests in response to the brutal rape and murder of Uyinene Mrwetyana at a post office in Cape Town, as well as other notable murders like those of Janika Mallo, Karabo Mokoena, and Reeva Steenkamp. They were protesting the prevalence and rise in cases of extreme violence against women (Naidoo 2018). This led the President of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa, to proclaim violence against women a national issue on September 5, 2019. (SAG 2019).

The historical effects of apartheid, which led to the normalisation of violence in the South African setting, have been partially blamed for the high occurrence of IPV (Buiten & Naidoo 2016; Machisa 2010; Hamber 2010; Anderson 2000). Researchers have found that amongst other personal and individual factors, patriarchal gender attitudes, cultural beliefs and selective justifications of domestic violence, gender-inequality practices, income disparities, and the expected masculine traits of toughness and dominance all significantly contribute to men using violence against their partners (Morrel, Jewkes & Lindegger 2012; Shefer *et al.* 2010; Lindegger & Maxwell 2007; Ludsins & Vetten 2005). Additionally, researchers have found that the "hyper-masculinities" phenomenon has a significant role in men committing IPV in South Africa as a shared society-level risk factor (Buiten & Naidoo 2013; Peacock 2013; Ratele., Shefer, & Clowes 2012; Conway 2008).

Hyper-masculinity is linked to leading a risky lifestyle, maintaining authority through aggression, and having possessive sexual behaviours (Graaff & Heineken 2017; Hamburger *et al.* 1996). Men who exhibit any of these traits are much more prone to be violent in interpersonal disputes

and to degrade women (Graaff & Heineken 2017). In addition, given the particular respect and social status given to men who enlisted in comradeship during the apartheid struggle, the construction of “militarized masculinities” (Conway 2004) further reinforces the value of aggression and toughness amongst South African men, particularly young black men. The construction of the ideal masculinities in post-apartheid South Africa is thus further highlighted by the norms surrounding power, resistance, and hyper-masculinity, which promotes a culture of violence that men must uphold to gain legitimacy and respect from their peers and the community (Mazibuko 2017; Ratele 2008; Morrell 2005; Xaba 2001). For instance, many males are likely to commit IPV against their partners to uphold control while also defending their honour when their status as “powerful men” is threatened and challenged by more assertive women (Gibbs *et al.* 2014; Morrell 2007; Wood & Jewkes 2001).

Earlier, respected studies had emphasised the connection between IPV and masculinities in South Africa. For instance, a gender-based study by Abrahams, Jewkes, Martin, Mathews, Vetten & Lombard (2009) found that South Africa had a higher-than-average rate of women being murdered by their male partners (South Africa 24.7 per 100 000 females - global 4 per 100 000 females). According to the study, some males killed their partners via strangling, choking, drowning, or blunt force trauma - these exhibit female power's role in IPV in the South African setting. The idea of gender power and its consequences for IPV against women in a Pretoria township were studied qualitatively by Mazibuko (2017). She discovered that the foundation of male perpetration of IPV includes dominant cultural beliefs and ideas of men's ownership of women and men's privilege to control and discipline women. This sociologically disadvantages women and empowers men to use control and violence to demonstrate their masculine prowess. Thus, according to data from the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, over 77 per cent of women in the province of Limpopo have been the victims of violence committed by their male counterparts. Women in KwaZulu-

Natal reported similar abuse patterns at 36 per cent, whereas women in Gauteng and the Western Cape reported gender-based violence (GBV) at rates of 51 per cent and 45 per cent, respectively. In all of the provinces, The majority of offenders were found to be men. Additionally, in this survey, roughly 76 per cent of men in Gauteng and 48 per cent of men in Limpopo, respectively, self-reported engaging in IPV (CSVR 2016:4). In Gauteng, more than 50 per cent of women have experienced physical, mental, sexual, or financial abuse at some point in their lives. In the research, 80 per cent of men admitted to physically abusing their partners (CSVR 2016:4). These studies are prevalence-based and do not take into account the particular situations that can raise questions about the interpersonal dynamics that contribute to women's experiences as victims and males as possible perpetrators.

Further risk factors for domestic violence in several communities in three northern provinces in South Africa were provided by Jewkes *et al.* in 2002. Using multiple logistic models and a response rate of 90.3 per cent of women between 18 and 49 in a current or former relationship, the authors concluded that there is no significant link between a woman's educational background, her perception of gender roles and norms, her condoning or justification of violence, and her being subjected to IPV. The study contends that IPV becomes men's expression of power, wrath, and resentment to establish their masculine identity against the less obedient women in communities that condone intimate partner violence and the widespread subordination of women. The study emphasises how IPV against women has become commonplace in various African countries due to dominant concepts of violence, child abuse, alcoholism, poverty, and masculinity ideologies. The results of IPV could show a gender-neutral perspective in communities that condone violence to resolve interpersonal issues. The survey analysis tacitly omitted the 34 per cent of the sample who justified husbands assaulting their wives.

These studies effectively draw attention to the accuracy in measuring IPV prevalence in South Africa. They also draw attention to the over-emphasis placed on male power and

relational approaches to understanding IPV in context. This way of thinking excludes some situations where males might also be exposed to IPV and the preceding disputes that justify such victimisation. Therefore, it advises further research to determine how gender-equitable relational practices may change power dynamics in close friendships, leading to tension and conflict between partners. The findings from the discussion above support the part that expressions of male power play in IPV against women. The discussion of power dynamics' potential influence on IPV outcomes in male same-sex relationships is covered in the next section.

Power dynamics in same-sex IPV

The foregoing has been about the violation of women by dominant males. Along with this, academics have recently thought about looking into the IPV experiences of homosexual men and other members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) community. According to these studies, the frequency of IPV amongst LGBTQ individuals may be comparable to or even higher than rates found in the heterosexual community (Badenes-Ribera, Bonilla-Campos, Frias-Navarro, Pons-Salvador & Monterde-I-Bort 2016; Hellemans, Loeys, Buysse, Dewaele & De Smet 2015; Edwards, Sylaska & Neal 2015; Finneran & Stephenson 2013; Goldberg & Meyer 2013; Nowinski & Bowen 2012). Indicators of risk for IPV amongst gay and bisexual men also resemble those for IPV in heterosexual couples (Goldenberg, Stephenson, Freeland, Finneran & Hadley 2016). In Atlanta, Georgia, 64 gay and bisexual men participated in focus group talks as part of the study by Goldenberg *et al.* (2016), which sheds light on men's general perceptions of the sources of conflict and tension in same-sex relationships in relation to IPV. According to the study's findings, IPV in same-sex male relationships is frequently caused by risk factors like gender role conflict, income, employment, and age disparities, alcohol and drug abuse, jealousy, degree of outness (extent of one's public conviction of homosexuality), and external homophobia.

The study by Goldenberg *et al.* (2016) shows how same-sex male partnerships without a female partner exhibit the same confusion caused by ambiguous gender roles as those seen in heterosexual relationships. Role sharing within all-male connections is a source of friction and problems. However, more materially powerful males may present themselves as providers and leaders in these partnerships. The study shows complex aspects of hegemonic masculinities, such as the observation that dominance and violence - which often underlie IPV outcomes - are challenging to establish in unusual contexts since both males defend themselves to reassert their masculinity when mistreated. Because of the imbalance in the structure of these American men's relationships, caused by the risk factors listed above, one partner is further positioned as the dominant figure over the other. The findings, however, are perception based and do not represent the opinions of gay or bisexual males who may have engaged in IPV perpetration or have fallen victim to it.

However, a mixed-method study by Kubicek, McNeeley & Collins (2015) of young gay and bisexual men in Los Angeles discovered some risk factors similar to those mentioned above. It also included gay men's perceptions of societal stereotypes, gender constructs of who becomes the weaker or more submissive (terms used to describe the feminine in gay relationships), and internalised homophobia (feeling of shame, anxieties, and becoming vulnerable to a partner who threatens to "out" them) as unique risk factors. These features and risk factors at the societal level shown in homosexual and bisexual men are similar to some of the results identified as significant contributors to lesbians' IPV (Pepper & Sand 2015; Hassounah & Glass 2008; Balsam & Szymanski 2005).

Furthermore, the IPV prevalence portion of the study by Kubicek *et al.* (2015) emphasises that there is a power struggle in these homosexual men's relationships as seen by the bidirectional perpetration and victimisation of physical, sexual, and emotional IPV. For instance, 69 per cent of the sampled participants reported shouting at each other, and 65 per cent admitted to cursing or abusing one another. Twenty-

four per cent of the sample claimed to have committed severe injury-related violence, and 27 per cent claimed to have been victims. However, two-thirds of the participants agreed to have committed or suffered from acts of physical IPV in the previous year. According to the study, there was a high prevalence of sexual violence, especially forceful anal or oral sex, with 35 per cent of these young gay men claiming perpetrators and 35 per cent reporting victims. About 28 per cent of these people admitted to being both victims and offenders. However, Merrill and Wolfe (2000) have shown that shared perpetration and victimisation in relationships between homosexual and bisexual men are elusive since males often don't have equal physical power. Therefore, there are usually the main perpetrators and the victims who might occasionally defend themselves. However, according to Bartholomew, Regan, White & Oram (2008), the pattern of IPV in male same-sex relationships makes it harder and harder to recognise the dominating and vulnerable masculine partner in this situation. It follows that masculinity manifests in IPV in both dominant and non-dominant ways.

Anderson, Ross, Nyoni & McCurdy (2015) surveyed 200 young gay and bisexual males from Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and discovered that 58 per cent of sexual IPV was committed against these men in sub-Saharan Africa. The results demonstrate high verbal and moral abuse and physical assaults by strangers and family members. The Anderson *et al.* (2015) study describes societal-level risk factors that are implicitly linked to homosexual or bisexual men's experiences of depression, internalised homonegativity, and IPV outcomes as culturally embedded homophobic attitudes and socio-political views in African communities. In African civilisations, homosexism and societal discrimination make it much more difficult for homosexual men to report their IPV experiences; as a result, these men may tolerate abuse in silence to avoid stigma because of their sexual orientation (Mgopa, Mbwambo, Likindikoki & Pallangyo 2017; Finneran, Chard, Sineath, Sullivan & Stephenson 2012). In a study that involved six nations, South Africa had the highest likelihood of reporting

physical IPV. The results show that the degree of reporting of gay / bisexual IPVs varies depending on the homophobic and heteronormative social forces in the various nations (Finneran *et al.* 2012).

In their study of 521 homosexual and bisexual males in South Africa, Stephenson, de Voux and Sullivan (2011) found that sexual risk-taking behaviour increases the chances of HIV infection and affects the prevalence of IPV. The study found that amongst gay and bisexual men, physical and sexual IPV occurred at a rate of 8.09 per cent and 4.51 per cent reported recent encounters. However, compared to the high rates in South Africa's heterosexual population, the study found a substantially lower degree of IPV prevalence. The study shows that whereas perpetrators of physical IPV are six times more likely to engage in violent, unprotected anal intercourse with their partners, men who experience physical IPV are more likely to be subjected to such sex by their partners. As a result, the study emphasises overt signs of hyper-masculinity (sexual risk-taking) as a frequent sign of IPV in the context of homosexual and bisexual males in South Africa. However, the sample was made up of 90.2 per cent of white gay men, making it irrelevant to a varied population.

The findings of the studies reviewed confirmed my original assertions that males can be perceived as weak and can experience IPV. They also emphasise the varied ways of understanding IPV beyond gender classifications. Although men's attitudes and IPV against heterosexual women may indeed be affected by their beliefs, the assumption that all males build masculine strength and dominance becomes shaky in male same-sex relationships (Bartholomew *et al.* 2008; Merrill & Wolfe 2000). Further evidence that IPV outcomes should be understood in the gender construct of partners in a relationship comes from studies showing that characteristics that contribute to IPV perpetration amongst intimate gay males are identical to those seen in female same-sex relationships (Pepper & Sand 2015; Balsam & Szymanski 2005). It is therefore pertinent to examine how masculinity is constructed within different populations

and how it operationalised itself as a risk and vulnerability factor at a societal level so that men's susceptibility to IPV, including heterosexual men's realities, can be documented and addressed.

There does not seem to be much work that shows how different masculine identities might appear as potentially vulnerable in heterosexual relationships, which can lead to instances where men may experience IPV. The literature on men's experiences with IPV committed by their female heterosexual partners will be reviewed in the next section.

Power dynamics: IPV against heterosexual men

The sentiment that it is taboo for a man to endure any form of violence from his partner is evident in the historical context of many societies around the world, where male victims of female violence are frequently mocked and publicly humiliated by society and justice officials. For instance, abused men were forced to wear wired outfits and ride backwards on a donkey around the community in post-renaissance France. These processions were known as *Charivari*. They were social rituals intended to pelt and shame abused men for failing to live up to the masculine power standards (George 1994). In the eighteenth century, men in France who allowed their wives to beat them were punished by shamefully kissing a set of decorated animal horns (Steinmetz 1978). In post-renaissance England, male victims of female violence were chained to a cart and dragged around the village while people mocked and cast aspersions on them (George 1994). In South Africa, it is culturally forbidden for a man to be subjected to violence by his partner as he risks being ridiculed by his peers unless he endures such violence discreetly. The latter is encapsulated in the Setswana proverb *Monnakenku o lletateng*, which means "a man is a sheep who must suffer in quiet" (Thobejane, Luthada & Mogorosia 2018). Within these societies, these parades and shaming rituals were regarded as patriarchal conventions and cultural attempts to emphasise patriarchal ideals that rejected the idea of a man's vulnerability to feminine

aggressiveness, therefore educating men to be more assertive in their relationships (George 1994). These historical facts imply that early societies recognised the possibility of men becoming the targets of violent relationships. Still, in modern society, partner abuse is perceived as a gendered issue in which men and male power are at the centre of most analysis. In academic literature, men have traditionally been perceived as the perpetrators of interpersonal and gendered violence; however, a smaller group of researchers has examined the IPV experiences of heterosexual men in Europe, Africa, and South Africa, which will be discussed in this section.

The European context: Men as victims

One intriguing study in Europe by Costa, Soares, Lindert, Hatzidimitriadou, Sundin, Toth & Barros (2015) was an IPV prevalence survey-based study in Athens, Budapest, Porto, Östersund, Stuttgart, and London. In the analysed population, the study discovered alarming rates of IPV for both men and women and reciprocal victimisation and perpetration. Physical IPV victimisation ranged from 9.7 per cent (men) and 8.5 per cent (women). Men made up 5.4 per cent of sexual assault victims, while women made up 8.9 per cent. According to the data on the prevalence of non-physical violence, there is a bidirectional pattern of perpetration. According to statistics for Athens, 71.4 per cent of the males surveyed self-reported abusing their partners psychologically. This figure is comparable to the 74.7 per cent self-reported abuse by women. A closer examination of these numbers reveals considerable hostility in these relationships, indicating a potential normalisation of violence in resolving interpersonal conflicts across the six locations. These findings highlight the manly vulnerabilities of European males by showing that men emerge as IPV perpetrators at a nearly identical proportion to women across Europe. According to Costa *et al.* (2015), the disparities in sociocultural and economic factors are a significant cause of cross-city heterogeneity. The similarities between men and women regarding IPV perpetration and victimisation are related to the dynamics of gender equality in Europe. However,

the Revised Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS2) (Straus, Hamby & Warren 2003) used in the study is an act-specific questioning instrument that ignores both the subjective meanings of the participants and the context of the violence.

In a grounded theory study on the experiences of 20 heterosexual men in Italy, Entilli and Cipolletta (2016) offered qualitative information on the prevalence of psychological and physical IPV amongst heterosexual men. It was found from this study that women have used violence, including verbal abuse, stalking, public humiliation, manipulating partners' relatives, making false accusations, lying about being pregnant to save the relationship, and inflicting severe injuries by occasionally hiring attackers. Some of the wounds were serious enough to need medical assistance. The males described how their spouses tried to exert control over them by cutting them off from their social, professional, and family networks, calling them names, humiliating them, and, in worst cases, undermining their sense of self-worth to weaken and further subjugate them. These men's experiences in the study serve as an example of the cycle of violence theorising of battered heterosexual women (Walker 1979). The theory hypothesises three stages of violence: build-up, battering, and honeymoon phases. The cycle of violence that these men experience begins with the early warning signs of violence, such as minor verbal and controlling behaviours, which later intensify into instances of battering, and the honeymoon period of reconciliation, during which the parties promise to put an end to violent behaviour but later resume it.

Furthermore, the findings of this study showed that heterosexual men are likely to suffer interpersonal terrorism in the form of feeling afraid, captured, and tormented by their female partners. Johnson (1995) argues that an intimate terrorism form of abuse occurs in a gendered context where men batter and control their partners to maintain patriarchal ideals; however, the narratives of the men in his study revealed women's use of tactics of intimidation and coercive control, which is generally understood to be typical features of the male means of subjugating women in intimate terrorism.

A different study by Nybergh, Enander and Krantz (2016) that included 24 Swedish men found insufficient evidence to logically characterise men's violent encounters as an instance of interpersonal terrorism because the men in the study did not sense dread or feel imprisoned in their relationships. They suggested that women who experience abuse are more likely to be economically disadvantaged, which places them at a further disadvantage and keeps them in violent relationships (Anderson 2007; Chang 1989). This study emphasises how difficult it is for women to maintain complete control over their male counterparts. Men's domination is not thought to be genuinely attainable, but it has been shown that they are vulnerable to various types of abuse.

In a qualitative study, Machado, Santos, Graham-Kevan & Matos (2017) investigated the ongoing sensations of worry that ten abused Portuguese heterosexual men were experiencing. The men in the research described their experiences as "constantly walking on eggshells", "living in perceptual anxiety" and being in a relationship "prison" (Radford & Hester 2006). The sensitivity and malleability of masculinities are highlighted by the sentiments of powerlessness, sadness, suicidal ideation, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and depression experienced by men in these circumstances (Randle & Graham 2011; Hines, Brown & Dunning 2007). The study's findings about the seriousness of the threat of violence against these men suggest that it could confound them and cause them to experience self-hatred, loss of confidence, blame, and a sense of masculine worthlessness. However, most participants were already single at the time of the interviews. At this point, it is important to note that the interviews mentioned in these studies were unidirectional only, meaning that the knowledge of the abusive behaviours of the female partners was obtained from their male counterparts who claimed to be victims rather than directly from the partners themselves.

The dynamics of wealth disparity, men's failure to create hegemonic masculinities, and prejudices against masculinities all repeatedly appeared to influence women's use of IPV

against males in European literature. For instance, a 2016 study in Italy by Entilli and Cipoletta found that women's economic empowerment had reshaped the power dynamics in relationships in their favour. Their socioeconomic level facilitates their ability to manipulate, abuse, and trap their male partners. They contend that because the female partners had economic clout, they could better acquire custody of their children and take care of themselves should their spouses quit the violent relationship, which gave them the confidence to continue abusing their partners (Migliaccio 2002). Similarly, Nybergh *et al.* (2016) found a link between IPV incidents against some men and their socioeconomic position. According to the study, males are frequently made fun of and mistreated because they don't make enough money, aren't effective at providing for their families, or do not exhibit the ideal kind of anticipated masculinity.

Men are unable to create hegemonic masculinities regarding women, and other men are demoted when they are shamed as weak and not man enough (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005). Men who fail to uphold this masculinity and allow themselves to be victims are seen as embodying complicit, marginalised, submissive, or oppressed identities. Rigid hegemonic structures permit men to be aggressive and forceful towards women (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005). The men in Entilli and Cipoletta's (2016) study attempt to reassert themselves as socially ideal men who do not retaliate against their partners' abuse but instead make excuses for their partners' violent acts. They blamed their experiences on their partners' emotional fragility, menstruation, or psychopathology. The study revealed the construction of victimisation. Such justifications are common amongst males who make an effort to follow gender equity societies' norms of masculinity. Men in these societies may become accustomed to gender relations that are egalitarian and develop "Progressive White Mediterranean" masculinities that downplay male power and authority over women (Migliaccio 2002). However, according to Entilli and Cipoletta's (2016) research, men's complacency in the face of their spouses' brutality worsens

the use of violence against them, effectively placing them in a subservient position from in Connell's masculinities framework (Connell 1995).

Furthermore, men's positions are more complex, and their partners' use of IPV against them is reinforced by the shame associated with conforming to subordinated masculinities and common male stereotypes. Entilli and Cipolletta (2016) point out that even overt physical abuse of men is frequently not seen as a crime by the offenders, the victims, or the social support systems, which may eventually result in the under-reporting of male IPV victimisation as a crime. In Entilli and Cipolletta (2016), one participant observed that his girlfriend felt confident abusing him because she knew he wouldn't expose the circumstance. When other study participants asked specialists for assistance, they claimed that they were laughed at or not believed. Others felt helpless, emotionally distressed, and constantly on the watch for the next hostile occurrence, but they never sought assistance to compensate for their under-cut male identities.

Similarly, the Portuguese study by Machado *et al.* (2017) underscores that women's use of the legal system to abuse and control their partners is always prevalent in countries where IPV is stereotyped as a masculine issue. Legal administrative abuse is characterised as a type of abuse where one partner takes advantage of the legal framework to harm the other (Hines *et al.* 2014; Tilbrook, Allan & Dear 2010). This is also in line with a study by Morgan and Wells (2016) that looked at seven males in the UK. In that study, female abusers controlled their partners by making up allegations. To family, friends, and the police, the female offenders identify as the real victims. As a result, male IPV victims seldom obtain assistance, are frequently victimised by the police, and often face discriminatory judgements based on their gender from the courts and social service organisations (Machado *et al.* 2017).

The initial review highlights the IPV realities against men in modern societies that place a premium on gender equality in intimate relationships, underlining the powerlessness of some

men in literature. These studies, however, did not specifically address how IPV can cause changes in men's self-perception. How men, specifically black African men, view the effects of victimhood on their sense of manhood in the context of gender-equitable relations on the African continent is crucial to the current study. The following section focuses on sub-Saharan black African men's IPV accounts within the minimal published research.

African and South African context: Men as victims

Research on men's IPV victimisation experiences in the black African context appears to be lacking (Tsiko 2016). There are very few researchers in this field. Despite the predominance of patriarchal attitudes and masculine behaviours of subjugating women, husband punching, kicking, slapping, sex deprivation, nail scratching, or murdering are IPV realities that occur throughout Africa, according to Adebayo (2014). Numerous black African women ignore traditional patriarchal conventions and become more violent with their male spouses. For instance, the number of males being beaten has grown considerably in Central Nairobi, a province with seven million residents. According to a British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) survey conducted in 2011, about 460 000 males have experienced various forms of abuse. This was more than a 2009 survey that found 160 000 instances of male IPV incidents (Robert 2012). The increasing rate of men-beating is argued to be linked to changing social, political, and gendered dynamics; Kenyan women's perceived financial independence, and men's failure to uphold the traditional gender roles as providers (Adebayo 2014).

Anderson, Ho-Foster, Mitchell, Scheepers & Goldstein (2007) conducted research in eight Southern African Development Community nations, including Zimbabwe, Zambia, Mozambique, Malawi, Eswatini, and Namibia, on the risk factors of physical IPV in 2002. The study used a sample of 20 639 people between the ages of 16 and 18. The survey discovered that 14 per cent of males and 18 per cent of females had been the victims of physical violence in the previous year,

with percentages as high as 32 per cent in Zambia, as low as 9 per cent in Malawi, and 9 per cent in Mozambique. According to the study's findings, having several partners, being unemployed, and possessing violent views and social norms are all potential risk factors for physical IPV. The researchers emphasise the fragility of black African masculinities by acknowledging a degree of female agency in the instigation and commission of physical IPV against men inside these Southern African countries.

Similarly, Tsiko (2016) examined men's IPV experiences using information from 12 different African nations, including Ghana, Burkina Faso, Liberia, Tanzania, and Uganda. Examining the prevalence and correlates, the findings revealed that IPV impacting men in Africa are highly associated with income, polygamy, and unusual types of partnerships, as well as with education level, alcohol abuse, childhood witnessing of violence, and witnessing of violence. Further research revealed that educated women in Liberia are more likely to physically abuse partners. At the same time, men married to multiple wives in Cote d'Ivoire, Kenya, Mali, Tanzania, Zambia, Ghana, Uganda, or Malawi are more likely to experience physical IPV from any of their multiple wives. Additionally, in all 12 nations, males who drink too much are much more likely to experience physical IPV. One drawback was that participants in this cross-national research were not asked about who started the abuse and how severe it was, which would have revealed gender disparities in how IPV was begun in the sample. This research excluded emotional and sexual IPV, which would have contextualised the participants' responses and instead concentrated on physical IPV.

Dienye, and Gbeneol (2009) conducted a study to determine the prevalence of IPV against heterosexual men in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. The study, which was retrospective in nature, focused on the damage and physical IPV patterns perpetrated against five heterosexual men. According to the study, these males suffered superficial burns, bruises, scratches, scalds, welts, or other wounds. This was discovered to be consistent with further research showing that women

are more likely than males to bite, slap, strike with an object or their fist, or hurl an object (Straus & Gelles 1990). According to the study, violence against heterosexual men occurs with a prevalence rate of 0.0023 per cent. This is mainly because the study was hospital-based and only included physical IPV. The prevalence figure is lower than the rates determined by a community-based study of eight Southern African nations, which estimated that 6 per cent of men in Malawi, 8 per cent in Mozambique, 12 per cent in Lesotho, 15 per cent in Namibia, 17 per cent in Zimbabwe, 21 per cent in Botswana, 21 per cent in Eswatini, and 27 per cent in Zambia had experienced physical IPV (Anderson *et al.* 2007).

According to Dienne and Gbeneol's (2009) study, IPV against heterosexual men is primarily motivated by envy and demands for money from their spouses, a type of economic abuse. In the survey, 60 per cent of the women and 80 per cent of the men identified jealousy as one of the reasons they were victimised. The study highlighted economic pressures, mistrust of extramarital relationships, drinking, and violent childhood experiences as risk factors for IPV against men. For instance, it was discovered that drinking too much alcohol encouraged males to stay up late, causing jealousy and suspicion of cheating, which in some cases led to discord and violence between partners. Violence was found to occur on average 10 to 15 times annually for 20 per cent of participants, 3 to 5 times annually for 40 per cent of participants, and 3 to 15 times annually for 40 per cent of participants. Given the patriarchal structure of Port Harcourt, where this study was performed, Dienne and Gbeneol (2009) claim that these violent occurrences were relatively high and may have contributed to 60 per cent of the participants leaving abusive relationships.

This study's analysis showed that men were frequently the physical analogues of beaten women as victims. This is due to the protracted and frequent assault these men experienced (Straus 1997). One participant complained that his partner is excessively hostile and oppressive. Shame, guilt, mental health issues like alcohol and drug abuse, despair, mood disorders, and suicide, as well as the issue of societal preconceptions

and prejudices, are characteristics shared by these male IPV victims (Adebayo 2014). The men in Dienye and Gbeneol's (2009) study used a variety of coping mechanisms, including violence, fear, wrath, anxiety, eating disorders, sleeping disorders, and divorce. However, 40 per cent of the abuse incidents involving the men in the study resulted from self-defence, a typical form of IPV known as "violent resistance" (Johnson 2001). In this case, women are retaliating and defending themselves against their partners' persistent use of violence against them. All of the study's participants said they sought assistance from the hospital and the police and were treated fairly.

In South Africa, a case study by Barkhuizen (2015) examined how the police responded to heterosexual male IPV victims. Five heterosexual men in marriage and cohabitation who had experienced abuse from their female partners and had turned to the police for assistance were interviewed for the study. The study made clear that the males had experienced physical and psychological abuse. Still, its primary objective was to look at the typical police responses to this violence and their apparent passivity when complaints were made. All of the interviewees told the police that their partners had abused them. Their spouses were unmanageable, forceful, problematic, dangerous, and harsh. The males in the study described how the abusive circumstances caused their children to feel fear, embarrassment, shame and stress, and experience physical injuries and psychological effects. Because of state laws protecting women and the stigma and preconceived notions associated with being victimised by a woman, research participants experienced difficulty accessing assistance from the police, counsellors, and courts. According to the survey, police responses to requests for help were inconsistent. Police responses included calming the situation, threatening to arrest the female offenders, issuing warning letters and warnings, leaving the scene when the abuser appeared to be out of control, and in some cases attempting to arrest the victim rather than the abuser.

Male Powerlessness: Men and Intimate Partner Violence

The study detailed how women used legal and administrative abuse against their partners, always being the first to call the police and accusing their victims. In reality, they were the ones who were doing the battering. One participant described how his spouse phoned the police after she beat him, but the officers decided not to arrest him after seeing the wounds he had received due to her abuse. All study participants disapproved of the police response, considering it inadequate in comparison to the actual cases of women being victimised. The study supports the gender tensions and contestations inside intimate relationships in South Africa, highlighting how state protection for women and progressive gender equality laws interact and thus leading to the abuse of men. Men in South Africa are particularly vulnerable since their actions are usually scrutinised as those of violent offenders and agents (Shefer *et al.* 2010).

The study assumes that the widespread gender stereotypes, famous chivalry for women, and under-reporting of male IPV by women in South Africa may be related to the views of officials, in particular support-giving systems. This perspective is supported by a recent study by Thobejane *et al.* (2018) that reveals the masked realities of six individuals subjected to violent oppression by their female partners in South Africa. The study draws attention to cultural proverbs such as the Setswana proverb *Monnakenku o lletateng*, which means that a man is a sheep and must suffer quietly. In the South African context, these cultural constraints and the absence of social support prevent males from speaking out about their experiences (Thobejane *et al.* 2018).

In another study in South Africa, Hesselink and Dastile (2015) looked into the experiences of 15 heterosexual women who were incarcerated for killing their intimate partners. The study suggests that the homicides were motivated by money avarice. Desperation, jealousy, possessiveness, helplessness, self-defence, and lack of love in their marriages were amongst the other reasons given for the deaths. Findings also suggested that these killings were carried out using the services of hit men, hired killers, *sangomas*, or traditional African healers.

However, the authors concluded that the protracted kinds of abuse that heterosexual women experienced at the hands of their male partners led to their use of violence. The prevalence of male partners' use of violence against their female partners in South Africa has no doubt assumed an alarming proportion and has recently received policy and research attention, hence the limited literature that interrogates men's experiences of IPV in the South African context.

Although some critical studies show the IPV experiences of men and the associated risk factors on the African continent (Tsiko 2016; Barkhuizen 2015), the current study probes this reality with men from different African countries who are situated in a particular context, in this case, within the Johannesburg area. A gap that I address includes the contextual influences shaping heterosexual intimate relationships, potential risk factors of IPV against men, and the forms of IPV African men experience in the South African context. I went further to examine these men's self-perceptions in challenging circumstances and victimised conditions.

Overview of the book

The many ways IPV outcomes vary amongst intimate partners have been discussed to lay the ground for understanding IPV in the bidirectional pattern of perpetration and victimisation. There has been much discussion about how IPV and male power analysis have generally portrayed heterosexual women as victims in this context, emphasising the adverse effects that the enactment of male power has on IPV outcomes. There is also a growing number of attempts to show how men are being violently abused by their intimate partners, some of which were briefly reviewed here. In this book, I address the question: *How do black African men living in Johannesburg who have experienced IPV explain the impact of this experience on their masculine identities?*

The key objective is to elicit and gain insight into the subjective meanings associated with manhood power for black African heterosexual men living in Johannesburg and how they

have changed over time due to their encounters with abuse. This end will be achieved flowing from the ensuing chapters. Chapter two, *Making Sense and Shaping the Study: Theory and Conceptualisation*, expand on the inherent dynamism of male power and IPV outcomes in heterosexual relationships from the operational faculty of the theoretical lenses of Johnson's typology of IPV theory, Homans' aggressive-approval Exchange theory, and the Connell's masculinities framework, in analysing men's accounts of IPV victimisation and impact. Johnson's (1995) models of contextualisation of IPV help foreground IPV in oppositional discourses and explain the different forms of IPV that the study participants have endured. This discussion illustrates how women's capacity for oppositionality may be relevant to the spate of violence against men in the South African context. To further deepen the study's analysis and to underscore the complexities of achieving hegemony against female spouses in a context of gender equity, the Homans' (1984) aggressive-approval Exchange theory preposition is introduced, which works to help us better understand why and how women could be violent. Homan's theory discusses how exchange forces of reward and cost may impact intimate relationships and influence the female partner's approval of violence to respond to issues in the relationship or pursue self-interest. Connell's (1995; 2005) framework of complicit, subordinate, and protest masculinities in relation to the hegemonic construct will help us explain the different constructs abused men may assess. The chapter then employs a diagram to locate the present study within these multi-theoretical frameworks that simplify analysis and interpretation of the data.

Chapter three, *Researching Violence against Men*, provides a comprehensive reflection on the methodological approach utilised to undertake the study and fitting procedures that may apply to studying men's abuse. Since the study's objective was to understand black African men's gender narratives of themselves in the light of IPV victimisation, a qualitative approach was adopted. This aided the eliciting of qualitative data from men from various African countries such as South

Africa, Zimbabwe, and Nigeria. Focusing on thematic analysis and qualitative interviews, this chapter ends with a discussion on fieldwork experiences, reflexivity of my position as the researcher in the entire process, and ethical considerations in conducting research with domestic violence victims.

Chapter four, *'Fight Fight Fight Fight Fight everyday': Enduring Female Partner Abuse*, delves into unravelling the forms of IPV experiences of these black African men. Given the context of socioeconomic, cultural, legal, and occupational transformations that exert contributing influencers on IPV outcomes, one works to examine individual black African male actors' lived encounters with intimate partners in the South African context. The chapter focuses on black African men's views on the forms and nature of IPV they have experienced at the hands of their intimate partners. The goal is to capture the severity of the physical and psychological scars that black African men may have sustained, as well as to gain insight into the frequency of abuse episodes they experienced, and the diverse patterns of coercive control acts exhibited by their female partners to underscore the imperatives of male IPV victimisation.

Chapter five, *Driver Factors to Men Abuse*, highlights black African men's views on the underlying tensions within intimate unions that give rise to men being abused. These factors form the interplay of motives, incidences that lead to social conditions, and violence triggers. In the understanding that IPV prevalence is impacted by different factors, including how gender is constructed between partners and the effects of more significant societal indicators such as changing attitudes to gender equality and the normalisation of violence, this chapter shows how men position themselves in non-dominant ways within intimate unions. It has also hinted at the gender contestations and oppositional relationships within intimate relationships. In a society in which male aggression and dominance over their partners are frequently referred to, the reality of male IPV victimisation can be invalidated. Thus, the argument that men are habitually subjected to IPV by their female counterparts is established in the chapter collaborating

with prevailing realities in European and African contexts reviewed in the literature.

Chapter six, *Conceptions of Manhood and Power*, explores men's self-representation as men in relation to their intimate partners. Being shaped as gendered subjects in their localities presupposes that these black African men inherently understood themselves as dominant entities within intimate spaces with women before migrating (trans-local or transnational) to an environment where equality is one of the main variables in organising gender relations. In this instance, this refers to the South African Johannesburg environment. In crucial ways, manhood in most African societies is tied to the operation of power and control in intimate spaces (Obeng 2003). Thus, these black African men's victimisation opens up rare nuances in the universal patriarchal order of discourses and men's expressions of power and dominants (Seidler 2006). Hence, I discuss how men perceive themselves as a normative gender and make demands of achieving hegemonic status and the implications this is likely to yield in understanding their subjectivities as victimised men.

Chapter seven, *Men of Power or Powerlessness: Interpreting the Impact of IPV on Black African Men's Manhood Conceptions*, focuses on interpreting the impact of IPV on black African men's masculine identities. The men's constructions of validity as real men in relation to women in line with notions of patriarchal legitimacy and gendered expectations and what the dynamic views of some men are in a new gender context are unravelled. This contributes to the idea that some black African men exist almost in opposition to and in contestation with their female partners in the Johannesburg context. Many spoke of the eroding of their respectability, feelings of powerlessness, and the absence of female submission in their relationships. Central in this part is that the notion of male power that men as a group must possess in relation to women must be transcended, highlighting the non-homogeneity of masculinities. In effect, IPV serves as a mechanism for our understanding of men's articulations of varied masculinities. This chapter highlights a strong link between

IPV and psychosocial shifts in black African men's masculine orientations of themselves from the participants' submissions.

Chapter eight, *Concluding Reflections*, brings together the major arguments in the book as well as the book's key contributions to empirical knowledge, theoretical applications, and methodology on IPV-related research. The book ends with a brief reflection on the South African policy landscape on gender-based violence, making concrete impact recommendations for practice that addresses IPV, particularly, men's experiences as female abuse victims.

2

Making Sense and Shaping the Study: Theory and Conceptualisation

“As with early feminist work there was often a tension between the richness of these first-person accounts and the terms in which they were to be theorised” (Seidler 1997:3)

How can we theoretically understand black African men’s experiences with IPV and its impact on their sense of manhood power?

Sociological theories of IPV can be classified into three broad categories: Theories such as feminist theories consider the relationality of IPV perpetuation in terms of the converging notions of gender and gender dominance in societies, underscoring patriarchal values and articulation of male power as some of the central root causes of IPV. Thus, most initial scholarly analysis considers men to be inherently at the centre of IPV perpetuation (Jewkes 2014; Anderson 2005; Dobash & Dobash 1979; Smart & Smart 1978; Brownmiller 1976). However, from the late 1970s onwards, this central gaze on males as perpetrators and agents of IPV was questioned as scholars of the family conflict perspective began to argue that, often, heterosexual women do perpetrate IPV, similar to heterosexual men in marital, cohabiting and dating relationships (Steinmetz 1978; Straus 1977; Goode 1971; Straus & Gelles 1990). These theorists attempt to explain the perpetration of IPV oppositionally - that is the understanding of violence as an inevitable systematic norm utilised by opposing male or female partners in advancing and maintaining their personal interests in the relationship. These theories include system theories, resources theories, conflict theories, exchange / social control theories, and

others. Moreover, other theorists suggest that the complex dynamics and diversities of control patterns that characterise IPV, that is, social, legal, economic, and political dynamics, do not allow for a single approach that is applicable across all contexts (Buzawa, Buzawa & Stark 2012; Dutton, Hamel & Aaronson 2010; Johnson & Ferraro 2000; Heise 1998; Johnson 1995). These are integrated perspective theorists who consider the violent context of the intimate relationships and the interaction of nested elements from the individual pathological level to micro, exo-, and macro systems in their analysis and attempt to understand IPV.

The current investigation exists in two dimensions. As I look at theories to make sense of IPV, I also review key masculinity lenses that help direct the advancement of men's and masculinities' science and provide theoretical insight into understanding of masculinities and male behaviours. According to Connell (1995), masculinities are social constructs, configured in gender practices, expressed in the body, and intersecting with race, class, inequality, and power dominance amongst men, and between men and women. This renders masculinities to be also relational, in addition to being a social construct. As socially constituted, it is also shrouded by the fluidity of meanings and behaviours that men articulate from the values, norms, images, and prescriptions they find in all aspects of their social existence (Kimmel 2017; Levant 2011; Connell 2000). This understanding of masculinity recognises the intrapsychic and biological deterministic tendencies that characterise some of the arguments that arise from sex role and psychoanalytical theories, which both rationalise the gender analysis of the two sex categories; that is, masculine and feminine. However, as it relates to the focus of this study, masculinities are better appreciated relationally in the heterogeneity and multiplicity that characterise the dialectical processes from which gendered identities are produced and reproduced (Connell 1995; Butler 1999).

In this chapter, discussion is around the intrinsic dynamism of male power and IPV results in heterosexual relationships. It conceptualises the subject of this research

from several theoretical viewpoints. The chapter focuses on how the Johnson typology of IPV theory, the Exchange theory, and the Connell's masculinities framework can be used to analyse men's experiences of IPV victimisation and impact. This chapter begins with a theorisation of IPV through the lens of oppositionality. The Johnson IPV framework serves as a foundation for the actuality of opposing power dynamics within intimate unions. I draw attention to the fact that IPV exhibits a gender-neutral pattern of violence and that both men and women are responsible for its commission. The Johnson framework's applicability in classifying the many types of IPV that black African men living in Johannesburg can experience is then demonstrated. The Exchange theory, which is employed in this study to explain actors' behaviours and actions in relation to incentives and benefits that reinforce the patterns of violence, is therefore the centre of my attention. In this specific instance, heterosexual women have acted violently towards their male counterparts. I then go on to discuss male power and masculinities using the Connell masculinities framework, highlighting the claim that masculinities are relational and constructed in a variety of ways, making them deserving of appreciation in the intricate social interactions that define the gendered contexts from which men originate. I also discuss some of the ways that black African masculinities manifest themselves in various patriarchal contexts in Africa, notably the way that hegemonic masculinities are framed regarding women. The study then goes on to talk about other hegemonic construct-related relational variables of the Connell framework of masculinities. In keeping with this, I demonstrate how the Connell framework concepts of complicit, subservient, and protest masculinities will assist us to understand the various conceptions that abused men may evaluate. I take note of some of the criticism levelled at the hegemonic profiling of masculinities, and I contend that hegemonic relationality may not only be understood as a relationship of power over women, but also as an oppositional practice that exists in a context of gender equity and may be related to the IPV that some men are currently experiencing in modern-day South Africa.

The three lenses used in this study are then illustrated in a diagram to help us better comprehend and explain the subject of this research. In the final section, I contend that various levels of theoretical analysis and parading are required to demonstrate a thorough grasp of black African men's experiences with IPV and the changing narratives of themselves as men.

IPV as oppositional enactment

This study utilises the Johnson typology of violence theory to afford operationalising the distinctions to explore men's lived experiences of IPV in the South African context. According to Johnson (1995), there are usually four manifested forms of violence in intimate unions: (a) common couple violence, (b) violent resistance, (c) intimate terrorism, and (d) mutual violent control, a typological reality which explains a bidirectional gendered context of IPV through emphasis on motive of coercion and the control exhibited by partners, "per couple frequency of violence, escalation of violence and reciprocity of violence" (Johnson 1995).

Johnson (1995), an integrated perspective theorist, asserts that significant disparities arise between the feminist and the family conflict theories mentioned earlier because of the intrinsic contradictions in each theoretical lens, particularly with respect to epistemological and methodological differences between the relationality and oppositionality theoretical divide. The characterisation of IPV as relational reveals that heterosexual men continue to maintain their dedicated subscription to the patriarchal order in their contexts through diverse activities and practices (Mazibuko 2017; Shefer *et al.* 2010; Jewkes *et al.* 2002; Belknap & Melton 2004; Dobash *et al.* 1992). As Dobash, Dobash, Daily & Wilson (1992) noted, the motives, frequency, and impact of partners' use of violence may differ systematically in relation to the concerned gender. Hence, wife abuse is a consequence of patriarchal sanction on the domination of women and unequal gendered power relations in African societies within intimate

relationships in particular (Fakunmoju & Rasool, 2018; Morrell 2007). However, scholars like Homans (1984) present nuanced arguments positing that situational factors as well as forces of exchange in intimate relationships, such as rewards and cost of violent actions, and not necessarily gender, reinforce IPV behaviours amongst intimate partners.

In this sense, men or women relate oppositionally when the use of violence is rewarding, valuable and highly attainable. In contention, Ferraro (2013) claims that some violent acts are uniquely gendered; for instance, rape, reproductive control, and violence during pregnancy are related to gendered attitudes. As such there is a strong link between the male gender and perpetration of IPV (Dobash *et al.* 1992). This is normally evident through the expression of explicit patterns of coercive control tactics including severe forms of violence to subordinate, dominate and persistently oppress women in intimate unions (Stark 2007; Johnson 2005). From this context, Johnson (1995) coined the term “Intimate Terrorism”, connoting physical, sexual, economic, or emotional violence, intended or perceived as intended to batter, coerce, control, humiliate, isolate, manipulate, threaten, terrorise, injure, or wound someone as well as stalking and inflicting damage to property. In this instance, the abuser’s intention is to not only terrorise their partner by threatening, inflicting injuries and battery, but to entrap them away from friends and family, diminish their self-esteem, exploit the partner’s resources and vulnerabilities, and constrict their decision-making power (Stark 2006). The abuser’s activities often attract the attention of neighbours and lead the victim to seek intervention from the police, courts, shelters and medical experts because of its repeated form and severity (Johnson 1995). Intimate terrorism features and characterises most cases of IPV against women in the black African context (CSVSR 2016; Abrahams *et al.* 2013).

One ought to avoid methodologically gendered sentiments by assuming that all men therefore have access to structural power and use it to enforce dominance over women, for this makes escape difficult for men whose experiences are

similar. In multiple black African contexts, studies showed the capacities of women to construct violence against their male counterparts (Tsiko 2016; Barkhuizen 2015; Adebayo 2014). Simultaneously, there is global emphasis on the dismantling of patriarchal gender systems of dominance at various levels, and as a result more women articulate their rights (Eckstein 2010; Seidler 2006), and in some instances become violent themselves (Barkhuizen 2015; Tjaden & Thoennes 2000). Hence intimate terrorism is better observed from the prism of oppositionality. Furthermore, the conceptualisation of IPV as a relational reality positions it as a gendered, internalised behaviour of men and women which subsequently becomes a natural and real aspect of their identities (Yllo 1993). It is observed that this stance avoids sex differences or individual pathology that may be inherent in psychoanalytic arguments (Dutton *et al.* 2010). As men are increasingly socialised to embody power, strength, dominance, and women to equally identify with submissiveness, weakness and passivity, violence becomes men's inevitable masculine performative expression of themselves as men to maintain their superior position in the gendered equation, resulting in the intergenerational transmission of violence against women, particularly in the South African context (Buiten & Naidoo 2013; Boonzaier 2005; Morrell 2007). However, as Allen-Collinson (2009) argues, IPV needs to be understood oppositionally in the light of the changing social attitudes and male victims of IPV who do not embody dominant gender norms. This is because social and personal identities are not fixed, but contingent, process-based, and constantly changing. Both masculinities and femininities embody this dynamic nature within themselves. Hearn (2004) speaks in the same vein by suggesting that "hegemonic dominance and violent enforcement operate for everyone in a society, including otherwise dominant". In line with this thinking, Johnson (2005) proposed the "common couple violence" or "situation violence" as a gender-neutral pattern of violence that exists in IPV, where both partners enact violence equally and episodically. The terms 'common' and 'situational' depict low-level threats and domestic assaults such as the tactics of shouting or pushing during a

disagreement, and, genderless in its scope, coercion becomes situation-bound, at least to advance a purpose, not with the intention to dominate or oppress (Johnson 2005). Johnson (2005) argues that women's use of violence falls precisely into this category. However, researchers have shown severe and chronic accounts of significant males as victims of abuse from the hands of their female partners (Entilli & Cipolletta 2016; Adebayo 2014; Hines & Douglas 2010; Migliaccio 2002). What is common and the impact IPV may have on victims may be explained in individual and diverse ways. What is critical for this thesis, however, is how IPV in heterosexual relationships is enacted in oppositional relatedness, and, more specifically, the shifting gendered positionality of men in these relationships within the South African context. Again, important questions are raised whether the actors' subjective experiences and interpretations should be the focus in IPV scholarship. This is particularly relevant in analysing the participants in this study. Some scholars suggest that behaviour-specific victimisation instances such as a shouted at partner, kicked partner, slapped partner, pushed or shoved partner, or punched partner may be retaliatory responses in self-defence from abusive partners who may have initiated the violence. However, such does not reflect the context, intentions, consequences, and the degree of injury inflicted, and, in this sense, women may utilise violence in self-defence against consistent abuse from their male, dominant aggressors, and such should not be generally regarded as IPV (Ferraro 2013; Swan, Gambone, Fields, Sullivan & Snow 2005; Swan & Snow 2002). Johnson (2005) further suggests contextual dynamics in intimate unions in which "violent resistant" forms of violence occur. Johnson speaks of violent resistance as a self-defence response from the victims of intimate terrorism (Johnson 2005). Thus, advocating for the feminist paradigm, Johnson argues that self-defence is "a legal response to criminal behaviour", hence situating women in such practices of the violence in intimate relationships (Durbin 2004; Dobash & Dobash 1998; Walker 1989). However, scholars problematised the tenuous nature of self-defence and male dominance in IPV theorising. For instance, Buzawa *et al.* (2012) argue that in situations where a female

partner consistently and aggressively verbally abuses her male partner and the latter is unable to respond verbally and instead employs physical violence in self-defence, it becomes increasingly difficult to determine where power resides within such relationship dynamics, especially when the definition of IPV is broadened to include verbal abuse. In Brown's (2012) view, a partner's claim of resistance or instigated violence comes with motive and sometimes consequences. For Brown, motives determine if such violence can be typified as situational couple violence or intimate terrorism. Hence this form of violence is foregrounded in the legalities and actors' motive (Johnson 2005).

The final form in Johnson's typology is the "mutual-violent-control" circumstance of violence in intimate relationships which is very rare. In this case, both partners utilise terrorist patterns of violence and control to advance their individual causes in the relationship (Johnson 2006). Partners are thus both victims and perpetrators. However, Brown (2012) problematises the notion of coercive control, arguing that in a situation where a partner enacts such a kind of violence once and achieves compliance and stability in the relationship, it becomes difficult to categorise such kinds of violent instances. To this end, Johnson and Ferraro (2000) conclude that in the mutual violent control contexts, the display of power and dominance is thus specific to isolated situations and not to the overall relationship. They observe that in such relationships violence is less likely to escalate, whereas in contexts rooted in patriarchal traditional values, IPV perpetration is gendered and largely informed by male dominance. Male dominance not only positions individual men as utilising violence in claiming their moral right to control their female partners, but it over-exaggerates male power, implying that all men exercise the same degree of dominance and power over women (Scott & Schwartz 2006). It ignores how differentiation along intersectional lines such as social class, age, income inequality, unemployment, alcohol abuse and other factors can impact the dynamics of IPV. More essential to this thesis is the focus on how changing social practices in

spaces and subspaces can influence gendered relationships, and ultimately shift the balance of power between the intimate partners. Researchers have shown that men grapple to maintain dominance and masculine expectations with women in a context that promotes gender equality enactment through government discourses (Igbanoi 2018; Hibbins & Pease 2009; Rees & Pease 2007; Pringle & Pease 2002). In fact, a study by Pease (2009) in Australia portrays Australian women enacting control, dominance, intimidation, and confrontation against their Australian male partners. Igbanoi's (2018) study in South Africa observed that the masculine liminality eroded respectability amongst migrant black Africans within intimate spaces. The men in the study expressed their dissatisfaction with their situational gender regime in a context which they perceive as empowering their partners, thereby promoting contestations in their relationships. How these contestations culminate in relationship breakdowns and violence against men becomes an interesting facet explored in the current thesis. What is highlighted in the foregoing is that IPV is inherently an oppositional-relational gender reality, and both men and women are implicated in IPV perpetration. This is an important point of departure for this study as it clarifies and acknowledges the argument that men are positioned in oppositional but also gendered ways in IPV outcomes. However, without prejudice to thousands of women subjected to severe forms of IPV, it is fundamental and important to address the key concerns of the victims, be they male or female (Brown 2012; Kimmel 2002). In the case of South Africa, IPV is rooted in the socio-culturally, politically structured gender system and the normalisation of violence which have been collectively internalised by both men and women (Moffett 2006; Peacock 2012). Thus, it is well suited to apply the Johnson typology to capture gendered symmetrical or asymmetrical forms of violence. However, what is central to this study is not just what form of abuse men are subjected to, but also the motivational factors for the abuse. It is in furthering this end that the next section presents the Exchange Theoretical Framework to help the study deliberate on the

incidences and behavioural dispositions that drive women's use of violence against their male counterparts.

Driver factors to IPV against men

While the Johnson typology of IPV assists this work in that it operationalised the categorisation of the kind of abuse that the African men in the study may have experienced, it is limited in its explanation of the interactional factors within the relationships and social agency influences that may give rise to victimisation, given the patriarchal African contexts in which these intimate partners exist and interact. For example, if the motive for coercion and control establishes the type of conflict, for example, intimate terrorism against men, little is known about the build-up to the supposed subordinate partner's utilisation of this tactic of violence, the interaction and exchange breakdown that prompted the female partner's abusive behaviour and what encouraged the partner's repetition of such destructive behaviour that is frowned upon as alien to black African womanhood. To this end, a family perspective exchange theory that is rooted in behaviourism, which explains the context of the actors' behaviour, vis-à-vis rewards and benefits that produce similar behavioural patterns, is applied to the understanding of the shifting traditional black African gendered behaviours in intimate unions including intimate partner aggression against black African men.

Emerson (1972, as cited in Ritzer, 2007), outlines three core assumptions of the exchange theory:

- (1) When people are engaged in situations that they find rewarding, they will act rationally, and consequently, the situation will occur.*
- (2) As people become satiated with the rewards they obtain from particular situations, those situations will be of declining importance to them.*

2 Making Sense and Shaping the Study

(3) Benefits obtained depend on benefits provided in exchange. Therefore, exchange theory focuses on the flow of rewards and costs in social interaction.

This theory suggests that intimate partners interact on the basis of calculated transactional exchange. Each partner expects services or benefits such as favours, love, protection, money, and sex in exchange for appreciation, bonding, or reciprocal treatment. Partners are likely to be resentful and angry when there is a lack of reciprocity and equity in the exchange scale (Homans 1984; Gelles 1983). According to Strong and Cohen (2014), exchange theory is at work when partners initiate an evaluation of their relationship, enumerating strengths and weaknesses, weighing the emotional costs against the benefits derived from the relationship, asking themselves questions like “What am I gaining out of this relationship?” “Is it worth it?” In a typical black African sense, this theory speaks best through the available instruments to heterosexual men’s patriarchal legitimised exclusive rights to observe and examine their intimate partner’s behavioural conformity to norms, make normalising judgements and to punish the violation of norms. This is done without recourse to how she feels and some form of reward that should accrue to her in the relationship. This panoptical structure and behaviour are rooted in black African cultural ideologies that uphold bride price payments as the legitimising of men’s disciplinary power and women’s acceptance of the use of violence to bring them in line with the man’s authority across many black African societies (UNICEF 2017; Ludsin & Vetten 2005). However, as a result of some socio-cultural transformations and the empowerment of women, more modern black African women are shifting away from collectivity, and are gradually gravitating towards radical individualism within intimate unions, thus asserting their unique concerns in the ongoing exchanges within their relationships (Seidler 2006). In this sense, away from subservient gender positioning, most black African women who may be angry and resentful can now express their feelings if they weigh the cost and reward scale as unfavourable to

them in the relationship. This theory will help us further expose this reality.

In terms of IPV, this theory explains the actors' preference for the use of violence in dyadic relationships. Gelles (1983) argues that violence within the family is measured on a cost-benefit basis; that is, when the reward of enacting violence outweighs the cost. Whatever reduces "cost" exacerbates violence, as people enjoy doing what they find rewarding and resist doing what might have proven to be costly in the past (Gelles 1983). In effect, abuse against men may thrive if their partner finds it rewarding and less costly. For instance, stabbing a male partner who does not press charges will be less costly for a woman, yet rewarded with power, control, or other benefits in the process. Homans (1984) employs the concept of "aggressive-approval" to explain some aggressive behavioural exchanges in intimate unions. Homans (1984) asserts that actors are more likely to reciprocate or act aggressively when they are frustrated, angered and unsatisfied with the quality of reward received for a particular action or actions. Within this framework, a woman's aggressive behaviour can be traced to the dissatisfaction in the exchange taking place in the relationship as she might be likely to deploy physical force in protest against inequitable exchange in the relationship, or even try to end the relationship. This suggests that collateral for exchange in intimate unions is equity. Partners consciously and unconsciously want reciprocal exchange of tangible or intangible favours, and the reward scale needs to balance and be fair, otherwise the partner who feels subjected to more cost becomes resentful and angry (Strong & Cohen 2014). These assumptions support some of the causal factors that may generate hostilities and tensions in intimate unions particularly in progressive black African spaces. For example, a man who could not perform an expected gendered role as a provider might be called useless and unmanly; hence the feeling of frustration by his female partner may result in the denial of sex or promote disrespect, as noted in Kenyan societies Gateri, Ondicho & Karimi 2021). On the other hand, a man who functions as a responsible

provider and yet receives less affection and abuses may be dissatisfied and may opt out of the relationship. All of these factors highlight oppositionality and the increasing decline of patriarchal relationality, as partners search for their individual greater material and emotional needs in the relationship. Other factors that are likely to increase the reward of deploying violence against men include the lack of intervention and response from administrators of justice, gender stereotypes and transformations in a given context (Gelles 1983). For example, the dismissive attitudes of men's experiences of IPV in societies that prioritise female victimhood may reduce the costs of violence for female offenders and exacerbate more incidences of violence amongst partners. Thus, contextual influences may shift the enactment of the violence reward scale to favour female partners in intimate relationships.

These isolated realities of masculine stereotypes and precarities and the increasingly being altered traditional black African idea behind the construction of intimate unions subverts the norm of IPV and presents intimate relationships as a key location of gender power contestation in the South African context (Singh 2013; Shefer, Crawford, Strelbel, Simbayi, Henda, Cloete, Kaufmann & Kalichman 2008), yet the current research includes black African migrant men. As these men migrate across borders, they travel with their gendered concerns of power relations within intimate spaces (Igbanoi 2018), hence how local intimate practices in South Africa and notions of themselves operate oppositionally, and how contextual complexities operate to subject them further before their partners are some of the key focal considerations of this study. Thus, utilising the exchange theory will help in the study's examination of these realities and their impact on the power dynamics within intimate relationships in the Johannesburg, South Africa setting, and the abuse of men as a consequence. The next section provides a convenient perspective from which the dynamic construct of male power and powerlessness can be seen.

Power dynamics: Male power and powerlessness

The present study utilises Connell's masculinities framework to explore and analyse black African heterosexual men's views of the possible shift in construct of masculine power in the light of IPV, and what they consider to be the sensible possible resolutions for abuse that men might endure. The practice and structure of gender power relations extends to the patriarchal relationality that sanctions the overall domination of women as a group. Connell (1995:82-83) views this as the "Patriarchal order" by which all men stand to gain as beneficiaries from this gendered order, and for Hearn (2007:14-15) this promotes "hetero-social power relations", whereby the imbalance of power manifests in men's discrimination, objectification, and violent oppression of women. Morrell (1998) locates gendered power relations in black African societies as an expression of black patriarchal dividend and men's privilege to fully demonstrate authority over wives, women, and children, whereas women are expected to primarily submit to the authority and sexual desires of their husbands. This practice deeply resonates in many South African contexts where women are arguably devalued in the rhetoric and institutions of communities and remain the property of their husbands (Sathisparsad *et al.* 2008).

However, while the conflation of manhood and power seems to be constant over time, the universal understanding of patriarchal dividend limits our understanding of the power relation dynamics because it excludes oppositional interactions of how men may articulate masculinities towards opposing and more assertive women. Thus, power relations ought to be appreciated in the diversities of masculine constructs, including underscoring the emotional feeling of emasculation when women exercise some level of power or pose a threat to men's assumed domineering sense. To this Seidler (2006) argues that masculinities are largely shaped by feelings of confusion and powerlessness that individual men may feel in oppositional relation to women. Thus, masculine power as a relational construct is better

appreciated in the complex social relationships that separate diverse masculinities.

Diversities of masculinities: Dominance / power construct

The singular or universal direction of the conception of masculinities fails to underscore the multiplicities, diversities, and fluidity of masculine identities and power (Kimmel 2017; Hearn 2007; Morrell 2001; Connell 2005). Thus Connell's (1995) masculinities framework becomes relevant as it identifies multiple relational categories of masculinities and power status. That is, hegemony, subordination, complicity, marginalisation, and protest. The concept of hegemonic masculinity (HM) as defined by Connell is a configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which arbitrarily guarantees the dominant position or power construct of men and the subordination of women. Thus, the concept is utilised herein in order to understand the dynamic cultural practices through which a man or a group of men sustain and position themselves as leading dominant entities in relation to women.

Connell's definition magnifies the institutional legitimisation of men's dominant positions in social life and justifies their subordination and marginalisation of other men and women as a group. In Connell's view, it is a cultural ideal form of maleness depicted as "real men" who are associated with - amongst other elements - power and dominance. Unlike power which can be latent, dominance is an apparent individual characteristic and relationship pattern in which attempts to exert control over another party or parties are either accepted or rejected. Although men are positioned differently within and across societies, according to Connell (2005), all men are advised to embody the HM version of masculinities in order to ascend to the top of the gender hierarchy and maintain patriarchal order. Almost all men are culturally expected to enact hegemonic power to sustain dominant social roles in relation to assertive women in

intimate relationships, or risk being perceived as feminine in social relationships (Connell 1995).

There are traditional available norms and ways by which men express hegemonic masculinities across tribal and ethnic group practices in the black African context. For instance, Morojele (2011) found that the display of physical strength, roughness, an uncaring attitude, and assertiveness are some elements of hegemonic constructs in Lesotho. In Eswatini, Mamba, (1997) noted that boys are socialised to “show the strength of an elephant as their ultimate duty was to be victorious warriors able to continue the tradition established by the early king Mswati. In the context, real manhood entails fierceness, sexual virility, as well as intelligence and inventiveness to demonstrate one’s value to society (Mkhatshwa 2017; Fielding–Miller, Dunkle, Jama-Shai, Windle, Hadley & Cooper 2016). Ratele (2008) locates the hegemonic construct of young black masculinities in South Africa in the norm of power and resistance. This means hegemonic maleness in South African terms is associated with one’s possession of character traits such as toughness, control and hyper-sexuality in relational contexts involving men and women alike (Ratele 2008). Researchers have shown that sexual prowess and virility are defining signifiers and common features of hegemonic constructs with young men in intimate relationships across societies in South Africa, the Congo, and Nigeria (Lusey, San Sebastian, Christianson, Dahlgren & Edin 2014; Babatunde 2014; Kaufman, Shefer, Crawford, Simbayi & Kalichman 2008; Barker & Ricardo 2005; Miles 1992). These hegemonic attitudes have been found to be sanctioned norms and rooted in patriarchy and religion in sub-Saharan Africa, the consequence being sexual violence, coercion and rape against women that are notoriously prevalent on the continent (Buiten & Naidoo 2016; Shefer, Ratele, Strebel & Shabalala 2005). However, Walsh and Mitchell (2006) have argued that not all men are fundamentally hegemonic and subjugate women into subservience on the continent.

The second level of relations amongst masculinities identified by Connell is subordination. According to Connell

(2005), groups of other genders are culturally and politically excluded from the legitimacy of the patriarchal dividends of authority and power; hence they assume oppressed positions in the gender hierarchy. Subordination depicts the practice of domination and control, including the use of physical and psychological abuse, socio-cultural discrimination, homophobic attacks, verbal insults, and punishment on all masculinities assimilated to femininity. Connell points out that gay masculinity makes up the most conspicuous subordinate group of men in relation to hegemony. The third category of relationship amongst masculinities identified by Connell is “complicity” in relation to the hegemonic project. This refers to the practice of constructing flexible versions of masculinities to compensate for failure to achieve the culturally ideal standards of masculinity. Men in this category are mutual benefactors to institutionalising male dominion and are thus conspirators to hegemonic ideals. According to Connell (1995:79), “this category of men often in marriages, as fathers and in community life compromises with women, rather than use naked dominion or an uncontested display of authority”. Such men are usually gentlemanly, caring and display chivalry towards women.

The fourth level of relations amongst masculinities identified by Connell is marginalisation, which refers to the dynamics between classes or ethnic groups. It is the practice of discrimination and subordination of certain masculinities as non-hegemonic by the dominant race or ethnic group in the existing social hierarchy. According to Connell (1995:80-81), marginalisation is relative to the consent of the hegemonic masculinities of the dominant group. The last level of relation amongst masculinities that Connell proposes is protest. Connell borrowed this phrase from Adler’s (1927) work on understanding human nature. The “masculine protest”, as Adler opines, is a neurotic response, which is the excessive anxiety triggered by an inferiority complex. This protest man expresses an exaggerated sense of self to reassert masculine triumph in the face of tensions and defeat. According to Connell (1995), masculine protest is practised at the level of

individual personality, wherein men construct a masculine self in protest to dominant normative ideals to claim gender positions of power and exaggerated self-esteem in response to powerlessness. Thus, protest masculinity is constructing compassionate views of women and children, upholding gender equality ideals and portraying a sense of weakness and support for feminist activities (Connell 1995). Given the above, what is critical for this study is how Connell's masculinities framework supports differential access that abused men, in this case abused black African men in Johannesburg, may claim as manhood preserved in the face of victimisation.

Hegemonic masculinity which magnifies the use of violence in the subordination of women, especially within intimate unions, has been subjected to criticism. Scholars argue that men who hold substantial social power may not necessarily espouse hegemonic oppressive tendencies, hence the debate of whether the term 'dominant' rather than 'HM' should prevail (Aboim 2010; Whitehead 2002; Beasley 2008). A full comprehension of HM becomes more nuanced and layered in a number of societies where features of matriarchy are identified, such as amongst the Mosuo of China, Khasi of India, Ashanti or Akan of Ghana, Chewa of Malawi, Kweya of Tanzania, and Igbo of Nigeria, (Gong & Yang 2012; Gneezy, Leonard & List 2009; Miescher & Lindsay 2003; Watson-Franke 2000), underscoring the fact that transcending biological sex, women in some African countries are in the preserve of constructing corresponding ideals of hegemonic masculinities in institutionalised practices (Krane, Choi, Baird, Aimar & Kauer 2004; Miescher & Lindsay 2003). In Aboim's (2010:52) view, "Domination is a larger concept than hegemony, since it allows us to think about power beyond the boundaries differentiating groups or ascendant ideologies." Sometimes women strive to re-establish their femininity through enacting dominant behaviours in the face of threat (Munsch & Willer 2012; Eckstein 2010). Thus, Seidler (2006) argues that theorising hegemonic masculinity does not consider the vulnerability of men and their emotional realities. It fails to predict the psychosocial dialogues whereby

men are unable to achieve successful or dominant versions of masculinity, especially in relation to women (ibid), and especially in contexts where gender equity is the main drive in gender relations (Hearn & Morrell 2012). However, noting the shortcoming of HM, Howson (2014) argues for the sustenance of HM relevance in the analysis of gender, suggesting that HM should be understood as aspirational, which men will align themselves to in the context of HM principles where they find themselves.

In effect, what is highlighted in the hegemonic relationality framework of gender analysis is: (1) the overall domination of women as a group and group of other men, (2) enacting forces to reinforce dominance, (3) and the patriarchal legitimacy and sustenance of unequal power relations with women in gender spaces. Hence men who fail to embody or enact hegemonic manhood - a man of power and a man with power - (Kimmel 2001) are considered as complicit, marginalised, protestant and subordinate others. Many analyses of hegemonic masculinities on the African continent provide an insight into intimate partner violence outcomes, supporting men's violent behaviour and oppression of women (CSV 2016; Buiten & Naidoo 2016; Jewkes *et al.* 2002). Little is being done towards applying hegemonic frameworks to understand men's account of vulnerability and victimisation. Hence some scholars advise on the pertinence of applying the hegemonic relational approach in order to fully understand the interpersonal violence associated with black African masculinities, particularly in terms of how it expresses itself as vulnerable and powerless in relation to women within transforming gender societies, as men deal with circumstances of humiliation and emasculation in displaced economic circumstances and the reality of oppositional gender relations (Raza 2017; Morrell *et al.* 2013, Ratele 2008). Connell and Pearse (2015) note and relate the differences of gender systems and their dynamics as to how masculinities are defined and constructed.

Clearly, masculinities may not be understood exclusively as a relation of power, but also in their subordinate realities

and inherent vulnerabilities (Ratele 2008; Seidler 2006). Thus, the current study is one of the pioneering viewpoints in the African continent in terms of applying a hegemonic relationality framework in examining the IPV realities of individual men from across sub-Saharan Africa resident in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Next, I show in a diagram how the three theories employed in this study help our understanding and explanation of the subject matter of this research.

Conclusion

There exist several and rich theoretical perspectives that studies can draw from towards understanding black African men's experiences of IPV and their changing construct of power. However, the three theories, that is, the Johnson typology of IPV theory, Exchange theory and the Connell's masculinities framework demonstrate direct relevance that could help us understand IPV against men, thus these theories served as the study's theoretical framework. These theories provide a convenient perspective from which to view how heterosexual men are potential recipients of abuse from their partners. They help the study deliberate on the incidences and behavioural dispositions that accentuate women's use of violence against their male counterparts.

Operationalising hegemonic masculinity in the study serves to demonstrate how black African men position themselves with regard to the demands of manhood in intimate spaces with women, in this case IPV in South African contexts. The conspicuous and growing presence of black African men in South Africa, particularly in Johannesburg, from across the African continent after the demise of the apartheid regime (Peberdy 2016; CDE 2008) is evidence of the multiple and somewhat conflicting normative notions of manhood and constructions of intimate unions in the context (Igbanoi 2018; Morrell *et al.* 2013). The underlying notions of masculinity in this context include being strong and resistant, militant, and violent, yet aiming towards attaining successful

Figure 1: Diagram depicting how these theories will apply

Men's Lived IPV experiences			
Johnson's IPV typology Fitting black African men's lived IPV experiences in forms			
Common Couple IPV • No motive to commit IPV • No motive to control partner	Violent Resistance Fight back in self-defence	Intimate Terrorism • Patriarchal motive to control/coerce • Masculinities	Mutual-Violent-Control Bidirectional motive to commit IPV and control partner
Homan's aggressive approval proposition - Exchange			
• Underlying risk factors of IPV against men			
Connell's Masculinities Framework			
Masculine categories		Analysing IPV impact on men	
Hegemonic masculinities: • Accept and practise patriarchal ideology of dominance and control of women and children, and other men. • Provide, protect, daring, stoic etc. • The use of violence against less subservient women.		• The impact of IPV on black African men's sense of themselves as patriarchal men. • The categorising of black African men's response to Connell's typology model to underscore their masculine positioning and shifting notions of power as a result of abuse experiences.	
Complicit masculinities: • Accepts patriarchal ideology of the dominance but fails to perform all elements of hegemony			
Subordinate masculinities: • Disqualified as patriarchal men based on sexuality and heteronormativity. • Disqualified as patriarchal men for being soft and not upholding hegemony.			
Protest masculinities: • Complicit, marginalised and subordinate men constructing varying versions of masculinities in protest against hegemonic standards of masculinities. • Complicit and subordinate men constructing softer and varying versions of masculinities to assert themselves as hegemonic men adrift from patriarchal relationality.			
Marginalised masculinities: • The hegemonic dominance of other men of colour, class and ethnicity.			

Source: Designed by author

masculinity within intimate unions, even in the face of social and economic exclusive realities. What is grounded in Connell's masculinities framework of gender analysis is the overall domination of women as hegemonic men risk demotion to the status of complicit, marginalised, protest and subordinate masculinities.

An important reality to note in the South African context is the presence of legalities, transformations and shifts to a modern oppositional model of gender relations, which promotes disharmony and power struggles between men and women, especially in an intimate context. Arranging their lives around contested intimate settings and coupled with other challenges and the pragmatic assessments of cost-and-benefits exchange in their relationships, black African men may be susceptible to IPV victimisation. Whether IPV against black African men is typified as intimate terrorism or common couple violence, what is critical to this book is how black African men engage with the complicated idea of hegemonic manhood as victimised men and their subjectivities while constructing their self-redefining identities as men. This will be fully addressed in the proceeding chapters, after a presentation of methodological practices in the following chapter.

3

Researching Violence against Men

In recent years, activists and scholars have debated the nature of intimate partner abuse, particularly the method of investigation. Men's rights activists have suggested that portraying women as the exclusive victims of abuse has impeded efforts to address the context in which men have also been victims of IPV. They argue that IPV exhibits gender symmetry, with an equal number of female and male victims. This position was supported by a national survey, which revealed that in the US between 1974 and 1975 11.6 per cent of heterosexual men were recipients of physical IPV as against 12.1 per cent of women. Males recorded the highest rate of severe violence - 4.6 per cent, and women 3.8 per cent (Straus & Gelles 1990). In another survey in 1985 there were 6.8 million male victims and 6.25 million female victims. Severe violence for men was 4.4 per cent and for females 3.0 per cent (Straus & Gelles 1990). Drawing from these surveys and over 100 empirical studies (eg Archer 2000) to make the theoretical claim that IPV against men is a considerable social problem sparked up controversy from feminist theorists. Feminists question the credibility and validity of the "Conflict Tactics Scale" (CTS and CTS2) used as a survey measurement tool for IPV outcomes. They argue that the CTS does not measure: 1) the actors' subjective experiences; 2) the context of the incidences that led to abuse, which may exhibit asymmetry nature and causes of violence; 3) the consequences and degrees of injuries sustained; and claimed that 4) the survey is gender blind, ignoring how masculinities and femininities are articulated and how female and male bodies embody physical power (Belknap & Melton 2004; Swan & Snow 2002; Dobash *et al.* 1992).

Noting the methodological debate around the study of IPV against men, in the current study I adopted a qualitative paradigm informed by a constructionist epistemological perspective which allowed for a more in-depth exploration of meaning into men's experiences of IPV. Guided by this perspective, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with twenty-five black African men currently residing in South Africa. Their nationalities include South African, Nigerian, Congolese, and Zimbabwean. The accounts of these men's subjective experiences of IPV and the interpretations of the impact of these experiences on their masculine identities are highlighted. These realities are set within the context of power-shifting and emerging gender equality jurisprudence, vis-à-vis the consequential development of new social practices in South Africa which is the study's focal point. To further grasp the symmetrical nature of the phenomenon, and efforts towards possible and pragmatic solutions, dialogue sessions were introduced with some of the participants. In some cases, this was done with their partners present. This method allowed Me to observe and interact with participants involved in recent instances of abuse whilst gathering real life information about the causes of their being abused, as well as the degree and consequences they endure. An additional five in-depth key informant interviews were conducted, involving three medical practitioners and two serving police officers to elicit useful and diverse information to complement the data gathered from the study participants. These key informants were three men and two women, a selection which ensured gender parity. All interviews conducted were tape-recorded with the consent of the interviewees and extensive field notes were collected to ensure accuracy, overall credibility, and trustworthiness throughout the process (Babbie & Mouton 2011).

In this chapter, I reflect on the detailed steps followed in conducting the study, which include the research design, sampling, data collection and analysis. Also presented are my reflections on the research site and reflexivity-related issues. The chapter also discusses ethical considerations and

limitations of the study and it ends with a summative section focusing of the chapter's key highlights.

Research design and techniques

The qualitative paradigm

This study adopted the qualitative methodology to investigate IPV affecting black African men in heterosexual relationships. It is typically distinctive of the qualitative approach to explore and make sense of phenomena in their natural settings. The participants in this study are situated in-context and the phenomena under analysis are appreciated through the lenses of those being researched (Babbie & Mouton 2011; Hallberg 2006). This thinking is highlighted in the constructionist standpoint, which recognises the influences of social context and social institutions on the internal interpretation people attach to their everyday actions and experiences (Creswell 2013; Braun & Clarke 2006). This contextualist perspective assumes that there is no single 'reality'; rather, reality is contextual, and can be accessed from the positions and submissions of research participants (Braun & Clarke 2013). The lynchpin ontological position of the constructionist is that gendered behaviour flows out of everyday social interactions between gendered subjects and influences of gendered conditions, be they cultural, social, economic, or legalistic (Braun & Clarke 2013; Creswell 2009), which leads to gendered articulation of selves. Hence, this indicates the relevance of the constructionist approach to this study, which explores not only black African men's masculine identity constructs in relation to femininity, but also the internal meanings these heterosexual men attach to their lived realities of gender-based violence on their perceived masculinities in the South African context. The critical realist position of constructionist acknowledges that knowledge and truth are not limited to objectivity, but also through participants making sense of their experiences and realities in context. Thus, in this study it was critical to deliberate on the participants' subjective

experiences and interpretation of lived IPV realities in context (Braun & Clarke 2013; Johnson & Christensen 2004).

According to Hallberg (2006:141), “The qualitative approach allows the Me to come close to the actor’s perspective and tries to capture his or her point of view or lived experience through detailed interviewing, observation, and rich descriptions of the participants’ world.” People’s articulations of meanings attached to their lived experiences are multiple, diverse, and complex (Gray 2014). In investigating these complexities, this study is located in the interpretive paradigm to ensure informed elucidation of these diverse meanings, interpretations, and viewpoints from the voiced narratives of the recruited black African men resident in Johannesburg who have experienced IPV in their heterosexual relationships.

The interpretive approach is contrary to the traditional positivist perspective, which holds that human experiences and actions can best be measured or understood as objective realities and abstract variables outside of humans. The positivist or quantitative approach focuses on the application of statistical techniques and numbers such as the CTS in gathering facts and explaining social realities. Critiques of the CTS note that respondents were asked closed-ended questions on incidences such as shoving, pushing and grabbing. Conversely, the interpretive approach assumes that humans are conscious agents and give meaning to their environment and context; thus participants of the current study were allowed to give context to their experiences (Creswell & Poth 2018; Gray 2014; Johnson & Christensen 2004).

The qualitative approach is often criticised for its lack of trustworthiness, rigour, generalisation, and reproducibility. Hammersley (2006) and Yin (2009) observe that the qualitative approach is methodologically sensitive to the first-hand interpretation of human group life, grasping people’s meanings and realities in an in-depth fashion and generalising cases to a broader theory. For this study, I gathered subjective and interpretive data from twenty-five black African men living in Johannesburg with IPV experiences

for a better understanding of the meanings they attach to such violence in specific settings, in a nuanced and an in-depth manner. I relied on transcripts of interviews, field interviews and observational protocols (process of recording information during the interview sessions and counselling sessions) to undertake analysis (Creswell & Poth 2018; Yin 2009). These analyses contributed to understanding the reality of the subject and to answering the research questions of the study (Creswell & Poth 2018).

Significantly, this research concerned itself with making sense of what is real for people, in this instance, heterosexual black African men's perspectives and viewpoints. Thus, the interpretive approach became suitably relevant and effective. The approach's effectiveness warrants an examination of the actions, patterns, emotions, prejudices, and knowledge that accumulate as a result of interpersonal interaction over time (Snelgrove 2017; Gray 2014; Creswell 2009). Hence, the interpretive approach allows Me to gain in-depth comprehension of how men locate and perceive themselves as men in marital, cohabiting and dating relationships. The participants were positioned as hegemonic men in their intimate relationships and also how their self-perceptions changed in the context of IPV victimisation. This was a critical aspect of the study's analysis. Through the interaction with the men, an interesting perception of intimate relationships and the sources of conflicts and tensions that usually give rise to abuse were revealed.

The logic of the qualitative approach offers Me a flexible and creative way of collecting information from multiple accounts or varied cases in order to understand the complexities of heterosexual men's IPV experiences and their contexts (Yin 2009). Yin's (2009:3-4) study describes the qualitative process as a "rigorous methodological path" that "allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events" in order to achieve the broader objectives of the study. For the current study, while an adequate number of men were recruited, the primary focus was on the meanings and interpretations men bring to their

masculine identities. The study centres on how these men's experiences of IPV precipitate shifts in their understanding of themselves as men of power. This is done by situating each individual man and case within a context of changing gendered practices and their IPV experiences. Thus, in reaching conclusions about the research questions, I was interested in integrating and contrasting the narratives of the different participants' accounts of the same phenomenon, and also how these accounts may be generalised coherently and analytically to broader understandings of IPV and masculine articulation in the South African context (Yin 2009).

Even as this study explored the diverse meanings and insights that men bring to their masculine selves in the context of IPV experiences, the qualitative approach allowed Me to compare and contrast their individual, subjective narratives on the concept of manhood and their understandings of themselves as men. This was then used as a platform to clearly understand an important analytic unit in the analysis of this study, which is the impact of IPV experiences on their masculinities in the Johannesburg, South African space. Circumstantially, the qualitative approach allowed the study to underscore the shifting narratives and nuances of these black African men's understandings and perceptions of male power, and the psychosocial effects of IPV against themselves as men. The qualitative approach further situates Me as a meaningful observer in the field and during interview sessions with the participants of the study. This further contributed to the in-depth understanding of IPV and the distillation of possible solutions to address the conflict such violence habitually generates in intimate unions.

Transcending the participants' subjective verbal accounts, the study relied on field notes and observation during interview sessions with individual men to capture their emotions and prejudices as victims of female-perpetrated IPV as well as their expressions of backlash of the gender regime in the South African context (Gray 2014). Interviews were conducted with five principal informants, which helped me to create a wealth of information that led to in-depth

and rich analyses in responding to the research questions and the study's broader objectives. These practices further demonstrate the credibility and trustworthiness of the study.

Reflections on the research site: A referral health facility (RH) in Johannesburg

I conducted fieldwork for this research between October 2018 and February 2019 at a referral health facility (pseudo name) in Johannesburg. Some understanding of the services of the RH facility is necessary in order to appreciate the lived experiences of the men who seek medical care at the facility after episodes of abuse. The RH facility is one of the seven clinical forensic facility centres spread across the Johannesburg Health District under the directorate of the Gauteng Department of Health, of the Republic of South Africa. This facility provides 24-hour healthcare services, specialised health needs to sexual assault survivors and domestic violence victims and supports the South African criminal justice system with medical evidence during court proceedings of cases from patients laying charges against alleged perpetrators of abuse. However, despite the sensitive nature of the services delivered by the RH facility, their annual report for 2018 (2018:7) indicates several inhibiting challenges. This includes but is not limited to non-availability of social workers to render psychosocial services, poor ventilation of all rooms, some days there is the smell of sewage, poor working order of air conditioning equipment in the medication storeroom, and old or broken chairs.

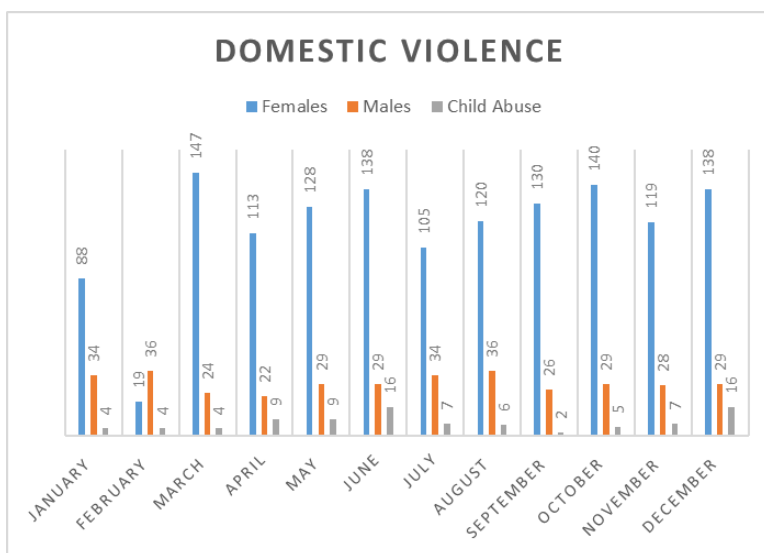
Usually, intimate partners who suffer injuries from physical assaults perpetrated by the other partner and report at the SAPS station are referred to the clinical facility for medico-legal examination. They complete the J88 form (police docket form), receive counselling and there is usually appropriate referral of such patients for psychosocial support. The RH facility policy booklet indicates that, during examination, health officers are required to examine patients privately, take their history, extract very personal details of the victims' accounts of the alleged abuse, collect information

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for court evidence, administer treatment to patients and guide or advise the patients who may be experiencing other forms of abuse such as emotional and financial abuse on how to seek support or stay far from the abuser.

Statistics obtained from the RH facility revealed that the numbers of domestic violence patients visited the facility reduced 2018 as against 2017. Ironically, the reasons for this decline were not provided in the annual report. In 2018, the annual statistics indicated that 397 women and 86 men visited the facility to seek medical help in IPV-related cases from October to December, as shown in the graph below.

Figure 2: Domestic violence report



Source: Referral Health Facility Annual report 2018

Mr Mabaso, a health official, revealed that despite the small number of men who visit the facility monthly, a good number of these men sustain serious injuries from the assaults inflicted on them by their female intimate partners:

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“And if I can tell you the men who are beaten who come here, you will not find a slap, no, you will not find maybe minor strangulation, no. you will find burns with oil, water, and iron; you find massive cases in men. Believe me; I have never had a case of a slap. It is a knife; it is those objects where you need to stitch. I am not saying a slap is a small thing, it is a big thing, you know? It is serious, but you never find a slap. It starts with the hand, with a knife, with those objects in the house, plates, and they get lacerations. Even the bites are very serious because there is a chance of HIV transmission; they say a human bite is more dangerous than a dog bite.”

This view further highlights the depth of the subjective experiences of the participants in the current study and a deeper appreciation of the subject matter under analysis. To this end, the qualitative case approach assisted Me in gaining a wealth of information and several nuances from the voiced narratives of individual men recruited for the study.

Sampling procedure

The men were recruited using the non-probability convenience sampling technique. According to Maree and Pietersen (2010), the convenience sampling technique allows the researcher to negotiate and solicit the consent of readily available and visible groups of people to participate in the study. This technique is effective in studying sensitive populations such as men who experience IPV, ensuring that they can be easily reached. In this instance, they were accessed at the RH, the site where this study was conducted. As such, the researcher recruited abused black African men including South African, Zimbabwean, Nigerian and Congolese men who visit the RH for medical care. Using the conventional probability sampling technique, it is not always possible to access this population because most men do not want to be identified as victims of female partner abuse and thus are unwilling to share their IPV experiences. Moreover, men who approach this facility have one intention, which is receiving medical help for injuries sustained during violent episodes of

abuse. They are often in traumatised states and do not have sufficient time to participate in rigorous other exercises. An additional five key informants were recruited – three medical practitioners and two police officers using the purposive sampling technique because these categories of interviewees were easily accessible and available at the RH facility and police station (Babbie & Mouton, 2011). This technique allowed me to choose informants who were gatekeepers and fitted into the purpose and aim of the current research.

Recruitment of participants

On Monday 1 October 2018, I arrived at the RH facility at about 8:20 a.m., the facility's porter approached and said, "I have one participant for you; he slept at the facility over the weekend because there was no doctor to attend to him." Simba from Zimbabwe sustained superficial burns from the chest to the forehead as a result of hot water being poured on him by his intimate partner. He became the first recruit for the current study. Sitting in one of the furnished offices meant for the social worker allocated to Me to conduct interviews, Simba was ushered in by the porter. I introduced myself as a researcher investigating intimate partner abuse against men and solicited his consent to participate in the research. He read through the consent form, volunteered to participate, and appended his signature to the form. However, a very cordial interview session was short-lived because Simba was in excruciating pain and in a traumatised condition. He also indicated this was his first episode of abuse in his relationship, hence providing in-depth but yet insufficient information.

In employing the convenience sampling strategy, I entered the research sites with a pre-planned recruiting technique to recruit participants. As in Simba's case, all the participants recruited for the study were men who had experienced IPV and were readily available at the facility to seek medical care and their consent was duly sought before being recruited as participants in the study. It is important to note that most of the men contacted declined to participate in the study. For instance, one South African man in his

early twenties declined, citing his reconciliation with his partner as the reason, and another man from Zimbabwe said he did not want his wife to be arrested, hence he was not willing to disclose his domestic issues. Some of the men who were duly recruited discontinued as interviewees in the process for reasons such as trauma, excruciating pain, drunkenness, tiredness, and lack of time. However, the 25 men who concluded the interviews were continually assured of the confidentiality of the process and the availability of psychosocial help at the centre.

The management and staff, including doctors and nurses at the facility, who were considered gatekeepers (Gobo & Molle 2017), also showed interest in the study and were most helpful in referring abused men who visited the facility to be interviewed at the office provided for the research, before or after carrying out medical examinations. The rapport I created with the facility management paved the way to conduct a follow-up via telephone to make appointments with those who visited in my absence. The follow-up strategy was extremely helpful because most men who visit the facility arrive on weekends and / or public holidays, a period when alcohol consumption is high. This is understandable given that, as revealed in the findings of the current study, drunkenness is an indirect factor that gives rise to men being abused by their partners.

This convenience sampling approach was followed until all participants, black African men who have experienced IPV from different countries such as South Africa, Zimbabwe, and the Congo, were recruited as participants in the research. By and large, the total number of black African men recruited for the study was 29, but only 25 men (ten Zimbabweans, seven South Africans, three Congolese, two Nigerians, one Mozambican, one Malawian and one from Eswatini) concluded the interview sessions. This number was considered enough and adequate for qualitative research of this nature (Yin 2003) and the selection of men from different African countries was necessary to get diverse, comparable, and contrasting accounts to enrich the study (Gray 2014). Since the purpose of this study

was to capture the voiced experiences of black African men who have experienced IPV and are readily available at the RH facility, the operating convenience technique proved effective, as opposed to snowball sampling which targets hidden populations (Maree & Pietersen 2010).

Description of the participants

The table below details the personal characteristics of the participants recruited for this study. These participants were black African men who reported cases of abuse by their heterosexual partners at the RH facility in Johannesburg. The participating men were selected through the convenience sampling technique, and they voluntarily gave their consent to participate in the study. In order to protect their identities, their real names were not used, but pseudonyms were used instead.

The set age range criteria for the recruiting of participants in this study is men from 18 years and above who presented as IPV victims living in Johannesburg and are visitors to the RH facility for medical care. The choice of the age of 18 and above for this study was informed by the fact that different African laws determine the male child age of attainment of manhood / maturity to be 18 years and above (ACPF 2013; Ratele 2008; CFRN 1999; CRSA 1996). Furthermore, men from the age of 18 are more likely to be in a relationship with the opposite sex, and as such can be rightly adjudged as men who understand intimate relationship issues and their identities as men in their cultural definitions of men. My final sample, however, was men whose age ranged between 23 and 58. Although two men recruited for the study were above 58 years, one of them, a South African aged 60, could not conclude the interview session because he was tired, weak, and not fluent in English. The other 75-year-old white Italian citizen was excluded because he did not meet the set criteria for participants - he was not an African and does not live in Johannesburg.

All participants recruited for the study were residents of Johannesburg and frequented the referral facility. My choice of

Johannesburg to collect data was informed by three reasons: firstly, the city boasts a high concentration of black African men from diverse countries on the continent (Peberdy 2016; ACF 2016; CDE 2008). Secondly, Johannesburg is the largest city in South Africa, a country believed to have the most advanced gender equality laws and practices than anywhere else in Africa (Ratele, Van Niekerk, Tonsing, Seedat, Jacobs, McClure & Helman 2016; CSV 2016). In addition to the two points above was that the RH facility being utilised by male IPV victims living across the city is in a strategic location in the city of Johannesburg. Thus, the population of the study, black African men, is well represented and available in Johannesburg, South Africa.

All the participants were recruited based on their positions as men in former or recent, married, cohabiting, and dating heterosexual relationships for a period ranging from eight months to ten years, and have experienced one form of IPV or another in these relationships. This helped the analysis of this study to explore how these men settling in a violent relationship experience shifts in their sense of being “men” over time. The breakdown showed the following: four of the men interviewed in the study were in a marital relationship, 14 were in cohabiting relationships and seven were in a dating relationship. While Thabo who had been in a cohabiting relationship for more than a year spoke about his IPV experience with his cohabiting ex-partner, Kabila, another participant from Congo, also narrated episodes of abuse from both his former and current marital partners in seven and eight years of relationship, respectively.

Several of the men recruited for the study had children from their relationships and two men reported that their partners were pregnant. Concerning education and employment, all participants were engaged in certain forms of gainful economic activity, and most of them were self-employed, while a few worked as employees in different organisations. A significant number of these men had obtained a higher degree qualification, and some had completed their secondary school education. Regarding the

Table 3.1: (a) Personal features of participants

S/N	Pseudonym	Country	Age	Relationship Type	Level of Educational Qualification	Occupation	Residential Area
1	Simba	Zimbabwe	36	Married	Grade 11	Auto Mechanic	Melville, JHB
2	Gwagwa	Zimbabwe	44	Cohabiting	Diploma in Printing Science	Printing Machine Operator	Marshalltown, JHB
3	Misa	Zimbabwe	30	Cohabiting	No Qualification	Security Officer	Soweto
4	Bafana	South Africa	43	Cohabiting	Grade 8	Temporary Job	CBD
5	Kgaogelo	Zimbabwe	35	Cohabiting	Grade 12	Automotive spraypainter	CBD
6	Langa	South Africa	31	Dating	Studying: Diploma in Nursing	Student, full-time	CBD
7	Chucks	Nigeria	39	Dating	Secondary School drop out	Businessman	CBD

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S/N	Pseudonym	Country	Age	Relationship Type	Level of Educational Qualification	Occupation	Residential Area
8	Khathu	Zimbabwe	29	Dating	Diploma in Engineering	Electrician	CBD
9	Ndllovu	South Africa	36	Cohabiting	Drop Out	Security Personnel	Hillbrow
10	Makwakwa	Zimbabwe	36	Dating	No Qualification	Owens a Salon	Yeoville
11	Kaloba	DRC	49	Dating	Diploma in Logistics	Works at Spar	Hillbrow
12	Sfiso	South Africa	41	Cohabiting	Matric Certificate	Security Personnel	CDB
13	Tinyiko	Zimbabwe	34	Cohabiting	Diploma in Marketing	Waiter	CDB
14	Lukah	DRC	37	Married	Degree in International Relations	Barber	Joubert Park

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S/N	Pseudonym	Country	Age	Relationship Type	Level of Educational Qualification	Occupation	Residential Area
15	Thabiso	Zimbabwe	47	Cohabiting	Diploma in Electronics	Employed	Braamfontein
16	Thabo	South Africa	33	Ex- partner	B.Com Degree in Accounting	Employed	Newtown
17	Thokozani	Malawi	35	Cohabiting	Matric Certificate	Self-Employed	Newtown
18	Obinna	Nigeria	34	Married	University Graduate	Salon/ Hairpiece Sales	Hillbrow
19	Themhani	Zimbabwe	24	Dating	Drop-out	Cleaner	Hillbrow
20	Senzo	Zimbabwe	42	Cohabiting	Matric Certificate	Painting/ Sealing	Hillbrow
21	Andile	Eswatini	36	Cohabiting	No Qualification	Security Personnel	Hillbrow
22	Jabulani	South Africa	36	Dating	Social Science Degree	Administrator	Berea
23	Mpho	South Africa	23	Cohabiting	Grade 11	Barman	Berea

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S/N	Pseudonym	Country	Age	Relationship Type	Level of Educational Qualification	Occupation	Residential Area
24	Mandla	Mozambique	30	Cohabiting	No Qualification	Car Spray Painter/ Panel beater	Berea
25	Kabila	DRC	58	Ex -and Current Marriage	Graduate in M.BCHB	Practicing Medical Doctor	Midrand

Table 3.1: (b) Details of participants' partners and the length of relationship

S/N	Pseudonym	Country of Partner	Length of Relationship	Number of Children	Partner's Educational Qualification	Partner's Occupation
1	Simba	Zimbabwe	10 years	2	No Qualification	Works as Nanny
2	Gwagwa	South Africa	3 years	0	Matric Certificate	Hairdresser
3	Misa	South Africa	2 years	0	No Qualification	Unemployed
4	Bafana	South Africa	9 years	0	Matric Certificate	Self Employed
5	Kgaogelo	South Africa	5 years	3	No Qualification	Unemployed
6	Langa	South Africa	2 years	0	Degree in Communication	Works with SAPS
7	Chucks	South Africa	2 years	0	Studying for Higher Degree	Works as civil servant in SA
8	Khathu	Zimbabwe	4 years +	1	No Qualification	Shop retailer
9	Ndlovu	South Africa	2 years +	1	No Qualification	Unemployed
10	Makwakwa	Eswatini	2 years	Pregnant	No Qualification	Unemployed
11	Kaloba	South Africa	1 year	0	Matric Certificate	Unemployed

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S/N	Pseudonym	Country of Partner	Length of Relationship	Number of Children	Partner's Educational Qualification	Partner's Occupation
12	Sfiso	South Africa	1 year and 9 months	0	Matric Certificate	Cleaner
13	Tinyiko	Zimbabwe	5 years +	1	Degree Secretarial Studies	Waitress
14	Lukah	South Africa	7 years	1	Matric Certificate	Hairdresser
15	Thabiso	Zimbabwe	4 years	0	A-level	Unemployed
16	Thabo	South Africa	3 months	0	Matric Certificate	Unemployed
17	Thokozeni	South Africa	1 year	0	Matric Certificate	Unemployed
18	Obinna	South Africa	4 years	1	Matric Certificate	Baker
19	Them bani	Zimbabwe	1 year	0	Not sure	Unemployed
20	Senzo	Zimbabwe	2 years	0	Drop out	Domestic Staff
21	Andile	Mozambique	5 years	1	No Qualification	Hairdresser
22	Jabulani	South Africa	1 and a half years	1	Matric Certificate	Unemployed
23	Mpho	South Africa	2 years	1	No Qualification	Cashier

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S/N	Pseudonym	Country of Partner	Length of Relationship	Number of Children	Partner's Educational Qualification	Partner's Occupation
24	Mandla	South Africa	8 months	0	No Qualification	Unemployed
25	Kabila	Ex-wife: South Africa Current wife: DRC	Ex-wife: 7 years Current wife: 8 years	1 1	Ex-wife: Teacher Current wife: - Matric	Ex-wife: School Principal Current wife: Businesswoman

Table 3.1: (c) Details of key informants in the study

S/N	Pseudonym	Level of Education Qualification	Profession	Years of Practice/ Experience	Place of Work
1	Dr Menzi	MBChB	Medical Doctor	31 years	RH facility
2	Dr Zinzi	MBChB & Postgraduate Diploma in HIV	Medical Doctor	13 years	RH facility
3	Mrs Thobeka	Graduate of SAP College	Police Officer: Social Crime Relations Coordinator	20 years	Police Station
4	Mr Shaka	Graduate of SAP College	Police Officer: Social Crime Unit	13 years	Police Station
5	Mr Mabaso	Nursing Degree	Nurse	3 years	RH facility

men's female partners, most of the women did not have any formal educational training and were unemployed. Seventeen of the partners of these men were South Africans, and six were Zimbabwean women. This is provided in detail in the table below.

Table 3.1(b) presents details of women who partnered with the participants recruited for this study, as well as the temporal durations of these relationships. Other features include the number of children in these relationships, their female partners' country of origin, educational levels, and occupational statuses.

Recruitment of key informants

The following Table 3.1 (c) presents the details of five key informants recruited for this study. These participants were considered to be gatekeepers because they rendered professional help to victims of IPV. While three of them were experienced medical practitioners at the RH facility, the other two were police officers specially trained to deal with domestic violence cases. These participants were three men and two women, and this was done in order to ensure gender parity. Information received from these participants was used to complement the data obtained from the study's sample.

To recruit the five key informants for the study, the purposive sampling approach became helpful because it enabled me to select those informants judged to be gatekeepers and good sources of information to complement the data obtained from the study sample (Babbie & Mouton 2011). Thus, I recruited three medical practitioners (two medical doctors and one nurse) and two police personnel (one police captain and one police constable). The choice of these informants was informed by the fact that they were personally responsible for handling and addressing domestic violence-related cases in the RH facility and police stations, respectively. Furthermore, these informants had vast experience in their professions. For example, one of the medical doctors recruited in the study had been in active clinical forensic medicine practice

for 31 years, and the police captain had served in the SAPS for 20 years; at the time of the current study, she had been the social crime coordinator at the police station for the past ten years, dealing with issues of abuse, including IPV. Privileged information from the interviews conducted with these key informants was used to complement the data and probe the effect of IPV on the conception of masculinity. This purposive sampling technique proved effective because these categories of interviewees were easily accessible at the RH facility and police station (Babbie & Mouton 2011). I was overwhelmed by these informants' interest and willingness to participate in the study when approached. After much rescheduling, the interviews were conducted.

Data collection

In-depth interviews

I relied heavily on the interviews conducted as a major data source in this study. This is so because interviews are one of the most important sources of data production in a qualitative study (Green & Thorogood 2009; Yin 2009). In essence, it is an invaluable tool used to tap into the accounts of these interviewees' subjective beliefs and understandings of their contexts (Green & Thorogood 2009). Hence, I adopted the interview as an instrument because it is the preferred data-gathering approach when the research purpose is to understand the lived experiences of people and the meanings they make out of those experiences in context (Gray 2014:385).

From the constructionist-interpretivist standpoint, an interview is an inter-dependent and mutual effort between myself and participants to produce knowledge (Gray 2014). The interviewee is more than just a participant, but a critical partner with the interviewer in the meaning-making process in a qualitative case study research (Yin 2009). Hence, the interview process is far more important than the content and conversation itself (Babbie & Mouton 2011). Thus, this study employed semi-structured, one-on-one in-depth

interviews, allowing the participants enough time to develop their own accounts of their experiences. I was interested in understanding the meaning of the men's experiences of IPV and its impact on their masculine sense of themselves. The interview schedule was designed to capture contextual issues surrounding men's victimisation; in this case, the contexts of changing gender relations in South Africa and the contextual issues and tensions in individual men's relationships. As already stated in this chapter, one of my major interest was to understand how the dynamics in such contexts can influence women's use of violence on their heterosexual partners.

The study employed open-ended questions in interviewing black African men. I was able to engage in depth with how the participants understand themselves as men within gendered relationships in their cultural contexts and how IPV experiences impacted this in the context of shifts in gender relations. All interviews in this research were audiotaped to provide a more accurate rendition of the accounts of participants. This contributed to the overall credibility and trustworthiness of the study (Babbie & Mouton 2011).

Reflections on the interviews

Empathy and rapport-building were first on my mind as I sat face-to-face with men who volunteered to participate in the study. Elmesky (2005) argues that to gain in-depth information from depressed and disempowered interviewees, the element of empathy is key. I began all interviews by demonstrating a sense of understanding of the participants' plight, assuring them they were not being judged as victims of women-inflicted violence and encouraging them to speak out. Words like "I understand what you're going through", "sorry about your experience", "have you received any medical help?" and "you are stronger when you speak out" preceded the actual interview sessions, and in some cases were re-echoed during interview sessions. Many of the participants felt relieved and could share deep stories about their relationship issues without being asked. For example, one participant

handed over his personal diary where he documented all the issues and abuse episodes he experienced in his relationship. However, some participants became very emotional during interview sessions as tears rolled down their cheeks while speaking of the traumatic IPV events. In such cases, interview sessions were suspended, and the participants were referred for psychosocial assistance.

Establishing rapport was another strategy that helped create a conducive discursive environment between me and the participants. Donalek and Soldwisch (2004) believe that in dealing with sensitive participants who share traumatic experiences, establishing a good rapport may prepare them emotionally and cognitively to render meaningful accounts of their lived experiences. Building rapport with the interviewee started out by sharing greetings, after which I would introduce myself, reiterate the purpose of the research and assure them of confidentiality. The dialogue then involved capturing participants' demographic information, including their source of livelihood, age, relationship status, educational qualification, duration of the relationship, partners' socio-economic status, and the number of children, if any. As the participants became increasingly more comfortable, I began to engage them in more serious conversations that addressed the research question and set the objectives of the current study.

During the in-depth interviews, they were asked questions that related to their views on intimate unions and experiences of conflicts and tensions in their relationships. This was one set objective of the study. Questions asked included probing the sources of tensions, how tensions manifested in their relationships and whether they directly led to them being abused by their female partners. This set of questions helped to expose direct, indirect, and contributing factors and sources that produce tensions in black African men's relationships. The interviews were also important in exploring the lived IPV experiences of black African men. The participants were led to discuss freely their personal accounts of abuse without interjection; however, other guided unstructured open-ended questions followed to

allow participants to contextualise their abuse experiences into physical, emotional, economic, and sexual IPV. Bless, Higson-Smith & Sithole (2013) posit that unstructured in-depth interviews are useful in exploratory research to gain detailed explanations from research participants. Unstructured interviews were useful throughout the interview sessions as they allowed for posing probing questions from new information supplied by the participants. In-depth interviews were particularly useful to the interrogation of the participants' view of manhood and their narratives of gendered positioning. Their verbal presentations were useful in understanding their conceptions of masculinity, trajectories of their gendered expectations and changing gendered relations. For instance, I discovered that most men still held traditional views on issues such as provider, financial control, decision-making, housekeeping and sexual intercourse, while other men constructed more progressive views on the same issues. Discussions of these issues were usually interesting for these men as they tried to show how egalitarian or traditionally conformist, they were. Having relieved them a little with questions on gender relations, participants were then asked probing questions on the impact of their IPV experiences on their masculine sense of themselves as men. These questions usually impacted their emotions as they began to express the psycho-social impact of IPV on themselves and their shifting notions of masculinities. Here, more direct questions were asked, for example, "Tell me how your experiences of IPV have affected how you see yourself? Please explain, when looking back, have these abuse experiences made you a better or different man?" Finally, questions directed at capturing their views on possible solutions to addressing IPV were posed to these men in concluding the interview sessions. These questions were probed with equal intensity and vigour and the interviewees were given ample time to think through their responses.

During the interview sessions, I paid particular attention to the participants in order to demonstrate that I was listening to what was being said. I would nod my head,

and make affirming sounds like “hmmm”, or “ok” and sometimes I even repeated what they had said as emphasis just to keep the flow of the conversation. In some instances, I would ask the participants to show me signs of old wounds they had sustained during the episodes of abuse that they had mentioned in the course of the interview. In other instances, incoming phone calls distracted our conversation, as participants were allowed to speak to family members who were following up on them as a result of the abuse. Participants and I would laugh when necessary, without losing sight of the matter being discussed. For example, one participant, when asked what he thought would be the solution to men being abused by their female partners, replied “polygamy”. He said men should keep more than one partner, which would make women fight themselves for you as a man and not fight the man. The foregoing underscores the interesting atmosphere in which these interviews were conducted.

It is important to note here that a significant number of the participants were interviewed almost immediately after a physical episode of abuse. A few participants were interviewed when they visited the RH facility for repeat treatment. It was only one participant who volunteered and shared stories of past episodes of abuse from his former and current intimate partners. For the men who were recent victims of abuse, the sessions were complex and challenging, especially when they were yet to receive medical attention. This category of participants is usually traumatised, emotionally unstable and in physical pain. In fact, I called off some of the interviews and referred participants for psychosocial help when I observed that a participant was not coping. We would usually schedule an appointment for another interview session which never materialised either because the participants had reconciled with their abusive partners or no longer had an interest in continuing as participants in the study. Several phone calls as a follow-up often yielded no response. One participant who came for repeat treatment and was called in for another interview session was reluctant to contribute meaningfully to our conversation, perhaps because he came to the facility that

day with his partner who had allegedly abused him. During interview sessions, some of the participants did mention that they were tired and wanted to go home after receiving treatment and I was obliged to let them go. In one instance, a nurse in the RH facility walked in and disrupted the interview session claiming the interview was lasting too long and the patient needed medical care. Interviews with participants lasted from ten minutes to an hour and a half. For the purpose of the current study interviews adopted for use in the analysis were those that lasted for about 30 minutes to an hour and a half and with sufficient responses that helped address the research question. At the end of each interview session, participants were given an opportunity to ask questions and state any concerns.

In addition to the interviews conducted with male IPV survivors, more interviews were conducted with key informants. The interviews with informants were intended to gather rich and complementary information about the subject matter of this research. Interviews with this group were held in different locations. While RH facility informants' interviews were held at the facility, the informants from the SAPS were conducted at the police station in their respective offices, at different dates and times. Interviews with this group were very straightforward and less complex because of the vast professional and practical knowledge the participants had acquired through their years of working with IPV victims.

I utilised semi-structured interviews which allowed him to raise key questions and create an environment for the informants to influence the conversation and eventually provide a rich and in-depth description of the research subject matter (Braun & Clarke 2006). Questions raised with informants included but were not limited to professional qualifications, years in practice, their understanding of the conception of masculinity, their understanding of IPV against heterosexual men, their opinions on the underlying cause of IPV against men and their professional opinions on the effects of IPV on men's masculine sense of themselves. These

interviews with informants were tape-recorded and each interview lasted for about 55 minutes or a little bit longer.

Dialogue sessions

I volunteered as a social work helper without any remuneration between October 2018 and April 2019, offering guidance and referral services to victims and survivors of abuse who visit the facility, at the same time observing, and gathering information in relation to answering the subject of the current research. According to Gobo and Molle (2017), a sound qualitative strategy allows Me to establish a direct relationship with the participants, immersing themselves in their spaces to observe, interact and describe their behaviour in a given time. Thus, a modern qualitative approach is focused on the character and processes of the qualitative dialogue between me and the participants (Tedlock 1991, cited in Robben & Sluka 2007). In this sense, providing guidance and interacting with all domestic violence victims becomes a creative qualitative process in intermingling with the lived experiences of victims and gaining a deeper understanding of their situation. While the motivation is to secure data, volunteering as a social work helper demonstrated commitment to reciprocity - to provide something useful back to research participants for their collaboration. This, according to Robben and Sluka (2007) is a new approach to qualitative fieldwork, in which the researcher's commitment to serving the local community and the collection of research data are equally important.

As a volunteer social work helper at the facility, I was participating in every activity at the site, from being present at the RH staff meetings, to partaking in the centre's community awareness campaigns, and attending conferences with staff members and training. He reported for service at the facility by 9 a.m. and would finish work at 3 p.m. The role of a worker at the facility facilitated my role of a researcher to gain an insider view and subjective data (Creswell 2013). I became a participant observer fully integrated into the activities of the site. He started out by observing broader

details of the site and then concentrated on issues bordering on the research questions and purpose (Creswell 2013). For instance, the observational protocol was recorded, as well as the physical setting of the facility, organisational documents, activities and conversations of staff members, interactions between participants and staff members, and the physical injury and behaviour of the participants during visits. I also took notes on personal experiences, hunches, reactions and informal conversations and interactions with the informants and participants of the study, for example, observing and taking notes on the attitudes of some participants in the waiting queues. About five participants in the waiting queue communicated their frustrations with the delay. This was brought to the attention of one of the informants in the study, a nurse in the facility who explained that patients are attended to on a first-come, first-served basis, except in cases of emergency.

Being a worker at the facility offered the privilege and opportunities to interact with the participants; in this case, clients, listen to them and give them support. These clientele sessions were helpful in gaining a deeper understanding of the dynamics and contexts of victims' experiences. During these sessions, participants and other male clients shared deep issues about the character and sources of tensions and conflicts in their relationships. These were truly short sessions aimed at gathering details about their circumstances to enable informed guidance and referrals to be given to survivors. A follow-up of these survivors is required to access their progress and further instruct and direct them accordingly. In the case of male clients, an invitation was extended to the alleged abusive partner for a dialogue, if they were still in a relationship. The dialogue sessions were usually more engaging and less emotional because at this time the clients were refreshed and revived. In all, heterosexual intimate partners who utilised the dialogue sessions during fieldwork were nine and of this number two were participants of the current study. For example, one Congolese participant named Lukah who alleged that his partner, a South African woman employed the services

of her son and brothers to inflict violence on him, came with his partner for the next dialogue session. This session further revealed to me after hearing his partner's side of the story how Lukah's drunkenness was a factor in his being abused, which he never revealed to me during the course of the interview session with him. She revealed to me that Lukah drinks and starts a fight at home, which he could not concretely deny. During the dialogue session, Kgaogelo vowed to avenge the injury inflicted on him. All efforts to make him and his partner resolve their differences failed; even the pleas of his partner could not move him to change his position. However, weeks later it was revealed that they had made up and Kgaogelo's partner expressed her gratitude for the intervention.

Although conversations during dialogue sessions can be likened to a focus-group style atmosphere (Creswell 2009), the sessions were not tape-recorded, but I took descriptive observational notes interpreting my observations in relation to the purpose of the current study after these meetings. At a later stage, it was decided to withdraw the services as volunteer work because it was necessary to engineer a critical and objective distance as the very close connection to the participants was beginning to weigh heavily on my emotions. I was advised to respectfully conclude the voluntary work at the RH.

The researcher's role: Personal reflexivity

Reflexivity is a key concept in a qualitative case study research. The concept is related to my position as the researcher in the integral part of the research process. As such, a co-construct of the data emerges from interviews (Gray 2014; Creswell 2009). In this sense, at every stage of the current research process I did a systematic reflection on their position to avoid bias or the skewing of the data. This was made possible by the documentation of personal feelings and emotions, which significantly helped in checkmating the process during the decision-making throughout the research process.

According to Gray (2014:606), personal reflexivity means that: “the researcher reflects upon how their personal values, attitudes, beliefs and aims have served to shape the research. It involves honesty and openness and locates the researcher firmly within the dynamic of the research process”. For Creswell (2009), personal reflexivity communicates the researcher’s openness about themselves, and it enhances the trustworthiness of the study and appeals more to readers. In this sense, as a researcher, I recognise my personal motivations in the research and the meanings I may have imposed on the research process. I have been interested in gender-based violence for quite a long time, particularly violence against women. This has positioned me as a defender of women’s rights, who wants to see justice in any case of abuse against women. However, the masculine understanding that these men are protectors of women and can bear whatever a woman inflicts on them, left me with many years of abuse from my partner. These experiences of abuse largely informed the choice of this topic – men’s experiences of IPV and their shifting masculinities. It is important to note here that I have personally experienced emotional abuse and have undergone professional therapy since 2007. Thus, in trying to make a case for men whose plight has been constantly ignored by society and its systems, I sought to be professional and unbiased throughout the current research process. However, hearing the abuse stories of these men in some instances triggered emotional memories of my own IPV experiences; hence, my engagement with social workers at the general unit of the health facility and briefing sessions organised by the RH were extremely helpful overall in sustaining my emotional stability.

Reflexivity helps researchers to conceptualise their unique preconceptions, assumptions, and personal background issues such as the place of culture, social positioning, gender, race, educational status, as well as victimisation experience that might impact the study (Creswell 2009). In view of this, in the course of this study of black African men, I interviewed black African men from countries such as South Africa in Southern Africa, the Democratic Republic of Congo in Central

Africa, and Nigeria in West Africa. As a Nigerian from West Africa, accessing men from this region was quite easy for me. I was able to build a certain level of mutual trust and obligation with men from West Africa (Green & Thorogood 2009). This was not the case with men from other regions because of the existence of a stereotype in South Africa about Nigerians. This created a major challenge in my access to men from other African regions, especially men from the Southern African region. This stereotype generally adjudged Nigerians as fraudulent and criminally minded. It was quite difficult with some of these participants from other parts of Africa, even though I was a volunteer social work helper at the RHF, and this was evident in the cases of the dropout of one participant and several others who refused to participate in the study. I worked hard at building a sense of trust with the participants, presenting myself as a decent Nigerian conducting this study for academic purposes.

Gender is a vital dimension of this research reflexivity process. As such, in undertaking this study, my professional and personal experiences shaped how I view women who perpetrate violence against men. Throughout the research process, I was conscious of myself as a man who had experienced IPV. I realised and acknowledged that I am connected to the issue emotionally and experientially. I held the belief that state protection of women and the societal stereotypes against men who experience IPV have influenced women's use of violence and men's silence in victimisation. However, I constantly reminded myself of the purpose of this research, so as not to demonise women, but to draw attention to men's experiences of violence and its impact on their lives, hence calling for gender justice. Furthermore, being a man probing the victimisation experiences of other men facilitated my conversations with these men. Many were looking for someone to talk to, someone who understands or is willing to understand their plight without judging them. There were instances where some men expected me to understand and agree with them on points they raised during interview sessions. While this made me uncomfortable, I nodded my

head as if in agreement and quickly redirected and deflected such questions with another question. Albeit, my gender and my position as a researcher prompted these men to open up to discuss the research question of this study.

I was constantly aware of my position as a volunteer worker in the RH facility in relation to the positions of the participants (DeShong 2011). I acknowledge that my position as a social work helper privileged me and created a power imbalance between the participants and myself. With this in mind, I was conscious not to take advantage of the clients; I negotiated, solicited, and explained the purpose of the research, handing over to them the research information sheets to go through and made sure they signed the consent form before the interview sessions. During the in-depth interviews, I made sure they were as conversational as possible, not commandeering or forcing responses from the participants in order to dilute the power imbalance between me as a volunteer worker and the participants as clients. I was involved and detached. I allowed participants to freely express themselves and make meaning of their IPV experiences, while I tried to understand their psychological realities. Furthermore, IPV is a sensitive issue (Watts & Zimmermann 2002), as men find it extremely hard to relate their victimisation experiences; this was particularly the case with some of the men from South Africa and Nigeria. They kept trying to retain explicit disclosure of their experiences. However, through painstaking engagement, and presenting myself as a non-judgemental and interested party, I was able to extract information relevant to answering the research question.

In probing the question of masculine shifts because of IPV experiences, I was mindful of my preconception of what a shift in masculinity means for me and to them. Some of the respondents' accounts of how IPV precipitates shifts in masculine understandings contrasted with my own belief and experience. For example, a few of the men still gave narratives of embodying hyper-masculinities and active agency despite being abused by their female partner. This to me was contradictory because my experience made me believe

that in such situations a man's agency is usually depleted. Reflexivity enabled me to detach my personal experiences and focus on the interviewees' viewpoints and experiences (Amina 1995). Reflexivity made me aware of my subjective ideas and my position in the research process and the influences of this to achieve the objective result, and this helped me greatly in collecting data that is void of bias in the interviews conducted in this study.

Regarding language, English was the language used throughout the interviews with the participants. This offered an excellent opportunity for a good number of participants to speak freely without any language barriers, although sometimes participants could not understand some of the questions asked because of their educational background. This made me rephrase the questions using explicit concepts and understandable terms (Creswell 2013), while I allowed them ample time to think through their responses and reply slowly. However, this was not the case with two men from South Africa who wanted to speak isiZulu and isiXhosa with me. As Khunou (2006) rightly noted, it is problematic when the researcher and the participants do not share a common language, and this was my exact experience with these South African men. While I discontinued interviewing the Xhosa man, I managed to interview the Zulu man even though his diction and English were not clear.

Interviewing key informants was vastly different from other participants of the study because they were well-educated, experienced, and had a preconceived perspective on the issues surrounding the subject matter of this research. In interviewing these informants, I tried not to introduce my views, or the views of other participants already interviewed; I allowed them to present their viewpoints as a complementary response to enrich the study data.

To ensure credibility and rigour for the trustworthiness of the study, I kept safely detailed records of the research process, including the field notes and audio records, and this can easily be recalled. The audit trail of the data analysis

process is also available; hence, this further demonstrates the consistency, authenticity, and transparency of the entire research process (Creswell 2013; Babbie & Mouton 2011). I made dedicated efforts to ensure that an accurate account of the African men's narratives of their IPV experiences and how they impacted their masculinities was presented in an unbiased manner.

Data analysis

I utilised thematic content analysis to analyse and present the data gathered from the field. This method assisted me in examining the voiced narratives of the study participants analytically and transparently from the transcripts and interview / observation protocol (Braun & Clarke 2006). The thematic content analysis in this research was useful for systematically pinpointing patterns from case testimonies (Gray 2014). I chose it because it helped me to focus on identifying categories, principles, and common themes in the content of the data and the presentation of key elements from the participants' accounts (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This helped to apply relevant themes important in describing the research phenomenon and in answering my research question (Gray 2014). Furthermore, it offered me the ability to reduce and summarise data collected to small units of content, while extracting comparable themes from the various accounts of the data set (Gray 2014; Green & Thorogood 2009). For instance, this method helped me to juxtapose the narratives of married participants with cohabiting and dating participants of the study in creating a comparative analysis. More specifically, Braun and Clarke's (2006) step-by-step guide were useful in the naming of themes in an evocative, catchy, concise, and informative manner, and the presentation was conducted in a logical sequence, with each team building on previously discussed themes. Hence, I followed the prescribed six-step process of thematic data analysis in the identification and arrangement of common themes from the data set, and in the write-up of the current thesis.

My approach to the data was firstly transcribing the verbal data by myself. This was a very tedious process, but it gave me the opportunity to familiarise myself with the data. The act of transcribing is considered by scholars as an interpretive act and a key phase of data analysis (Braun & Clarke 2006). I further familiarised myself with the data as I spent more time reading intensely, trying to interact, search for meaning and be familiar with the content. Afterwards, I coded the data and, subsequently, themes were identified, reviewed, defined, and named. In coding, I pinpointed significant patterns from case testimonies, and organised all extracts into meaningful groups and then matched them up with tentative definitions. At the next stage, I went through the definitions of each category, refining each one and sorting them into the broader significant themes I created, while I collated closely related extracts in that particular order. In the end, a set of candidates and sub-themes emerged (Braun & Clarke 2006). During the fourth step, I kept meticulously investigating the meaning of each theme that emerged and the extracts that followed, returning to look through my field interview / observation protocol and juxtaposing elements in key informants' interviews with study participants (Yin 2009). Then I began to rework the themes, created new ones, and rearranged codes and extracts in order to present a nuanced and good representation of the entire data. In stages five and six, I further refined the themes and conceptualised the stories each of them told in the data, locating the relationship of each theme in relation to the research question of the study. I then began to plan themes to be included in the write-up, moving from a descriptive to an interpretive presentation of the data (Creswell 2009; Yin 2009). Verbatim quotes from participants were embedded into the document to give the participants' voices in the outcome and to ensure credibility and transparency. My aim was to provide a clear sense of how individual men's narratives explain the impact of IPV on their masculine identities in the South African context by linking themes that capture the overall stories of the data and juxtaposing these findings against relevant existing literature on IPV and masculinity.

Ethical considerations

Investigating men who have experienced IPV raises ethical issues, safety considerations and potential emotional distress risks for participants (Ellsberg & Heise 2002), yet this study was justified because the findings created awareness and enhanced our understanding of IPV, which will ultimately lead to improved responses to victims (Ellsberg & Heise 2002). Thus, given the sensitive nature of the study and the societal stigma associated with male victims of IPV (Randle & Graham 2011; Wassenaar 2006), clearance to conduct this study was obtained from dual research ethics committees. The first was the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Johannesburg, granted on 10 April 2018, and the second was the Research Committee of Johannesburg Health District, granted on 19 September 2018. These approvals further gave me access to visits to the RH Hillbrow H.E.L.P. centre facility on 1 October 2018.

This study adheres to the World Health Organization's ethical guidelines for domestic violence research and the Johannesburg Health District Research Committee conditions. To ensure ethical standards, participant autonomy, and self-determination, I informed each participant about the purpose of the research and presented them with the research information sheet to read. The information sheet includes detailed ethical information surrounding participants' participation in the research. In compliance with the conditions of the Johannesburg Health District Research Committee, measures were put in place to maintain participants' rights, anonymity, and confidentiality at all times to ensure their safety. I did not coerce clients or take advantage of my position as a volunteer worker to recruit participants for the study. Participants were informed of their rights to decline or volunteer to participate in the research and indeed some of them declined. As a show of respect for their autonomy and dignity, participants were told beforehand about the sensitive nature of the questions that would be asked and they were freely allowed to decline to answer questions they did not wish to answer. They received assurances that

their identities would be concealed with pseudonyms and whatever information provided would be tape-recorded, would be for academic purposes only, and would be accessed only by my supervisors and me, but that information may be presented at conferences or published in journals (Braun & Clarke 2013).

A key ethical obligation recommended by the WHO (2010) for researchers on IPV is to provide privacy for the participants during the course of the interviews. Thus, all interviews with participants were held at the social worker's office in the RH facility. This space was considered safe, private, and familiar because it is a government facility and participants who approach the police station are compulsorily referred to this facility for medical examination and psychosocial help; hence, their privacy and security are guaranteed within the facility. Interviews with key informants were held in the confines of their offices, convenient and secure enough for them to freely participate in the research (Ellsberg & Heise 2002).

I understand that male IPV victims often do not want to disclose their violent situations to cover for their sense of masculinities (Adebayo 2014), hence participants were required to sign an informed consent agreement to buttress their willingness and interest to voluntarily participate in the research (Creswell 2013; Babbie & Mouton 2011). All participants were allowed to ask questions before signing the consent form and they were also informed of their rights to withdraw or discontinue the interview sessions.

Ethical issues of trauma, physical pain, fatigue, and vulnerability of participants arose in the course of conducting the interviews. In fact, research has demonstrated that male IPV survivors are at risk of post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms (Hines & Douglas 2010). A number of the men in the sample were considered traumatised persons. This was because most participants interviewed were in their victimised contexts, whereby they showed signs of agitation, and physical pain and were feeling uncomfortable (Leedy & Ormrod 2001). In such cases, I discontinued the interview and

addressed the urgent needs of the participants. While those who needed psychosocial attention were immediately referred to see the social workers at the general outpatient department (OPD) of the facility, those with medical needs were referred to see the medical officers. This was done in accordance with the WHO (2010) ethical guidelines, which stipulate the provision of appropriate support services for participants. However, participants who had already received medical help were allowed to go home if they did not wish to go through trauma counselling. They were encouraged to utilise sources of support such as family and friends' homes in order to stay away from their homes and partners to avoid further altercations and to emotionally detach themselves from the scene of the abuse episodes, which re-enforced their traumatic condition (WHO, 2010). Furthermore, I offered participants follow-ups as part of my duties as a volunteer worker at the RH facility, to monitor their emotional progress.

Participants who in my validation were emotionally fit to continue the interviews and did not wish to discontinue immediately were encouraged to speak out when they felt overburdened or stressed during the course of the interview. The interview sessions became one remedy for helping male IPV victims before referrals. These sessions gave these men a good opportunity to ventilate, which is an important therapeutic step in managing traumatised clients (Brown, Strauss, LaBar, Gold, McCarthy & Morey 2014; Griffin, Resick, Waldrop & Mechanic 2003), yet scholars note how third-party responses can implicitly cause secondary victimisation (Hines & Douglas 2011), hence I made every effort to display good communication and interpersonal skills, emotional maturity and empathy, and was non-judgemental during the course of the interviews (Babbie & Mouton 2011). In the end, all participants articulated that the interview sessions were extremely helpful, released them from psychological tensions and did not exacerbate their traumatic conditions.

Although the findings of the current study do not include accessing traumatised individuals' reactions to participating in research, they support the conclusions of a body of evidence

which counters the assumptions about the risk of engaging traumatised participants in a research process. For instance, Griffin *et al.* (2003) found no potential risk or harm associated with participation in trauma-focused research with a sample of 430 domestic violence victims, rape, and physical assault survivors' participation. Campbell and Adams (2009) found that rape survivors accepted to participate in face-to-face interviews to help themselves and other potential survivors, and Brown *et al.* (2014) found a favourable risk-benefit in conducting research within the traumatised population. Although participants in these studies were not engaged in the aftermath of the traumatic episodes, the overall risk of increased traumatic stress associated with research participation was not noticed amongst most participants in the current study who were engaged in their traumatic state. The study participants indicated that the interview sessions were valuable and were not a distressing experience for them.

Conclusion

The methodological strategies highlighted in this chapter demonstrate the rich variety of approaches to investigating IPV against black African men living in Johannesburg. They reflect an interpretive / qualitative lens utilised in this study to explore the meaning that individual men ascribe to their IPV experiences and the impact of these experiences on their masculine identities. Each approach provides a useful, albeit partial contribution to the full mechanisms used in achieving an in-depth and rich outcome of the current research process. I have particularly demonstrated in this chapter how, through in-depth interviews and participant observation, I tapped into the personal experiences and accounts of the black African men in their environments, underscoring my personal reflexivity as a researcher, as well as other realities that impact how the study progresses.

4

“Fight, Fight, Fight, Fight, Fight Every Day”: Enduring Female Partner Abuse

The black African men were asked to narrate present and past forms of abuse they endured at the hands of their female partners.

Analysis of the collected data allowed me to identify nuanced, multi-faceted and overlapping forms of abuse encountered by these black African men who were in relationships of cohabitation, dating, and marriage. Table 4 captures from these men’s submissions the severity of the injuries they sustained as a result of their partners’ aggressive behaviour, prompting them to seek medical attention from the RH facility where they were recruited. The table also reflects a comprehensive estimate of the number of abuse episodes they experienced in their relationships. It represents observed and reported forms and episodes of abuse, including the diverse, manifested patterns of coercive control acts such as emotional abuse, economic abuse, sexual coercion, threats, intimidation, and isolation (Stark 2006) perpetrated by the female partners against these black African men.

Physical abuse: A dominant pattern of abuse against the men

The black African men’s experiences of physical IPV is both frequent and intentional, both severe and bi-directional. It is frequent in that some of these men reported to have experienced battery, highlighting that violence had started earlier on and continued in their relationships, while for others it manifested in the course of the relationship. It is also intentional if one considers the dominant and controlling

Table 4: Estimated episodes of IPV, including physical and psychological abuse

S/N	Participant	Aggressive acts/Weapon used/Injury sustained	Estimated number of all abuse episodes and incidences
1	Simba	Scalded with boiling water: Superficial burns from the forehead to the chest.	1 st episode of abuse
2	Gwagwa	Bitten, hit with a bottle, slapped, punched	More than 10 episodes of abuse
3	Misa	Scalded with hot water: Superficial burns	More than 20 episodes of abuse
4	Bafana	Scalded with hot water: Superficial burns on left arm and face, hit with a stick and steel bar, stabbed with a knife	More than 16 episodes of abuse
5	Kgaogelo	Stabbed 3 times with a bottle. Hit with aluminium pan while sleeping	More than 7 episodes of abuse
6	Langa	Pointed and hit with a gun	Lost count
7	Chucks	Scatched with fingernails by the genitals	1 st episode of abuse
8	Khathu	Hit with a pan	Lost count
9	Ndlovu	Slapped, hit with an elbow	Lost count
10	Makwakwa	Hit with a glass object close to the eyes	1 st episode of abuse

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S/N	Participant	Aggressive acts/Weapon used/Injury sustained	Estimated number of all abuse episodes and incidences
11	Kabola	Bitten on the chest, hit by two passers-by, had mobile phone stolen	1 st episode of abuse
12	Sfiso	Stabbed with knife, hit with a stone	More than 3 episodes of abuse
13	Tinyinko	Stabbed on the right hand	About 40 episodes of abuse
14	Lukah	Beaten by partner and her son, had head smashed on pavement, sustained visible bruises	About 10 episodes of abuse
15	Thabiso	Stabbed in the back	About 7 episodes of abuse
16	Thabo	Slapped, hit with a pot	Lost count
17	Thokozani	Slapped, hit with a pan, hit with a brick, bitten, destruction of property, strangled by partner	About 78 episodes of abuse
18	Obinna	Hit with an object and scalded with hot water	Lost count
19	Thembani	Hit with an object	Lost count
20	Senzo	Stabbed when asleep, punched in the eyes when asleep, hit with frying pan	Lost count
21	Andile	Stabbed in the back, bitten, hit with a bottle	More than 4 episodes of abuse

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S/N	Participant	Aggressive acts/Weapon used/Injury sustained	Estimated number of all abuse episodes and incidences
22	Jabulani	Bitten on the arms	1 st episode
23	Mpho	Injured himself by hitting on a glass object. Reported as being the aggressor	About 2 episodes of abuse against him
24	Mandla	Stabbed with a knife on the face, bitten on the face and hands	More than 10 episodes of abuse
25	Kabila	Had clothes torn by current wife, spat on in the face by ex-wife	Lost count

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motivations that characterise some of these women’s use of violence against their male partners. These different black African men were subjected to severe physical acts of violence, as evidenced by the serious injuries sustained by these men and the use of instruments and objects by their female partners. A bi-directional perpetration and victimisation also resonates with the life stories of a number of the men in the study.

Mpho, a participant from South Africa, admitting to bi-directional IPV outcome in his relationship and related an odd tale of how he got hurt in one instance, explaining, “I hit the glass then I went out.” Mpho justified his behaviour by blaming the late return of his cohabiting partner from a night out with her girlfriends.

“...when she came around 4 a.m., I said aah, so I was angry, so we started shouting at each other, and then I hit a glass. I didn’t want to beat her; instead, I hit the glass and then I went out.”

The above story suggests that men who feel undermined can end up reacting violently. Mpho felt that his partner disrespected him and thus reacted aggressively, thereby self-inflicting an injury. Mpho admitted to having inflicted violence on his partner once, supposedly to assert himself as *the man* in the relationship. However, upon advice by someone that it is unmanly to beat a woman, he now opts to direct his anger and energy to beating random objects: “Yes, I beat things, I hit things.” In addition, Mpho claims to have experienced acts of violence from his partner, thus admitting to being a perpetrator as well as a victim in their relationship of two years.

Similarly, Mandla, a Mozambiquan man, reported having committed what he referred to as *moderate* acts of physical violence against his partner and has been a recipient of his partner’s violence. Mandla describes his eight-month relationship as one defined by “...*fight, fight, fight, fight, fight every day*”, formulating mutually combative IPV. Mandla recounted how he injured his partner with a clothes iron on her face in reaction to her intense verbal abuse and tearing

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of the shirt he was ironing to wear to work the following morning. He also explained that another of his abusive acts was in reaction to his partner's abusive remark after abusing the money they had budgeted for rentals by drinking alcohol. However, he mentioned that about ten times his partner had initiated physical violence against him and had in different episodes stabbed him with a knife in the face and bitten him on the face and the arms:

“Firstly, she bit me here; secondly, she stabbed me with a knife at home. My landlord called an ambulance they brought me here. Last two weeks she beat me with a bottle [...], yesterday she beat me again with a bottle and bit me here, even here is the mark of last week's bite. It's like four times serious inquiry but abusing me emotionally is many, many times even today.”

Mandla explained that he has never pressed charges against his partner despite sustaining serious injuries, but his partner opened a case against him on the clothes iron incident, without insisting on his arrest, however, but rather using the case file number to threaten and control him. She called the police six months after to arrest him the day she assaulted him, and only for fear of his retaliation. Upon arrival, Mandla claims that the police officers asked him some questions and then advised him to end the relationship or risk getting into trouble.

In making sense of Mpho and Mandla's relationship's bidirectional experiences of IPV, I refer to the reality of black African men's subjection to physical IPV as noted in Tsiko's (2016) analysis of data from 12 countries across Africa, including Ghana, Burkina Faso, Liberia, Tanzania, and Uganda. Bi-directional prevalence is also observed amongst heterosexual European men's relationships in the Costa, Soares, Lindert, Hatzidimitriadou, Sundin, Toth & Barros (2015) study. This study found equivalent rates of physical IPV perpetrated by intimate actors, showing that men and women are likely to use physical violence against each other in Athens, Budapest, Porto, Östersund, Stuttgart and London. Also, Mandla's partner's threat to obtain an official response against him is consistent with the experiences of Portuguese

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and UK men (Machado *et al.* 2017; Morgan & Wells 2016). Such practices of women obtaining or threatening to obtain a judicial response against men claiming to be actual victims is considered as legal administrative abuse by some scholars (Hines *et al.* 2014; Tilbrook *et al.* 2010), underscoring the fluidity in the conceptualisation of IPV (Breiding, Basile, Smith, Black & Mahendra 2015). In Mpho’s case, although his actions logically portray power and ability to control the situation, what supports his story is how discourses around IPV against women promote masculine reorientation. Such consciousness of masculine restraints resonates with South African and Mediterranean men victimised by their female partners (Barkhuizen 2015; Migliaccio 2002). Hence, Nybergh *et al.* (2016) note the embedded structural power men continue to assume within intimate spaces in their study of Swedish men who suffered physical IPV from their female partners. The study emphasises the lessened impact of female-perpetrated physical IPV against men. Such conclusions define violence as an inherent potential in men, and women’s acts of violence are justified as self-defence (Belknap & Melton 2004; Swan & Snow 2002; Dobash *et al.* 1992).

Similarly, a minority of the men in the study reported using violence in self-defence, rather than viewing their retaliations as bi-directional gender symmetry outcomes. To eliminate their partners’ over-bearing and aggressive behaviours, these men sometimes bite, slap and push down their partners. For instance, Chucks from Nigeria, in a two-year dating relationship, narrates how he fought back by slapping his partner to curtail her physical aggression against him:

“I saw her using my phone calling some friends in my phone, I now said ‘I have told you many times stop using my phone.., [...] then I took my phone and she just jumped up and start punching me immediately, the artificial nails she fix that particular day she use to assault me, punching it into me, close to my manhood, immediately she did that I cut open. That was

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when I slapped her, so my neighbours came out and she said I'm cheating."

While Chucks sustained physical injury before he fought back in self-defence, Kabila, who is in an eight-year marital relationship, inflicted what he describes as a minor fracture on his partner's ankle as he tried to rescue himself from his partner's grip on his shirt in front of his daughter:

"Now with this one (talking about his current wife) the bad one was when she was beating the little boy, I don't know what he did with the cell phone, she was taking her stress out on a child and he was 5 years that time, [...] then I came out and pulled the child away, thus she jumps on me and pulled me on my shirt in front of my daughter, I said to her don't pull me like that and I grabbed her and put her aside. She just had a small fracture on her ankle, so I put her a plaster for 3 weeks, and she sent the news everywhere and tell people that I beat her and broke her leg. And she was lying, but anyway my God is there."

Also of interest in Kabila's story is his intervention in the ill-treatment of the child. The overall rate of violence against women in society has somewhat overshadowed instances where children and other groups of men may be victims of violence. Hence, society stigmatises instances where men may engage their partners in self-defence. This is witnessed in Bafana's experience as a South African man. He was jailed for four months for assaulting his partner, despite his self-defence claim:

"Last year when it was good Friday, I was preparing to go visit home KZN, and she started to fight me, and then I started to defend myself and bite her on the cheek, and then she went to the police, and they arrested me. I was arrested for 4 months, and then she came to talk to the police to take me out."

Bafana had experienced comparatively more acts of physical violence from his partner. He recalled about sixteen episodes of assault committed against him by his partner. His partner

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used weapons such as a knife, a stick, and a steel bar to inflict violence on him on several occasions. His most memorable episode of abuse was when his partner scalded him with hot water which left scars from superficial burns on his face to his left arm. Bafana said he noticed his partner’s aggressive and domineering behaviour just a year ago, considering stress and alcohol as possible causes. Bafana chooses to report these incidences to his mother, because his partner always apologises to him after the episodes of abuse. Hence, Bafana who “*wanted to marry her*” has concluded to put off his marriage plans, not necessarily because of her aggressive behaviour, but because “*she got me arrested*”.

These men’s narratives were contrary to the women’s narratives in the study in America by Swan *et al.* (2005) of women who had used violence against their male partners. The study indicates that women committed moderate physical violence against their male counterparts compared to the violence they suffered themselves. Close to 95 per cent of the women in the study who used physical violence have themselves been victims of acts of physical violence by their male partners. In the current study the majority of the men reported themselves as recipients, and never perpetrators of IPV against their partners. However, substantial in the cases of the men in the current study is the fact of their seeking medical assistance, which underscores the severity of injuries sustained and the degree of female agency in the initiation and perpetration of physical IPV (Anderson *et al.* 2007).

In terms of context, severity and consequence, the physical IPV experiences narrated by these black African men in the current study differ and include the using of random objects and others which aid these men’s partners’ assertion of violence against them. For example, Langa, a South African man who is in a two-year dating relationship, narrates an episode when his girlfriend, a serving police officer, pointed a gun at him, and then he said to her:

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“...don’t point me if you want to use it use it, and then she started to hit me on the head with the handle of the gun. There were kinds of stitches, where she hit me with the gun.”

In Langa’s view, the need to dominate him and control the entire relationship underpins his partner’s use of different tactics of aggression and violence against him. Thokozani, a Malawian national in a year-long cohabiting relationship, substantiated in his reflections on how the use of instruments and objects embolden women’s perpetration of IPV:

“I’m trying so hard, and the other day she even told me that she will eat my heart alive; you see here this is the mark of her teeth where she bites me on the chest. And everything is broken in the house, she broke all the stuff even the mirrors. There is this time when she holds my neck and squeeze and I could feel that I was about to die the way she was doing it, so I tried to push her. [...]. There was a time where she hit me with a plate and even poured me water.”

Similarly, Senzo from Zimbabwe, who is in a cohabiting relationship of two years, recounted his experience of his partner’s aggressive tactics and the use of a knife to inflict physical assault on him:

“Sometimes I would wake up with a swollen eye, she just hit me just like that when I’m sleeping, when I’m not sleeping, she doesn’t usually start her fights because she knows when she starts, I just leave and go out, so she just waits for me to sleep and then starts. You see this wound that I’m having here she stabbed me when I was sleeping, [...]. The other day someone called me outside and went there and it took a little bit longer, so when I got back, I bumped into her by the gate, she said I have been looking for you and what is it that you were doing outside, I told her I was with my friend. And then we went to the house, she started her blah! blah! blah! Thing, so I avoided her by going to bed, so she came and stabbed me on the head, and lock me inside alone and I was extremely bleeding. If it wasn’t

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a security guard who saved me when I was alone, I would be dead. She came back the following morning.”

For Senzo when it comes to his partner’s aggressive behaviour “any time is teatime she can just start a fight.” Kgaogelo, a Zimbabwean man, who is in a cohabiting relationship of five years, illustrated an episode in which he was stabbed by his partner and the injury he sustained in the process:

“I remember mostly the day she stabbed me with an empty bottle which was January 22, 2018, on my left-hand side, and she stabbed me so many time because when I try to block she stabbed here when I try to protect her here she stabbed here, and when I keep on trying to block she stabbed here and here. I got about 15 stitches in and out in my hands... She can use anything, like now she uses an aluminium pan to hit me in my hands and my waist.”

Simba, a 36-year-old Zimbabwean man who has been married for ten years and who was scalded with hot water by his wife, leaving him with visible superficial burns from the forehead to the chest, underscores coercive control as an important factor in women’s use of physical violence against their male intimate partners. Although this was the first physical aggressive episode against him, his partner’s intention is to control his movement or better still, correct his perceived excesses. When asked what he had learnt from this experience of abuse, he communicated that he will no longer arrive at their home late. Simba recalls:

“On Friday I came in very late, so she poured me hot water. [...] Her argument is that it’s like I will be coming from other girlfriends.”

The use of instruments and weapons by these black African men’s partners’ is consistent with a study of Port Harcourt men, foregrounding that women are significantly more likely to use weapons, throw objects, bite, use a knife, or hit with an object than men in physical assaults (Dienye & Gbeneol 2009).

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This argument is further substantiated by the comments of Mr Mabaso, a key interviewee from the RH facility:

“Those men who got beaten and come here for help, it’s a knife, it’s those objects where you need to stitch. [...], and they get laceration. I can attest to that I never had a man with a slap...”

He suggested that men who seek help from the police and clinics are significantly more likely to have sustained severe forms of physical injuries from partner violence, including bodily pain, and traumatic symptoms, and also express feelings of vulnerability.

In terms of frequency of violence and battering - the experience of Gwagwa, a 44-year-old Zimbabwean man who experienced prolonged violence in three years’ cohabitation with his South African girlfriend, suggests that husband / man battering is equivalent to wife battering syndrome typified in violence against women in literature. According to Reid (2003), the batterer subjects the victim to systematic and prolonged physical and emotional violence to achieve control over the relationship. A sufficient explanation of such prolonged violence is the perpetrating actors being sure that such violence, especially in cases of IPV against men, will not be disclosed (Entilli & Cipolletta 2016). Gwagwa, who baby-sits two of his girlfriend’s children, cooks, washes, and makes sure that the house is clean, describing them as *“duties that I expect that are for a woman”*, was subjected to systematic violence for three years. In the course of the interview, he presented a diary used for the documentation of his abuse experiences. He said, *“When she sees that she is on the wrong side she tries to cover it up by violence so that I don’t ask.”* Below is Gwagwa’s story that made him visit RH facility for medical assistance:

“I didn’t hear her knock at first in the flat that we are staying in, then she went to ask for the security in the entrance to call my phone, I didn’t hear the phone call also, then later it was when I heard the knock, half two in the morning, so I just opened the door, [...] then eeh, I went into the bathroom, then she followed me into the bathroom, and started swearing at

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me, swearing at me, then she started fighting, u see all these bite. You see, this finger, this finger, this finger, then this finger, then she hit me with a bottle of beer. She locked the door of the bathroom and hid the keys.”

Gwagwa was in a traumatised condition and expressed a sense of hopelessness and powerlessness when sharing his story. A similar experience of battery was observed in Lukah’s case where his partner’s brothers and her 15-year-old son helped her in battering him. Lukah, who cohabits with his South African girlfriend, shared episodes of when his girlfriend invited her brothers to attack him at home, he insisted “*they were even having a gun, and the other day I nearly lost my life, where they hit me and put me in the basin.*” Lukah recounted the incident that brought him to the RH facility:

“when I was sleeping she woke me up and say that ‘I’m making noise’, so I said to her ‘when I’m sleeping I don’t hear or feel anything’, then I went back to sleep again, after that they (mother and son) pulled me and I fell from the bed, then I felt the pain I tried to turn and they started to hit me on the head and bang me on the pavement, and I was bleeding too much. When they saw that I’m bleeding they pulled me and told me to go out, and I said how I can go out at this time and in this condition, which was around 12 midnight.”

In terms of motive and intention of perpetrator the story of Lukah, above, also suggests that his partner has a clear motive and intent to dominate and keep him in constant fear. The female partner seeking the services of others to perpetrate physical IPV is also observed in the case of Kabola, a 49-year-old Congolese man. In Kabola’s case, the services of people from outside – presumably passers-by – were employed. Kabola is a married man who keeps a ‘*girlfriend with benefits*’. When he was unable to meet his girlfriend’s financial demands, a fight erupted:

“She bites me on the chest that is why I’m here in the hospital. She bites me and starts screaming and invites more people

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saying that I want to kill her, and one of the guys hit me and took my phone.”

The stories of these men reflect similar manifestations in one study of 15 South African women perpetrators of IPV who are currently serving jail terms for killing their intimate partners. The study revealed that some of the female offenders consulted *sangomas* (African traditional healers) and employed the services of hit men in the murdering of their partners. The study reveals clear intentions on the part of the women to commit IPV, including greed and vengeance for being dumped (Hesselink & Dastile 2015).

Although some of the men reported having used violence in self-defence, or to fight back or to initiate forms of violence against their partners, it remains that all the men in the study ultimately reported having experienced severe physical violence. Thus, there is evidence to suggest that the use of physical violence remains a dominant pattern of abuse against these men, and other diverse forms of coercive control by their female partners were frequent and overlapping.

Emotional abuse: A frequent and overlapping pattern of coercive control against the men studied

The men interviewed reported a range of their partners' emotionally controlling behaviour such as verbal attacks, attacking their sense of manhood, sexual virility criticisms, infidelity and xenophobic remarks. These abusive tactics were used to control, humiliate, threaten, isolate, provoke a physical reaction, and trap them in the relationship's abusive cycle.

The stories of the majority of these men indicated that they were recipients of frequent and excessive emotional abuse before subsequent physical violence. For example, Langa, who was earlier mentioned as a victim of physical assault with a gun by his partner, narrated:

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“Most of the time I will go out with some friends, and then I come back she will be angry, abusing me. Most of the time it was verbal, but now she started physical abuse as well.”

The narrative of Langa also highlights how verbal assaults and control-and-isolation intentions from friends and other social activities are all subtly recurring abusive behaviours that continue to be a common feature in a number of men’s perceptions of abuse. This is echoed in Misa’s voice, who sustained superficial burns as a result of being scalded with hot water:

“Yes, she does use her mouth to abuse me, and it’s too much. She doesn’t want me to go anywhere. Even if I miss her calls if I try to call back, she will start shouting at me. She is trying to control me. Even now am supposed to go play soccer she said don’t go and we start to fight.”

These men consider their partners’ use of abusive words and shouting at them as improper feminine behaviour. Most of these men perceive that women should collectively position themselves to the patriarchal order, in which women are to be submissive and show respect to their husbands. As such, Thembani, who has lost count of his partner’s aggressive acts towards him, reflected on his gendered preferences: “As a woman, she should talk softly to her man; if there is something wrong, she should *talk* to him.” On the contrary, he says his partner tells him to “*f.. off! She even calls me stupid and shouts at me.*” She threatens him, “*she tells me that she will show me.*” Bafana, who has been a victim of more than sixteen episodes of abuse, spoke of his partner’s problematic and, in his view, “unfeminine” behaviour, and narrates how his partner uses his physical condition to humiliate and insult him:

“I had a problem with my private parts, so they had to cut and remove the other side and leave only one, so she is always telling me about it that I have a problem with my private parts. I told my mother straight that I had a problem with this lady.

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She likes to fight me, and she insults me every day. [...], she stays in my house, yet she insults and abuses me.”

In their work, Entilli and Cipolletta (2016) note the damaging emotional impact of verbal attacks on 20 Italian men who also suffer physical IPV. They observe that those female partners can be highly predisposed to employing emotional tactics of abuse on their male counterparts to demoralise them. While this is also the case in the black African context, researchers have tended to find more deference and less evidence of women’s potential for violence (UNICEF 2017; Uthman *et al.* 2009; Koenig, Lutalo, Zhao, Nalugoda, Wabwire-Mangen, Kiwanuka, Wagman, Serwadda, Wawer & Gray 2003).

The verbal abuse of men has been observed as systematic humiliation of the men who are deemed to be unable to perform their “normal” responsibilities as husbands, which further exacerbates tensions in relationships (Gateri, Ondicho & Karimi 2021). For the men in the current study, the abuse is read as though they are tactics of war utilised by women partners to crush their partners’ spirit and male identity.

The men perceive their partners’ recurrent propensity to use hurtful language, criticism of their sexual virility, and swearing as an excessively abusive behaviour pattern that is emotionally draining and emasculating. For instance, Lukah, who narrated incidents of physical assault against him, sees his partner’s manhood remarks as a serious transgression to undermine his manhood identity. Thabo’s account revealed that his partner calls him a “*big baby*”, mocks his choice to not drink alcohol, and his lack of a car as limited social life which he experienced as emotionally stressful. Ndlovu shared his partner’s emotional abuse, illustrating how her comments on his sexual virility, and her attitude about their sexual relationship deeply affected his feelings:

“She calls me names any time and even starts swearing at me in front of people. She is telling me, ‘I am not feeling you, you’re not a man for me’.... She doesn’t want to sleep with me, she does it once in a while when she wants to, she just tell me ‘come

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and put your ‘d’ here with the clothes on’, you won’t even have that feeling to go there when someone does that...”

Sexual virility criticisms also resonated in the voice of Andile who felt consistently emasculated by his partner:

“She said: ‘you’re not a man’, she is telling me ‘where you come from, you’re not my type, look at you, your ‘c’ is short like you, when am sleeping with you am not feeling something, hey voetsak, go away, even this one is not your child, this one is not your son.”

Andile is yet to conduct paternal tests to establish his biological position in relation to “his” child. He expressed the view that his partner always abuses him in this manner during fights and quarrels in their relationship. The deeper source of his trauma is the probability of negative paternity results between him and the child. The dynamics of children around emotional abuse also resonate in Khathu’s relationship. In Khathu’s revelation, his partner expects him to relinquish his parenthood rights over the baby; hence whenever he talks about the child, conflict erupts. She usually calls him names and even says “I’m stupid”, and says that “I don’t think well,” and “you’re not man enough”.

A number of the men in the study also interpreted their partners’ extra-relationship affairs (or infidelities) in terms of a pattern of emotional abuse. In Gwagwa’s opinion, the height of emotional abuse is when his partner started dating other men:

“Ehhh, I know that women talk too much, and I was not taking it seriously; it was minor to me, then this thing of dating other men when am there, coming back in the house in the morning, I had to sleep alone with her child in the house.”

Similarly, Thokozani shared two instances to prove his partner’s infidelity, which to him has become a pattern of emotional abuse:

“When I open her messages, I see these messages from another man saying that the love you made to me yesterday was so nice I can’t wait to have it again, and stuff like that.”

Cheating as a form of emotional abuse is also highlighted as a weapon in the women’s use of violence against their male counterparts in a study on Italian men’s relationships (Entilli & Cipolletta 2016). This is well articulated in the views of Mrs Thobeka, a police captain, who has been attending to GBV crimes for the past 20 years. She commented that:

“Yes, most of the abuse from the women is emotional, because if someone abuses you emotionally cheating at you knowing that you can’t touch me, touch me I am gonna report you, that’s an emotional abuse. You know somebody will rather not beat you but kill you from the inside. So, most of the men are dying inside.”

The idea that women offenders sometimes utilise emotional abuse to provoke a physical reaction from their male counterparts in order for them to obtain official justice was observed as a pattern in a number of these men’s narratives. Sfiso illustrated how he consistently manoeuvres his partner’s luring and goading for him to react physically:

“She says words that I don’t like and swearing at me, pushing me to hit her, but as a professional security officer I know the law, I don’t hit a woman.”

Kabila speaks of his ex-South African partner’s provocative and harassing behaviour, yet threatening to obtain police intervention should he react:

“there was this time where I was stressed and tired, so I said let me rest, so I set my alarm to ring at 10 o clock, when it rang, she was in a sitting room watching TV, she came to the bedroom to ask me who was calling, and it was a big issue, who were you talking to. She took my phone to see the number that called. Then we started arguing and she was using hurtful words, she pushed me, pulled me, and tells me that if I touch her she is

going to the police, this fight was from 10 o'clock up until 2 am, it was a war."

In line with the study of British men by Morgan and Wells (2016), most female perpetrators are motivated to act out abusively because they are confident of obtaining an official response.

In the case of migrant men in this study, their migrant statuses further disadvantage them in a context like South Africa with prevailing xenophobic sentiments against migrants (Igbanoi, 2018). Some of the migrant men view their partners' xenophobic comments as emotional abuse. For instance, Sfiso stated, "She calls me names and even say *voetsak!* And call me Zimbabwean."

Although Sfiso is Zimbabwean by birth, he claims South African citizenship by naturalisation, yet his partner sometimes uses xenophobic remarks against him. The use of xenophobic remarks also resonates in the submissions of men like Mandla, Gwagwa and Thokozani who are all in relationships with South African partners. The abusive partners constantly remind them of their migrant condition and vulnerability.

Thokozani: "She calls me 'Kwerekwere' because I'm from Malawi, so those words hurt me."

Mandla: "She is telling me she found me on the street, that I am not a man, him she got a better man. She is Shangaan, she calls me 'Kwerekwere', you know people call foreigners people Kwerekwere."

Gwagwa: "She always mentioned you're a foreigner. Who do you think you are, 'Kwerekwere' (laughing), this is my country. You don't have to tell me what to do."

It appears that a number of men who do not expect something better from a relationship and lack the courage and confidence to walk out from abusive relationships trap themselves in a

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cycle of violence. Dr Zinzi, a medical doctor from RH facility, refers to such men as “timid”. Dr Zinzi states that:

“...but some of the males who came were very timid people, and even though some of them had economic power they were very timid in nature. And some of them would say out of respect and out of their cultural beliefs they cannot lay a hand on top of a female, so the women took advantage of that.”

Dr Zinzi’s comment highlights how men who construct their identities with emphasis on gender equality might respond to abuse. According to him, these kinds of men endure female victimisation believing it makes one a “real man”. A case in point is Gwagwa, trapped in the cycle of violence in his relationships, said violence in his relationship is “*a continuous thing, now it is worst, because it is more physical*”. Gwagwa once tried separating from his partner but she begged for forgiveness and promised never to be abusive. They continued the relationship:

“I caught her picked by another man, she confirms and say ‘no I want to move on that is why I was dating this man’. Then I moved from that side, then I was staying in Melville, I wanted to leave her there, she beg me saying ‘no I will leave everything, is not that I wanted to do bad things behind your back, I will stop going to work, am no longer going to use the phone if you think I may be tempted.’ She did that for two months.”

She again relapsed into the abusive pattern. Gwagwa expressed that he loved his partner and he “...tried for three years to change her but has failed”. He feels his life is in danger but yet he remained in the relationship.

The experiences of Gwagwa and those of other men in the study exemplify the circle of violence theory for battered heterosexual women (Walker 1979). The theory postulates a three-phase circle of violence, which consists of a build-up, a battering, and a honeymoon phase. The circle of violence experienced by these men follows a progressive continuum: from a beginning phase of signs of violence (minor verbal and

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controlling behaviours) which later escalates into incidents of battering, and the honeymoon phase of reconciliation, whereby there are promises to end the violent behaviour, only to revert to violence later on. According to Gwagwa, violence in his relationship started with “those minor things that she slaps you, then you hold her, then you sometimes talk ...but now it’s worse”. Similarly, Kgaogelo speaks of the evolving stages of violence in his relationship, citing the reconciliation stage and how the violence erupted again after a few months.

“She only asked for forgiveness, and then we talked about the issue. She said she was sorry and then I took her back home... And last year December she hit me with a pot when I was sleeping.”

More men demonstrated a lack of self-worth and the inability to leave the circle of abuse in their relationships. While Mpho accepts the state of his relationship and blames his vulnerability on his financial condition, Khathu doubts his ability to pick himself up and get out of his circumstances, having spent four years in his abusive relationship. Sfiso blames another man for his woes in his relationship, employing the services of his in-laws to plead with his abusive partner not to leave the relationship:

“After that fight, she went to her mother’s place, and she told me that she was leaving me, and it was painful that another man is destroying my relationship. It would be better if I was the one destroying it myself. I called her mother and my brothers telling them that she wanted to leave me. They said don’t worry. She is not going to leave you.”

Sfiso’s circumstances demonstrate the involvement of family and relatives in the dynamics of intimate unions. Sfiso, who is in a cohabiting relationship confirmed that his partner made up with him and came back home because of the intervention of his partner’s mother. This case further highlights the dynamics of parental consent and support for intimate unions even outside proper marriage formalities in South Africa.

Kgaogelo enlisted his sister to intervene in his relationship. Entrapped in their relationship's cycle of violence the feeling of powerlessness and vulnerability is predominant in the narratives of these black African men. This was also noticed amongst Italian men (Entilli & Cipolletta 2016).

It is clear that the aforementioned accounts of emotional abuse do not occur in isolation but intersect with physical and other forms of control tactics, such as restrictions on seeing their children, restrictions on partners' friends, refusal to have sex with the partner, making hurtful utterances, swearing and shouting, utilised by these black African men's female partners to inflict violence on them. These black African men are deeply affected emotionally, yet endured these forms of abuse as "men". These emotional patterns of abuse also resonate with findings of other studies of European men (Morgan & Wells 2016; Entilli & Cipolletta 2016).

In effect, a number of these black African men's esteem was low, influencing them to settle in relationships where they were being violently oppressed. Even though they are economically able to care for themselves should the relationship discontinue, these men persevere because of the love they have for their partners, the lack of courage to move on, and the positioning of themselves as "real men" who can "take the punches" and do not "cry". In the final analysis, a few of these men cried out to relatives for intervention in their relationships.

However, it is important to note that two participants in the current study, Simba and Jabulani, indicated that they did not experience any form of emotional abuse from their partners. When asked if they could recall patterns of emotional abuse in their relationships, Simba remarked, "No! We used to laugh, go out together - to the park, movies ..." and Jabulani said, "She has never done that!" Both men report having experienced only one [severe] episode of physical abuse in the course of the relationship. Overall, emotional abuse remains a frequent and overlapping pattern of coercive control abuse against these black African men.

Economic abuse: A support to broader patterns of coercive control abuse against the men

Economic abuse is a type of coercive control abuse in which one partner exploits or controls the economic resources, access to economic resources, or other assets of the other partner (Stark 2007; Ludsin & Vetten 2005). A number of the men under discussion experienced this kind of abuse differently and conceptualised it differently. For some of these men, economic abuse drives instances of other types of abuse against them. For example, Kabola, who was physically assaulted by his partner with the help of other assailants, related his misfortune to his refusal to respond quickly and appropriately to the financial demands of his partner. A pattern of financial abuse leading to physical and emotional aggression also resonates in the responses of men like Thabo and Thokozani:

Thabo: “Number one, economic abuse. I am the breadwinner, I try to make a budget for the whole month, and she destroys that budget. That was killing me. When I ask, where is the money? She would slap me.”

Thokozani: “Financial abuse is there if I say there is no money for this and that she slaps me and calls me ‘kwerekwere’ (foreigner).”

On a different note, Them bani speaks of how desperation for finances influences his partner’s aggressive behaviour, extortion, and threat to use official authorities against him:

“She said she is going; I should give her money. I said ‘I have no money now. She said if I don’t give her money, she will go open a case and say that I’m threatening her. I was confused, so I said to her, she is clever. When I touched her and say, ‘Let me find you money for a taxi to go’ that is when the fight started.”

Mandla narrated how his partner exploits him financially by borrowing money from him on the pretext of paying it back,

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only to get emotionally aggressive when he makes a demand for repayment:

“Sometimes she borrows money from me say R300 or R500; I will tell her “you don’t have the right to borrow; ask for money am gonna give you, because now you gonna come borrow that money am gonna ask where is my money”. When I ask “where is my money that you borrow I want to use it now”, she tell me shit, “eh you, you (f..) me did you pay for my p..sy”, Am I supposed to pay for your p..sy now, for what, that thing is not good.”

In a similar vein, several of the men had varied perspectives on economic abuse. For instance, while Senzo interprets his partner’s misuse of money meant for groceries by drinking alcohol as economic abuse, Kabola felt that he was financially abused by his girlfriend whom he described as over-demanding and spends too much money on eating out:

Senzo: “All she wants is money from me, am gonna give her R500 go to the shop to make groceries for us here, she then takes 300, 200, later you goanna see her drinking beer.”

Kabola: “She doesn’t want to cook; she wants me to buy KFC every day. I told her that she is always asking for money and this and this and that...”

Kabila, another black African man in a marriage relationship, opined that economic abuse is a fundamental factor in the broad range of abuse incidents within intimate unions. For Kabila, men who are married in “community of property” are more likely to be subjected to financial control, exploitation, and manipulation as well as other controlling and aggressive behaviours from their female partners:

“So the thing is that when you marry them and then you are in community of property in marriage where you signed, that means what is mine is hers and what is hers is mine, after that they take advantage knowing that all the things you have also belongs to them. The previous one and even the current one

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always tells me that they don't worry to bother themselves because they will also get a share from my pension funds. And from that she wants to control you. [...] the expenses they want to know, and when you become resistant that's when they start to fight. From the fight caused by finances, it will shift to asking questions. [...]. And when she starts to put her request on a table she makes sure that she gets it, she knows that you are a doctor the money is there, and the moment you can't respond that's when you start to fight.”

The submissions of a number of the participants were collaborated by two key informants. As noted in Mr Mabaso (a medical employee)'s response, financial pressure precipitates tensions in intimate unions and leads to a female partner's aggressive and abusive behaviour:

“...You know sometimes you will be obliged to pay rent just because you are in love, I am forced, [...]. I am obliged to take care of your financial need, [...]. but then there is something that going to go wrong if am not goanna pay those bills.”

Another key informant, Mr Shaka, who has thirteen years' experience in fighting social crime, opined that:

“In my experience, I can say (IPV) it's on the increase, because this is an urban area, its Hillbrow, which is almost like a continent itself. We have different people from other countries, so it's a combination of all African countries such as Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Congo, Nigeria and others, so women have a tendency of expecting money when in a relationship, and its challenging for some men to support their women with this and that because its challenging to get a job, the job opportunities are low. So, the woman becomes abusive because the man can't give this and that because there is no money.”

Mr Shaka speaks of the dynamics in a cosmopolitan suburb like Hillbrow, Johannesburg, and the socio-economic pressures and other precarities affecting people's lives. These

include the fact that women tend to depend on men for their daily survival, hence they are likely to put economic pressure and make excessive demands for money from their partners (Dienye & Gbeneol 2009). This, in his view, impacts on relationships, especially when the financial basis of the man is not sufficient enough to situate him as a responsible provider to his partner.

These stories illustrate the fact that some men are most likely to suffer economic abuse from jobless or low-income earning partners. This is inconsistent with findings suggesting that economically empowered women are more likely to be violent (Entilli & Cipolletta 2016), and men who transgress their provider norm responsibilities are susceptible to IPV (Nybergh *et al.* 2016). This study revealed that male partners who operate as fairly responsible providers are still likely to endure IPV. Although higher economic status enhances control in a relationship, it also positions one at the receiving end of demands that lay the basis for disagreement, conflict and thus IPV. The men in the study felt subjected to patterns of economic abuse such as excessive financial requests, control, diversion of financial budgets, and exploitation. The narratives of these men further depicted that financial abuse does not exist in isolation within their relationships, but in connection with other forms of abuse. Hence, men who suffer economic abuse are more likely to experience physical and emotional abuse. However, these men are less likely to be “immobilised” because of their financial status, and thus they are financially stable enough to walk away from the abusive relationships, and this is a contrast to the predicament of female victims of economic abuse observed in the domestic violence literature (Stark 2007; Ludsin & Vetten 2005). For the men in the current study, economic abuse supports the broader patterns of abuse against them.

Sexual coercion pattern of violence against black African men

Sexual coercion implies sex that is without the consent of the victim. Women are more likely to be subjected to this form of abuse than men (Mathews 2010). In this study, a number of men expressed views stating that they are against any form of coercion, except perhaps the married men who downplayed the concept of rape in marriage. However, these men did not report having committed any sexual crime or being subjected to them, except for Mandla, who indicated being subjected to sexual harassment by his partner. He described his partner as masculinised and controlling. In his words: “*She wants to control me, as a boss for me.*” Mandla, who described violence in his relationship as frequent and intense, believes that his partner is the primary aggressor who committed virtually all acts of violence against him, whereas he responded disproportionately. In terms of sexual coercion, he narrated that:

“Aah me am not that kind person who like sex too much, she is the one who like sex every day, me when am tired I said am tired I don’t need it. Sometimes we fight she force me to do sex like force, sometimes am tired, I don’t need to do that thing, sometimes she forces me.”

In simple terms, sexual coercion is the use of force to achieve sexual pleasure from victims (CDC 2017). In this light, Mandla perceives himself as a victim who sometimes was forced to have unwanted sexual intercourse with his partner. However, Mandla’s experience cannot be classified as rape or sexual assault, or a generalised form of IPV against men, yet it remains a uniform form of abuse which women are significantly more likely to experience in the South African context (Buiten & Naidoo 2016; Mathews 2010). His case underscores the fact that some men are likely to experience sexual coercion from their female partners. This position is consistent with the bidirectional IPV prevalence study by Costa *et al.* (2015) conducted across six cities in Europe. Hence,

women are potential perpetrators of sexual coercion against their male counterparts, yet men may not want to speak out and instead, opt to conceal the shame of emasculation, which indeed makes sexual coercion a speculative pattern of violence against black African men.

Utility of Johnson's IPV typology in unpacking the men's narratives

For a better understanding of the findings, we turn to Johnson's IPV typology lens to foreground the forms of IPV experienced by study participants in a condensed fashion. The study findings feature Johnson's (1995; 2006) theorisation of four distinctive manifest forms of violence within intimate unions as noted in Chapter three of this thesis. Johnson (1995) advances "intimate terrorism" as a context where one partner enacts severe forms of violence, extreme control tactics, intimidation, threats, and transgressions against their partner's gendered sense to achieve dominance in the relationship. According to Stark (2006), the abuser's intention is not only to terrorise their partner by threatening, inflicting injuries and battery, but also to entrap and isolate the partner away from friends and family, diminish their self-esteem, exploit the partner's resources and vulnerabilities, and constrict their decision-making power. Another valid indicator of this form of abuse is the repeated form and seriousness of the victim's injuries which often attract the attention of neighbours and lead the victim to seek intervention from the police and medical experts (Johnson 1995).

In the above cases, the overwhelming features of severe physical violence including stabbing, biting, and scalding with hot water, and other tactics of control such as emotional abuse, threat, isolation, and control of movements were observed. Hence for a majority of the black African men in the study, their abuse experiences fit into the context of intimate terrorism. For instance, Gwagwa was subjected to systematic and prolonged physical, emotional, and economic violence from his partner who exploited his migrant status

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and also intimidated him. He showed signs of low self-esteem, powerlessness and hopelessness and sought police and medical help. Other men such as Bafana, Misa, Lukah, Kgaogelo, Sfiso, Thokozani, Ndlovu and Senzo also suffered the same and related predicaments as their partners achieved control over the relationship. However, what looks dissimilar to women who experienced intimate terrorism is that these black African men are not particularly entrapped in the relationship and were not financially reliant on their partners; hence their decision to leave these relationships was not constricted. A number of these men chose to remain because they are in love with their partners and the children involved in the relationship. Be that as it may, their experience fits properly into the category of intimate terrorism.

Johnson (2005) further suggests the existence of *violent resistant* contexts of violence in intimate unions, which are self-defence responses or fight backs from the victims of intimate terrorism within contexts of abuse (Johnson 2005). This dynamic is observed in the current study in the particular cases of Bafana, Chucks and Kabila. Bafana has a more combative partner who has subjected him to frequent and intense forms of abuse and control tactics which fits into the intimate terrorism kind of abuse. He narrated how he fought back to defend himself, an incident which eventually led to his arrest. For Chucks and Kabila, their partners initiated moderate physical aggression against them in situational episodes. Their reaction may be considered in the light of self-defence.

Johnson (2006) proposed *mutual control* as another form of violence in the context of intimate unions in which both partners utilise terrorist patterns of violence and control to advance their causes in the relationship. In this case, partners are thus both victims and perpetrators. However, this kind of violence and control circumstance of violence in intimate relationships is very rare. Mandla’s case in the current study fits into this category. Although Mandla reported a dramatic case of his partner’s consistent physical assault and extreme cohesive control tactics and minimised his violent offending,

what is clear is the combative nature of the relationship, the severity of the injuries and the utilisation of the services of the police and medical centres.

Johnson (2005) finally theorises *common* or *situational* couple violence as another form of violence that he describes as gender-neutral, where both partners enact violence equally and episodically. Indicators of this form of violence include low-level threats, tactics of shouting or pushing during a disagreement, situation-bound, at least to advance a purpose, and not with the intention to dominate or oppress (ibid). This conceptualisation becomes problematic as a distinctive form of violence in the current study. This is because, for example, men like Simba, Jabulani and Chucks record what can be termed as situational violence because they all experienced only one episode each of physical violence from their partner. However the severity and injuries sustained were traumatic and they interpreted their experiences as not common but devastating and instilling a sense of fear, hurt and control. Most men in the study did not witness excessive forms of cohesive control patterns from their partners, yet they sustained very serious situational injuries; the frequency of violent episodes and partners' engagement with other control tactics distinguishes this category of violence. In Stark's (2006) view as differences are resolved per situation, partner violence diminishes over time, and this may lead to stability in the relationship. In the current study, these men resolved their differences with their partners who always waited for another situation to inflict violence on them to advance another purpose, yet the use of violence implies intention to dominate and control. As such, victims may interpret a situational violence incidence as intimate terrorism, depending on the impact such victims may endure from the physical violent episode or episodes of victimisation, even without evidence of entrapment in the relationship. For instance, Tinyiko, who reported one episode of physical abuse, declared that "*I am even scared of her, I don't feel safe.*" Hence the majority of the men in the current study who did not initiate or commit reciprocal violence on their partners, but rather sustained severe forms of injuries, sought

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police and medical attention, and interpreted the meaning of violence meted out to them as a heavy transgression of their sense of self, emotions, mental sense and with visible mental health outcomes. This should thus rate them as an intimate terrorism kind of abused victims.

Despite the utility of Johnson’s IPV typology in unpacking the study’s findings, it should be noted that it also contains some shortcomings. Conversely, a clear overlap of motive to coerce and control is recognised, and the men’s IPV experiences intersect between categories. All the more, the typology does not explicitly account for incidences that may accentuate violence and characterises all the forms of IPV that were narrated by the men in the study. For instance, Mpho’s incidences of “hitting things” cannot fit neatly into any form of IPV in Johnson’s typology. Nevertheless, the foregoing narratives in the study suggest and suffice that black African men are significantly likely to experience IPV from their female partners in severe, harsh, and diverse ways. The study findings clearly show the context, frequency, motivation, meanings and consequences of female-initiated violence which can assist our understanding of the nature of IPV experienced by different black African men in the Johannesburg, South African context.

The experiences of these black African men provide reasons to suggest that IPV is better conceived as a gender-neutral phenomenon rather than from the traditional framework of patriarchal gendered attitudes and the display of dominant masculinities in line with patriarchal relationality in IPV scholarship. Hence, a key point emerging from this section is that IPV in heterosexual relationships is enacted in oppositional relatedness and nuanced arguments around men’s power and control within intimate relationships. This reality is consistent with the observations of Homans’s (1984) aggressive-approval Exchange theorisation of social actors in a relationship. Hence, rewards and costs of violent actions, not necessarily gender, reinforce IPV behaviours amongst intimate partners. In an exchange sense, males or females relate oppositionally and violently when their actions are defined

as rewarding, valuable and highly attainable (Homans 1984). In this thinking, a woman's aggressive behaviour without proportionate reaction will likely be considered rewarding and the lack of reprimand for her violent actions will further embolden repeated aggression. For example, the rewarding outcome of IPV for the female partners of men like Kgaogelo, who was stabbed multiple times, Simba scalded with hot water and Gwagwa trapped in a cycle of violence is the fact that the men will not react or press charges, and even if they do press charges they will not be believed; hence violence is considered a desirable, less costly, and attainable behaviour for them. Although Homans did not explicitly account for multiple forms of IPV that can categorise all the experiences of the men in the study, his aggressive-approval preposition anticipates that intimate actors (depending on their perceptions and the social context they find themselves in) are likely to act based on reward and cost. Hence, in my view, the Homans aggressive-approval Exchange theory preposition can extend our understanding of the different forms of IPV experienced by some black African men in Johannesburg. More of how Homans's theorisation could contribute to our understanding of aggressive exchanges and female partner use of IPV against participants will be discussed at the tail end of the next chapter.

Conclusion

The chapter has demonstrated how black African men in the study voice their lived experiences of IPV. The violence that men experience can be seen in the frequent and aggressive cohesive control patterns, including excessive emotional abuse, economic and financial conflicts, sexual coercion, threats, intimidation, and isolation (Stark 2006). All the men in the study endured significant physical violence from their female partners. I examined the black African men's experiences and showed that their experiences constitute an "intimate terrorism" form of IPV which is often endured and not easily reported. In the current study, the use of violence by women was discussed as a major factor threatening the black

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African men’s relationships, health and state of wellbeing. Because of this reality, I would argue that it is not necessarily gender that reinforces IPV behaviours amongst intimate partners, but entrenched “situational” factors, contestations and oppositions that exist within these intimate spaces. The resulting scenario is one where a few of these men report having used violent acts in self-defence, fighting back, or having initiated moderate forms of violence against their allegedly abusive female partners.

I would hypothesise that when physical violence and sexual violence experiences are considered as the persistent and injurious sort of violence perpetrated by female partners, the evidence is overwhelming that gender symmetry in IPV remains in full effect. Women do have agency, and some women’s fundamentality utilises violence as an instrumentality to achieve control rather than as tactics to express anger, frustration or urgent emotions in family violence, as argued by Kimmel (2008).

I would contend that these black African men are gendered subjects who interact in oppositional and contested ways with their female partners within intimate spaces in the inherently violent South African environment. As such, given the progressive gender regime and state protection for women in South Africa, the potential for men to feel vulnerable and powerless exists in these contexts (Robins 2008), especially for migrant black African men who are precarious within a transnational space. Amidst the contextual realities, masculine precarity and IPV victimisation, it becomes imperative to show what these men endure and foreground the men’s IPV trajectories to critically underscore the underlying incidences and conditions which may have warranted their subjugation and oppression by their female partners. The next chapter presents findings on the sources and risk factors which often lead to these black African men’s abuse.

5

Driver Factors of Men's Abuse

Although there is no one factor that predicts IPV, several factors can increase a man's risk. I was able to uncover potential risk factors through an analysis of the transcripts from the interviewees that are plausible for driving tensions and conflicts in intimate relationships, ultimately leading to the victimisation of the men. These factors form the motives and incidences that lead to social conditions and triggers of violence within some black African men's intimate unions in Johannesburg. Themes and sub-themes that emerge from the data set include coming home late at night and cover-up tactics, jealousy response, explosive anger response, lack of conflict management, excessive alcohol consumption, low socio-economic status of the female partners, lovelessness, superiority complex and control, gender equality mores, gender discrimination and the attitudes of the police. Although these factors may overlap or intersect, they emerged as the central aspects of being subjected to IPV, at least from the perspective of these black African men. Thus, the claim that contestations and oppositional relationships exist within heterosexual relationships and some women habitually expose men to IPV in South Africa is further substantiated in this chapter collaborating with prevailing realities of men's risk in European and African contexts reviewed in the literature.

“Where are you coming from at this time?”: Coming home late at night and attempting to cover-up as a basis of conflict

Gwagwa: “She is a person who usually comes into the house by 10 a.m., but yesterday she came in at half past two... To cover her things she begins to fight me in order to keep me from asking questions. She sometimes causes a commotion in the house so that we don't talk to each other so that when she

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leaves, no one will be talking to each other. That is the position I am in right now.”

Obinna: “I normally close at 8 p.m., so I can’t just close at 8 p.m. and go home right away because when I close, I have to clean the shop and fix other things, so I get home around 9 p.m. And sometimes there is a customer in the shop doing the hair, so you can’t chase them out because it’s 8 o’clock; you have to wait for them to finish before closing. And she’ll be calling me around the house, asking, ‘Where are you? Where are you?’ And it’ll be a problem by the time I get home because she’ll be asking, ‘Where are you coming from at this time?’”

The above submissions demonstrate that coming home late at night by either the male or female partners or partners’ attempts to conceal wrongdoing is significantly likely to heighten tensions in these black African men’s relationships and potentially give rise to their abuse. In the case of Gwagwa, while he stays at home to take care of his girlfriend’s children, she comes back late and then starts a fight to avoid being confronted with questions. Gwagwa’s position also demonstrates that some men are likely to encounter IPV episodes in cases where their partners try to conceal wrongdoing or embarrassing situations. Obinna, a Nigerian man married for four years, presented what seems to be a genuine reason for coming home late, yet he is always confronted by his partner upon arrival.

Social practices around some of Johannesburg’s public spaces allow for the frequenting of nightclubs and attending, sometimes into the late hours of the night. Whereas publicly men and women construct their own night realities, on the domestic front the socio-cultural expectations of a present husband and a present wife at night supersedes the former. A man or a woman who keeps late nights is sometimes considered irresponsible and promiscuous, thus their partner’s uneasiness and anxieties can easily be communicated via violence. Mr Shaka observes that coming home late is a major source of conflict within intimate relationships, suggesting

5 Driver Factors of Men's Abuse

that some men are the instigators of the conflict meted out to them in such cases. He stated that:

"...after work, they go to a tavern and drink, then come home late or the next morning, which their partners cannot stand for..."

Some of the men's submissions, such as Thabiso and Mandla, on the other hand, support how their partners' clubbing, coming home late, or even coming home the next day would fuel tensions in their relationships. Other men like Kabila, shared an episode with his ex-wife relating to his coming home late at night:

"When I was working at Alexandra, there was this medical student who was repeating her fifth year and was afraid of failing again, so I used to help her that day at the clinic doing stitches. So, we were at the clinic until 10 p.m., and when I got home, I found her sitting in front of the TV, insulting me and even spitting in my face."

Simba speaks of how his repeated late home-coming on Friday nights angers his wife:

"Every Friday the late I will say I am late is half past 10 p.m. Then I will find her angry about that."

Simba, who was later violently scalded with hot water by his partner, linked his episode of abuse to coming home late at night.

In another vein, some of the black African men expressed that in order to avoid or silence criticism and deflect guilt of infidelity, their partners enacted tensions in their relationship as a cover up tactic. Thabiso narrated how his partner responds with violence to avoid questions about her whereabouts:

"We were drinking together yesterday, and when I got home today, she wasn't there, so I left my things and went out, and when I came back home, she was still not there, so I asked her

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where she was, and that's when she started fighting me, saying "why am I asking her that?"

A similar reaction was observed in Sfiso's case. He describes his partner resorting to violent attacks to ward off more questions with regard to phone calls from a man, which to him proves evidence of his partner's infidelity:

"The most recent one occurred three days ago, when her phone began to ring with the name Joe, written, so I assumed it was a call from work, so I answered her phone, and when I answered, he asked 'where is my girlfriend Portia?' 'Portia isn't here right now, can I get a massage?' I asked. When I asked what his name was, he said, 'He is Thapelo; they work together,' so I told him, 'Don't call my wife again.' So when she returned, I told her about the call and asked her 'What is going on?' because the number had been saved as Joe, her manager, but when I answered it wasn't her manager, but someone else called. So, she asked me why I answered her phone, then the fight started and she even called me names, and then she clapped me."

In these men's view, their partners employ tactics of shouting, quarrelling, or starting a fight as a cover-up when they do not have sufficient justification for their actions, evidently proving infidelity or other forms of guilt. Mr Mabaso provided an excellent example by describing a case in which his male patient was abused by his partner in order to cover up her infidelity:

"But here's an example of a man who is being assaulted; this man discovers his woman naked in the bed with another man, so this woman is supposed to go down and apologise, to be humble, to feel guilty, but instead she is the one who is assaulting, she stabbed the man, and she was the one who went to open the case first, according to the man."

The aforementioned incidents highlight contestations, conflicts, and tensions in these black African men's relationships that result in IPV against them. Clearly, some

women are asserting themselves and challenging men's comfortable patriarchal positions of unquestionable authority within intimate unions (Seidler 2006). As a result, in Thabiso's case, he encountered a violent reaction from his partner when attempting to assert his authority as the head of the household even though neither of them slept at home. This observation conflicts with a cross-national survey in 17 sub-Saharan countries, where men's endorsement of utilising physical IPV against women for breaking gender norms range from conditions such as leaving the home without informing their spouse, to burning food (Uthman *et al.* 2009). In the current study it appears that coming home late at night is perceived as gross disrespect and deliberate undermining of a partner's disadvantaged position in the relationship. For instance, Gwagwa emphasised that his partner's violence against him and her coming home at unreasonable times is because of his precarious migrant status. In Simba's case, all efforts made by his partner to change his late homecoming attitude were ignored, hence she reacted with violence to oppose the pattern he was trying to build into the relationship. Similar trends of how coming home late can influence men's victimisation were observed in the study by Dienye and Gbeneol (2009) in Port Harcourt. Again, resorting to violence as a cover-up tactic in effect shows that men and women relate in opposing ways within intimate unions, particularly in contexts like South Africa where attempts are made to dismantle patriarchal gender relations.

***“I think she's jealous”*: Jealousy response – a driver to men's abuse**

Jealousy response is an emotional reaction to exert control over a partner when a valued relationship is threatened by a real or imagined competition. In some ways, jealousy is instrumental in maintaining relationships by driving actions that prevent intimate partners from cheating or ending the relationship (Newberry 2010). Evidence suggests that male sexual jealousy is more likely a common indicator of the volatile nature of intimate unions and a common trigger to

IPV episodes across cultures (LaMotte, Meis, Winters, Barry & Murphy 2018). From the accounts of a number of the men under discussion, sexual jealousy usually precedes some IPV episodes against them. This jealousy response manifests in practices such as searching a partner's phone, calling contacts from a partner's phone, answering a partner's incoming calls, stalking a partner, questioning a partner's whereabouts, and accusing a partner of infidelity. This was noted in the case of Langa, a full-time student in a dating relationship with a lady working at the South African Police Services. He narrates the negative effects of his partner's jealousy response on the relationship, and points out the tensions which eventually led to his abuse, having begun with restricting his movements with friends and unsubstantial claims of cheating levelled against him:

“I think she’s jealous [...], she started saying ‘Actually you are not seeing me alone’, then I said ‘why are you saying?’ she then said ‘I can see’, then I said, ‘What prove do you have?’, then she started a fight.” (Langa)

Mandla could not stop his hostile and “big-sized” partner from scrutinising his mobile phone in search of strange women's call records, messages, or contacts:

“You see sometimes she checks my phone. When I tell her ‘Don’t touch my phone because I am not touching your phone when your phone rings, I call you and I don’t answer your phone.’ She takes my phone, looks at all numbers on it, and starts to contact people on my phone. She starts to fight with a lady on my phone, talking rubbish.” (Mandla)

Jabulani's partner's jealous responses drove her to seize his phone and take it to a phone technician in order to access his messaging (WhatsApp) chat records:

“She took my phone, went to these Indian stores, and they unlocked it for her. She then downloaded WhatsApp so she could see whom I was talking to on WhatsApp.” (Jabulani)

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The partners of Langa, Mandla and Jabulani demonstrate possessive and anxious jealousy based on imagined threats and suspicions without any evidence to support their claims. This, according to Newberry (2010), serves their dispositional drive and delusions rather than the need for the relationship. Their partner's jealous behaviours can be characterised psychologically as neurotic, rigid, hostile, and problematic (Newberry 2010).

In another vein, some of the men in the study indicated that their partners expressed emotional jealousy. This kind of jealousy response occurs when a partner fears losing the relationship to a "rival" or "competition". This perceived threat may either be actual or imagined (Newberry 2010). A case in point is Kgaogelo's, an automotive spray painter in a cohabiting relationship with an unemployed partner. Kgaogelo relates how phone calls from female colleagues prompted an emotional jealous response and eventually negative outcomes of incidents of abuse:

"She's jealous, which is why she's doing all these things; the women who call me are from work; I even gave her the phone numbers so she could talk to them and could see that I'm not lying and that these are people from work, and then she called them, but I'm not sure what they talked about; by the time I got home, she was fighting me again."

Receiving a phone call from a female individual in the presence of their partners or at home is viewed as a transgression of the latter's sense of femaleness, and there is a sudden jealous reaction to assert their positions as women in the house. Sometimes explanations to clarify who the suspected intruder is do not satisfy the jealousy anxiety, thus not settling the dispute which would have already ensued amongst the partners. As Misa observed:

"My friend borrowed my phone yesterday and called his girlfriend; today, the lady began calling me; I told him that the guy was not there; my wife asked who this was; I explained this and that; she began to yell at me."

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Tinyiko described how his partner's emotional jealousy response was triggered by his extension of help to another woman:

“So after dyeing my hair, a lady who was there asked what I was going to do with the other half of the dye, so I told her she could have it and I even helped her colour her hair. So, when my partner noticed this, she assumed I was having an affair with that lady. When we returned home, she began fighting.”
(Tinyiko)

Thabo shared an interesting scenario of his ex-girlfriend's emotional jealousy response when she saw him posing with his new girlfriend:

“I was walking with my current girlfriend, and she was also walking on the stairs; she suddenly attacked me with a bottle while yelling, ‘Hit me.’ And she is the one who abandoned the relationship and the baby when the baby was six months, over a year now, and she just showed up on Wednesday.”

It was observed that some men also experienced and expressed emotional jealousy as a result of strange male callers or text messages received. They perceived these as flirting or actual cheating, which often prompted continued exchanges and escalated into altercations with their partners. Thokozani narrated instances where he discovered messages from other men on his partner's phone:

“When I check her messages, I notice messages from other men stating things like ‘the love you made to me yesterday was so lovely I can't wait to have it again,’ and other such things.”

Thokozani further shared how touching his partner's phone creates tension in their relationship. According to him, she believes that *“her phone is private property,”* but to him this applies only when she is single. Thus, this indicates to him she has something to hide. In a marriage union, Thokozani believes, *“I can touch her phone and even answer phone calls.”*

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Similarly, in Sfiso's case, there was evidence of messages and calls from other men he saw while going through his partner's phone, which he claims proves his partner's infidelity. This, to him, is jealousy-evoking, and when he confronts her, "*she gets angry*" and responds violently.

Andile also narrated how his emotional jealousy response instigated a violent reaction from his partner:

"I asked her why she was constantly chatting with this guy; last week, I found you with the same guy; now, we're talking with this guy, [...] she was drinking the, so she grabbed the bottle and beat me here. She also bites me here."

These cases reflect the submissions of a number of black African men's experiences of jealousy in their relationships. It suggests that sexual jealousy, whether anxious or emotional, usually culminates in tension and aggressive behaviours against men in intimate unions. These men indicated their partners' jealous responses are based on imagined threats, suspicions, paranoia, lack of trust and possessiveness. Mr Mabaso summarised this pattern as follows: "Some men suspect that 'my woman is cheating' so he is jealous when he raised that, the woman will get frustrated, or the woman will suspect that my man is cheating so she is going to attack him physically." Furthermore, research has shown how a jealous response can influence IPV victimisation against men in South Africa, including serving as a motive to murder male partners (Hesselink & Dastile 2015).

"She is always angry": Explosive anger - a trigger to men's abuse

Researchers who examined women's violence towards male partners have suggested that women's expression of anger is a paramount tactic and rationale in their use of violence against their male partners (Swan *et al.* 2005). It is further predicted that women who are frustrated or with symptoms of depression, post-traumatic stress, and / or pregnant often

articulate their anger, and are more likely to express explosive anger and become aggressive physically and verbally towards male partners they perceive to be hostile (Silove, Rees, Tam, Mohsin, Tay & Tol 2015; Swan *et al.* 2005). This position is consistent with the stories of some men interviewed in the current study. As one man, Simba, commented:

“She is always angry. She assumes I’m on my way back from seeing my girlfriends. [...]. Last Friday, I came in very late, so she poured me hot water.”

Simba’s case reflects how annoyed and depressed a partner could feel about some ignored issues in the relationship. He identified his repeated behaviour of coming home late as the direct trigger of his partner’s sadness and anger thereof, which resulted in her scalding him with hot water. Khathu and Thokozani told similar stories of how their partners were formally in an abusive relationship, which they believe bred a post-traumatic existence within the current relationship. Thokozani describes his wife as overly aggressive, hence his living in perpetual fear:

“She just tells me ‘ngizokugwaza wena’! Which means ‘I will stab you’, so I live in fear? She is always angry.”

Khathu relates the tensions and abuse in the relationship to his partner’s state of anger as a personality trait and her aggressive attitude cultivated by a post-traumatic existence:

“When we speak, she is angry and insults... She is angry over everything; at one point she said, ‘I regret ever having a baby for you’.”

These black African men’s revelations suggest that women who are deeply frustrated with issues around the relationships or the behaviour of the men tend to be emotionally aggressive (insulting, swearing, etc), and thus express physical violence (scalding with hot water, stabbing with bottles, etc). Furthermore, the post-traumatic stress of abuse from

previous relationships impacts on how aggression and violence manifest in the current relationships. This is consistent with other studies (Swan & Snow 2003; Swan *et al.* 2005).

Another study suggests that pregnant women are more likely to embody explosive anger because of the physiological changes their bodies undergo through the different stages of their pregnancy (Silove *et al.* 2015). The report further indicated that pregnant women express explosive anger response patterns in the face of ongoing adversity, traumatic events and IPV enacted by their partners against them (Silove *et al.* 2015). However, some men in the current study, who claim not to be abusive themselves, indicated that their abuse experiences started during their partners' pregnancy periods. Sfiso noted that violence from his partner is inadvertently linked to the period when his partner became pregnant:

"It started in 2017 when she told me she was pregnant, we started to fight then..."

Obinna corroborated Sfiso's view, stating that he noticed his partner's abusive behaviours during her pregnancy, and which continued afterwards:

"I first saw these concerns when she was pregnant, so I assumed it was due to pregnancy hormones, which is why I did not consider it a problem. I could bear it without complaint since I assumed it was due to nature because she was pregnant. But it did not stop there; it continued, and I kept seeing the same character. She was like a dog when she was pregnant! Not even a dog, a lion. Imagine a pregnant lady telling you I will beat you."

Explosive anger responses by pregnant women, as noted in the study by Silove *et al.* (2015) exemplify Obinna's descriptions of his partner as acting like a dog or a lion and exhibiting threatening behaviours during pregnancy. His submission is suggestive that pregnancy is likely to exacerbate tensions in intimate unions and possibly give rise to men's IPV victimisation.

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In another vein, Makwakwa saw the fury of a pregnant woman who felt that her concerns were not being taken into serious consideration. He narrated his pregnant partner's hunger, anger, and aggressive behaviour.

“It was simply a minor dispute between her and my friends; she requested me to get her food, so I went to get it; when my friends arrived, they ate her food, and she began to weep. [...] So I promised I'd go get another plate for you, but she refused, [...] When I returned, I assumed she would have calmed down; she took a glass and smacked me near my eye.”

Explosive anger appears to be a key factor that triggers women's use of violence inside these black African men's intimate relationships. Clearly, an explosive anger response from female partners is symptomatic in the submissions of some of these men in the study. Thus, the hypothesis is that frustrated, depressed or pregnant women are likely to express explosive anger during arguments more frequently (Kimmel 2008). One other direct factor that proved to support the explosive anger response is the lack of conflict management of issues in the relationships and men's inability to quickly fix the concerns of their partners before they precipitated the anger response.

Lack of conflict management

Conflict in intimate relationships is unique and sometimes viewed differently by the parties involved. Partners' claims of justification of issues in the relationship sometimes further exacerbate tensions, anger reaction and victimisation. Inferences can be drawn from the stories of some men themselves in the study of how their inability to resolve or manage early signs of tensions and abuse further heightens tensions and precipitates angry responses from their partners. As noted by Mr Mabaso on the likely sources of tension in African men's intimate unions:

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“I believe it is a combination of anger and a lack of conflict management skills. Because sometimes you ask them why she is beating you, and you discover that the reason is not that serious; for example, this person sustained burns because he accidentally broke a cell phone charger, he told her he was going to buy a new one, and then the woman was frustrated; she waited for the man to go to sleep, and then she scalds him with hot water [...] So, you know, those are examples of things that can be resolved if we get together, talk about it, and figure out a way forward; they are not heavy issues.”

Some of the men in the study expressed sentiments of being overwhelmed by the tensions and their partner's explosive anger in the relationships over resolvable issues. Tinyiko noted how noticeably light issues further develop into tensions and conflicts in his relationship. He said, *“Sometimes we have conflicts over small issues.”*

The inability to curtail and attenuate conflicts that prompt their partners' anger response gives rise to their abuse. Hence, Misa believes that his relationship is irredeemable, stating, *“I really don't know what to do”*, in his response to his inability to handle his relationship issues and his partner's anger. He has resigned to seeing it as *“just a difficult relationship”*.

Furthermore, Thokozani, Tinyiko, Sfiso and Thabiso, like many other black African men, speak of their partners' unwillingness to engage with them on certain issues in the relationship. Thokozani shares how his partner always reminds him of not paying her bride price to excuse her excesses: *“When we argue, she tells me that I do not have the right to tell her what to do because I did not pay lobola (bride price).”*

Tinyiko notes how impossible it is to discuss issues with his partner *“because every time I try to talk to her, we fight”*. Sfiso revealed that *“In terms of this, she doesn't agree when she is wrong; she just keeps on fighting me.”* Thabiso commented on how his partner enjoys talking to him on social media, especially when she is drunk and ready to start a fight: *“She is not the type of person with whom you can reason. She prefers*

to communicate with me via WhatsApp rather than in person at home.”

Obinna, who reported his partner’s explosive, aggressive anger during pregnancy, indicated how overwhelming his situation is because “...even after birth, it didn’t stop; it continued”. Since he cannot manage the crisis in his relationship and his partner’s angry behaviour, he is now seeking and hoping for spiritual intervention: “*The solution is to pray, I just put it in prayer, and God will answer me.*”

Similarly, a few of these men who sought spiritual interventions in the management of the crisis in their relationships believe that some supernatural forces are behind their partner’s explosive anger behaviour and actions. For instance, Sfiso likened his partner’s aggressive behaviour to his knowledge of how demons manifest in people:

“But, as a Christian, I’ve noticed something: when she does this, it’s as if she has a demon inside her because we can be happy for months without any fights or noise.”

Senzo believes that his partner’s habit of infidelity and aggression against him is linked to some demonic spirits. He describes his partner as a bully “*She’s talkative and likes fighting*”. He said, “*You can even go shopping with her, but you just need to know that in the end, you will be fighting.*” Senzo seemed certain that ancestral spirits were behind his relationship’s tensions and conflicts. With the belief that demons are behind explosive anger responses from female partners, men are likely not to be introspective in order to reflect on their actions and instances in which they might have been part of the problem.

Conflict management within intimate unions seems unattainable in these black African men’s intimate unions because of, amongst other reasons, the concerned partners’ unwillingness to engage on small and sensitive issues, feelings of being right over issues, inability in and lack of the requisite conflict management skills in relationships and partners’ anger behaviour. This has a strong impact upon the overall

quality of these men's relationships and the acrimony that manifests within, giving rise to the men's abuse.

“She says she was very drunk”: Excessive alcohol consumption – a potential driver to men's abuse

According to research, there is a clear connection between excessive alcohol consumption and domestic violence (Jewkes *et al.* 2002). In terms of alcohol consumption, South Africa is one of the world's heaviest drinkers of pure alcohol, with an average per capita consumption of 4.2 litres for women and 18.4 litres for men a year (WHO 2014). Heavy drinking has repeatedly been linked to domestic violence as a risk factor (Peltzer & Ramlagan 2009), and it is considered to blame for the majority of IPV instances against women in South Africa (Jewkes *et al.* 2002). However, it is unclear whether women's alcohol consumption causes tension and conflict in intimate unions.

In the current study, some of the men attributed their partners' alcohol consumption as a source of conflict that precedes violent episodes of abuse and also follows it. The responses below suggest that the consumption of alcohol by female partners is a significant and more likely reason for conflicts in these black African men's intimate unions, which gives rise to their assault victimisation. For example, Bafana describes how his partner's sense of rationality and consciousness was clouded by excessive alcohol consumption:

“When I asked her about it, she said she was very drunk and could not remember what she was doing.”

Gwagwa illustrated how his own partner becomes ashamed of herself when she is sober and conscious after drinking alcohol:

“You know, this person loses it when she's drunk, and when she's sober, I think she's even ashamed of what she did. She has a problem that is exacerbated by alcohol. She loses her mind when she is drunk.”

Tinyiko presents a more interesting picture of his partner's deliberate intake of excessive alcohol to blur her senses in order to be able to engage with him violently: *"When she sees me with a woman talking, she will start drinking and then start fighting when she is drunk."*

Similarly, Andile's comments demonstrate the relationship between alcohol addiction and IPV. *"Always fighting, always drinking beer, when she does something wrong, I can't talk, and when I do, she can take the bottle and beat me."*

To illustrate the depth and impact of alcohol consumption on their relationships, Ndlovu and Thabo reflected as revealed in the comments below:

Ndlovu: "And in my previous relationship, my partner had a drinking problem; by the time I met this one, she told me she did not drink. But as time went on, I found that she has been drinking all along. She drinks more than my ex-wife. [...] She goes out to drink, comes back, and breastfeeds the child."

Thabo: "She had a problem with alcohol and still has; she drinks every day. She likes partying. In fact, she went to a club the time she was pregnant with my daughter and consumes alcohol. Yes, we had tensions because of that. [...] She even gave birth to my daughter when she was drunk."

However, Mr Shaka is of the view that in some instances, the man is the one who is the source of the problem within intimate unions, especially men who always go *"out there drinking and taking drugs"*. A similar sentiment resonates in the study by Tsiko (2016) of 12 African countries including Ghana, Burkina Faso, Liberia, Tanzania, and Uganda. It shows that men who are excessive drinkers are highly likely to be subjected to physical IPV. Be that as it may, these black African men in the current study expressed concerns about their partners' excessive drinking habits and the implications on the tensions and conflicts in their relationships. Although some of these men admitted to drinking alcohol, they described instances of their partners' excessive alcohol intake as directly impacting their violent victimisation. These sentiments

resonate with those men who were abused by their female partners in another study in South Africa (Barkhuizen 2015).

“The first thing that brings tensions is finance”: Low socio-economic status of the female partner

“The first thing that brings tensions is finance. And when she starts to put her request on the table, she makes sure that she gets it [...], and the moment you can't respond, that's when you start to fight.” (Kabila)

Many black African men believe that financial demands from their partners are instrumental to the tensions and conflicts in their relationships. Given the socio-economic status, that is, the “lower class” of the female partners of the participants in this study, money becomes a vital factor in the men's hold of control and power over their relationships. Hence, many relationships may develop into tensions and sometimes altercations when men refuse to comply financially with what their partners perceive as necessary demands and obligations. Gwagwa explains how he responded to his partner's demand by giving her the money she requested just to ease the tension within his relationship:

“Yesterday she said she wanted to go home, so I should give her money. So I questioned her. ‘Ah, you want me to simply give you money from who knows where without budgeting for it? Did you discuss with me earlier that you are going to your home?’ ‘I want R1 000 from you,’ she said. It wasn't asking but demanding, so I thought, okay, let me give her the money to free tension...”

Similarly, in Kaloba's view, making excessive financial demands is “typical behaviour” of an average South African woman who is in a relationship with an economically stable man.

“It is even easy to get these girls. You can go to Soweto and meet her today and ask her to come to stay with you at your

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place, and she will go pack her stuff and come stay with you the very same day. And the problem is that they don't want to work hard for what they want in life; they want shortcuts."

The above comment resonates with the *Blesser* paradigm of relationships whereby young girls from low socio-economic backgrounds and poverty engage in intimate relationships with rich older men for financial reasons. The study in KwaZulu-Natal by De Wet, Alex-Ojei and Akinyemi (2018) revealed that financial support is not a predominant reason for young South African women to engage in age-disparate sexual relationships. Other reasons include feeling secure, age irrelevance, sexual satisfaction, etc. However, Kaloba linked financial demand from his young girlfriend to the episode of abuse he experienced in his relationship, and, of course, he operates as a *Blesser* who always provides money for his girlfriend: "...she knows that when I have money, I do give her..."

Senzo believes that his partner is in a relationship with him because of her financial situation:

"She tells me to "buy this one" and "buy this one," so I must stay with her because of her situation. This means that she is staying with me despite not loving me..."

The Exchange theory presupposes that people measure their relationships on a cost-and-reward scale (Homans 1984; Gelles 1983). Partners are unhappy with the union when the cost outweighs the benefit derived from the relationship. The expected reward may include tangible or intangible things such as love, companionship, status, and good looks (Strong & Cohen 2014). For increased love in a sexual relationship, partners expect rewards such as sex, trust, honesty, and money. Men are more likely to attach the reward for love to sex than women, as most women view relationships from the context of companionship and economic contribution (Diamond & Blair 2018). Ndlovu voiced his deep frustrations about not achieving his reward for sex from his partner because of his current financial situation. In his words:

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“She came to me because of money. That time when we first met, I had money, and she would get anything she wanted. But now my car’s got broken there is no more money. ...When I have money, everything goes smoothly in the house.”

Ndlovu comments further on how his depreciating financial condition heavily impacted his relationship and sex life and how his feelings have been bruised as a result. Ndlovu also shared the threat of his partner leaving the relationship if she is financially stable:

“You know that actions speak louder than words when she says things like, ‘I stay here because I’m not working when I find a job, I’m leaving you,’ which implies that she is simply using me now.”

The intersection between economic demands with other forms of violence was further illustrated by Dr Menzi and Mr Shaka. Dr Menzi speaks of how women who feel that their financial needs are not being met in the relationship can respond by denying their partner sexual satisfaction, which may eventually promote tension and further develop into other forms of abuse within the relationship.

Mr Shaka describes how men’s inability to fulfil normative expectations of responsible providers can warrant abusive remarks from their partners as useless and lesser men:

“In most cases, when a man loses his job and can no longer support financially, that’s when women start changing and feeling that they can no longer take it. They begin verbally assaulting and yelling at the man. And even tell him that he is useless and cannot support his family as his neighbour does, that’s when the issue usually starts...”

It follows that either covertly or overtly, financial insecurities become one driving factor directly linked to the tensions and conflicts in intimate unions (Breiding, Basile, Kleven & Smith 2017; Tisdale 2016). Many of these black African men view the demand for financial assistance as an aggressive assertion

from their partners. As men from patriarchal backgrounds, asking in a polite manner for financial wants for them is proper feminine behaviour and shows respect for them as males. Some of these men succumbed when self-defence was required just to ease the tensions. Nonetheless, financial insecurities directly impacting intimate unions are consistent with other studies (Breiding et al. 2017; Tisdale 2016), and it is an important contributor to tensions and conflicts in these men's relationships and their abuse.

***“They see a man as a machine”*: Lovelessness**

A number of the black African men's views suggest that the lack of love is an indirect source of acrimony in their intimate unions and gives rise to their abuse. Dr Menzi describes lovelessness in intimate unions below:

“Most of the cases of males being assaulted are because a woman wants to get out of the relationship. But I don't know if it is another male that they may be involved with. So, they start abusing the male verbally, and some females go to an extent where they start using physical abuse.”

This is the situation in the case of a number of the interviewees. Khatu's partner tried getting out of the relationship, yet he persisted, presenting different issues to gain access to her. Khatu described the state of lovelessness in his relationship thus:

“She just wants me to turn my back on her and the baby. She is pushing me so hard to the point where I should give up. Yes, I have given up on her, but on my baby no! Whenever we talk about the baby there is too much conflict.”

Khatu illustrates how children play an important role in the dynamics of intimate unions. His case underscores why a number of intimate partners are bound in the drama of lovelessness and victimisation, sacrificing their freedom and safety because of the children the relationship has produced.

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Mrs Thobeka captures the interplay of lovelessness, children and IPV within intimate unions amongst black African men as follows:

“And then some is whereby there is no more love, its only perseverance, like some say, I am not in love with this person anymore, but for the sake of the kids. You stay in a relationship whereby there is no more love but for the sake of the kids, but if you are not happy inside then the abuse will never stop. You find that people are staying together but they are sleeping in separate rooms, for what?”

Perseverance for the children's sake, not romance and love, keeps some of these black African men in their relationships. Walker (1979) cautioned that in such situations “a critical and self-protective assessment” based on the facts of the dangers of verbal and physical abuse within the intimate union should supersede the need for romantic fantasies or other involvement. However, in the case of Simba, leaving the relationship or even seeking justice in a marital relationship, is exceedingly difficult for men because *“If I take her to the police, who is gonna look out for the kids, because every day I am going to work; I have time only Saturdays, Sundays.”* (Simba). Tinyiko was pressured by his family to obtain an official response against his abusive partner, yet he declined because he did not want to separate his partner from the children. He said:

“I even told her that there was no point in me taking her to the police because this was big, and my parents were angry that I not taking the matter to the police, and I told them that they should not forget that there is a kid involved here.”

Gwagwa explained how he tried for three years to change his girlfriend to love him, yet in his words *“sharing a woman is not a good thing for me, how could I love the thing you know that this is not mine this is ours”* ... indicating her cheating partner.

It appears that some of these black African men held on to their loveless relationships because of the children involved and, in some cases, because they were still in love

with their partners. Despite the physical abuse, many of these men communicated a position of resilience, hoping that their partners would like one day to rethink and change for the good of the relationship.

Intimacy is a common human need (Strong & Cohen 2014), and in Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, after meeting physiological and safety needs, men and women are motivated to meet the interpersonal need for love and belonging in order to form and connect emotionally in relationships with others. Generally, men are perceived to be emotionally reserved, while women are to demonstrate and maintain intense traditional emotional connectedness to the family and to their partners (Connell & Pearse 2015). However, Strong and Cohen (2014) observed that, in contemporary times, the gendered difference in the expectation of love in intimate unions is slowly changing as more men are likely to fall in love more quickly than women, whereas more women approach intimacy with a more realistic view of the man's personality and economic stability. A woman's social choice is based on the interplay between dynamic socio-cultural and other influences and women's need for survival, protection, and status (Strong and Cohen (2014)). Some of the men interviewed in the study support this position. For example, Khathu illustrated how men are seen by women as "machines" used to satisfy specific needs and discard them when no longer in need. In his words:

"They no longer see a man as a man. In fact, in simpler open terms, they see a man as a 'machine'. What can this machine do for me (Laughing). Seriously, because you can get into any hardware, you pick a grinder only because you want to grind something, you can't pick a grinder while you want to drill a hole, so that's what women are doing; they are just aiming on what to get."

Khathu continued:

"They enter into relationships and marriages with different aims and goals and false intentions. For example, a man gets

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into marriage because they want to settle down with the woman that they love and start a family, but a woman gets into a relationship and marriage because the guy is living nicely, and he has money. So, love is being overshadowed by money. Some people even break up once a man loses his job and financial stability.”

Many of the men sought emotional attachment from their partners, yet they were abused. These men portrayed a sense of emotional bankruptcy and emptiness that they expected their female partners to fill. Hence, Sfiso made efforts to forgive and settle the conflict in his relationship because he loved his partner and preferred staying with one partner to avoid sexually transmitted diseases (STDs):

“The reason I’m continuing with this relationship is because I love her very much, that is the main reason. [...]. Another thing is that there are too many diseases in the world now, so changing partners is not the solution,”

As men who positioned themselves in patriarchal ideals, this can be considered a significant weakness in sexist politics, yet as humans first and then men, love and intimacy are crucial elements that shape their personal lives (Seidler 2006). Some men who could not realise their expectations of love in their relationships expressed dissatisfaction, resentment, and anger and communicated the possibility of them quitting their relationships.

Andile: “I want to just live my life alone. She must go and live her life alone because I see she doesn’t really love me. She is using me.”

Misa: “I am not feeling good about this relationship anymore.”

Thabiso: “I loved her, up until today when she had to stab me; that’s when I saw that this is not going anywhere. I have continued this just because I loved her.”

Ndlovu expressed how the lack of love has affected his perception of women and intimate relationships – “I won’t

be able to love anymore or trust women.” This perception resonates with the views of men like Gwagwa, Langa, and Thabiso, as they relate their displeasure over women’s violent attitudes and the lack of love in their relationships. To this Thabiso commented:

“Yes, it has affected my perception of relationships. This experience gave me a wrong impression about women.... even being with another woman I won’t take her serious.”

The collateral for exchange in intimate unions is equity (Strong & Cohen 2014; Homans 1984). Partners consciously and unconsciously want a reciprocal exchange of favours, the reward scale needs to balance and be fair; otherwise, the partner who feels subjected to more cost becomes resentful and angry. Misa believes that the cost of lack of love in his relationship is more than the reward and he laments: ... *“It’s just unfair.”* Many of the men vividly expressed this sentiment of unfairness, like in Khathu’s view these men’s perception is that an intimate union should be a place to settle down, to be loved and build a family, not to be battered. Kabila added: *“to be together forever”*.

Interestingly, Misa whose earlier view was separation from an abusive partner as an option after he sustained superficial burns from his partner scalding him with hot water, later changed his narrative after six days of repeat interview sessions. He forgave and resolved issues with his partner who apologised for her violent behaviour. He shared that: *“she said sorry she makes mistake, I said to her what happened, she said sorry, and I accepted, I said its okay its fine.”* However, one statement that stands strong in the men’s submissions is that of Ndlovu. He said: *“No money, no love, only control”*.

When we approach the notion of masculinity from an abstract and universal lens, it is possible to lose touch with the conscious and diverse lives of men and their relationships because we are tempted to assume that the structure of relationships mechanically decides how women and men must behave as groups (Connell & Pearse 2015; Seidler 2006).

Hence, Seidler (2006) notes that understanding manhood from the standpoint of power relations denies us a critical look at the personal and the emotional. Participants in the study consciously grapple with their inner emotional feelings, desires, and constructions of love in the context of their victimisation.

“She is trying to control me”: Superiority complex and control as a factor

In many of the men's narratives, there was justification to allude to the fact that their partners' abusive behaviours and tensions in their relationships are linked to feelings of superiority and their partners' motives to control the relationship. As Misa suggested:

“Yes, she doesn't want me to go anywhere, even if she calls me I never see the phone after when I try to call back she will start shouting at me, she is trying to control me.”

Misa's partner clearly demonstrated a motive to control him and the entire relationship. There is a somewhat underlying notion of superiority in her character. The cleavage between controlling behaviour and a superiority complex is further demonstrated in Mandla's case:

“Sometimes I am coming from work she will send me go to the shop to buy her something; why can't she go to the shop herself to buy the things she need? Is it me that is supposed to go to shop to buy things for her? When I say ‘I am tired’, she say ‘ah hi, go to the shop’. You see, like I am a small boy. The whole day she stays in the house watching TV, and she's gonna wait for me to come back from work and then send me to the shop. She wants to control me, like she is my boss.”

Mandla believes that his partner feels superior to him. He recalled how she employed aggressive control tactics, limited his movements of coming and leaving the house,

and his activities with friends, and yet she lives a free life in the relationship:

“Sometimes she wants men to come into the house by 5 o’clock, [...], Sometimes she phones me asking, where are you? Where are you? She wants to control me, [...]. Sometimes she goes out for drinking and comes back the following morning. Sometimes she goes out for three days not sleeping in the house.”

Langa holds similar thoughts about his partner, stating, “*She thinks she’s powerful*” and superior over him. The pattern of control, superiority tendencies and tensions in these black African men’s relationships are further buttressed by Ndlovu, who sees his partner as wanting to rule over him:

“Her intention is that she wants to rule and control me. When she says this, I have to jump! When she says this, I have to jump [...]. She just disrespects me too much in front of people to show that she rules the house.”

Some women achieved control and were able to assert themselves in violent ways in the relationship as Sfiso’s case portrays:

“So, when she makes noise even if she is wrong, I apologise just to stop the noise inside the house, so then that’s when she starts clapping me.”

These cases demonstrate that intimate unions are likely to slide into tensions and violent oppression from partners who embody superiority complexes and a motive to control them and the overall relationship. Increasingly, studies have shown that the cultural structure of relationships sociologically disadvantages women and empowers men to enact control and violence to assert their masculinities (Fakunmoju & Rasool 2018; Mazibuko 2017). In contrast, some men in the current study were overwhelmingly subjected to coercive control which further gave rise to their victimisation, underscoring the capacities of feminine agency and unique independent

context. Similar characteristics were found amongst women in Kenya who inflicted their partners with violence (Adebayo 2014; Robert 2012). The women's superiority complex tendencies were the pivotal cause of abuse against their male counterparts in Kenya.

“There is no African man that can accept that”: Gender equality mores and men's vulnerabilities

“Why there are so many single women here in South Africa, it's because of the issue of saying men should have this percentage and women this percentage; no African man can accept that. So, this gender thing is a problem... .” (Thokozani)

“Now she has the rights you have the rights so its 50-50. When you combine that 50-50 too many relationships do not work. Because you have to tolerate one another, remember if you have to live by tolerating someone, which means you have to tolerate that person for the whole of your life, and there will be a time when you get tired of tolerating this person. So the 50-50 means your compromising something, you compromise the 50 party”. (Jabulani)

A number of the men seem to find it difficult to accept the gender equality culture in South Africa, and in their thinking, this has placed them in a compromising state, leaving them vulnerable and has as a result, given rise to their abuse by their female partners. Chucks, in juxtaposing the Nigerian and South African gender cultures, claims that *“where we come from it is not 50/50.”* He claims that *“the woman is supposed to be under the man, submissive to the man.”* For him, gender equality rights for women disrupt the natural gender order.

Many men felt that the gender equality laws in South Africa promote, protect, and give women more rights to abuse them. Sfiso also thinks that *“now its 70/30, where women have 70 and men have 30,”* and Kaloba commented:

“...equality does not mean that power should be taking from one side to another and leave the other side without power

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[...], So the law is no longer promoting 50/50 or equality, it's now 75/25."

Simba felt that gender equity practices in South Africa have rendered men powerless. He said that men's authority to legislate domestic affairs in the homestead is being increasingly contested by women. Hence a man is compelled to listen to his partner in order to maintain harmony in the relationship. Kabola supports Simba's view and adds, *"This law takes women's side too much and most women are aware of that and take advantage."* To this point, Khathu emphasises the limitation of men's power and women's weaponisation of the law:

"Firstly, I condemn abuse against women. But with the laws, rules, and regulations, the whole thing is turning around. It's not preached enough; it's becoming more of a weapon instead of an understanding. As a man you don't feel man enough, you are so limited in what you can say and what you can do to your woman, most women tend to take it as a weapon."

Kabola also remarked that the gender regime in South Africa *"gives women rights to do many things wrong, a man cannot discipline a woman at all these days"*. He went further to state that the implication of this gender regime has emboldened more women to engage in risk-taking behaviour than men, even walking the streets at night: *"Try to walk on a street at night you will see more women walking than men. It shows that women are no more afraid of taking risks."* Misa narrates a picture of how being a responsible provider does not equate with dominance within intimate unions in South Africa, but rather gender jurisprudence. According to Misa, *"Women have too much power now; if you talk to her, she goes to the police station to arrest you, whereas you are paying rent doing everything for her."* Obinna, speaking generally, comments: *"women are given more power, and they are abusing us."*

Although many other factors determine men's power and status in the African culture, including age, husbands, fathers, and kin relationships (Miescher 2005), it is clear

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that these black African men perceive extensive progressive provisions for women's rights as a direct affront to their authority and power as men. Many expressed a feeling that they can no longer articulate themselves as patriarchal dominant men within a gender equality culture. In these men's thinking, structural practices of equality in South Africa are geared towards favouring women, discriminating against men as a group and further complicating and promoting instability in their intimate relationships. Similar perceptions resonate amongst black African men living in Melbourne, Australia (Mungai & Pease 2009). These men find mutual and gender equality practices disempowering. While some of these men adjusted to the equality culture in Australia, few of them relocated to their countries of origin where they felt more valued as men (ibid). Impressions were offered that gender equality norms can be associated with family breakdown amongst black African men in families settling in Australia (Mungai & Pease 2009).

These impressions resonate with the comments of Dr Menzi and Dr Zinzi:

“Now we are going deep down into politics! (He pauses). But I must tell you the truth, this law of gender is more into protecting the weak. And for them, the weak is the female, children, and elderly persons, so men are excluded. They think that men are not supposed to be assaulted. So, they mostly protect women, children and the elderly. One of the reasons why men assault women most of the time is because of this gender law. Because women take advantage, they say they are protected by the law so you can't touch me, you can't beat me.” (Dr Menzi)

“The fact that women have even more freedom to speak, they came out and they are now becoming more independent, and some men are feeling threatened by this, so they tend to react. And in some situations, that's where they start abusing because the woman feels that they have power, also financial and economic power. So they feel like they can abuse the man because they have the power also. There is an indirect implication of the law in relation to IPV.” (Dr Zinzi)

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The indirect implication of gender equality norms to power dynamics within intimate spaces in the South African context is further illustrated in the narrative of the men in the study. For instance, in Jabulani's view, many partners in South Africa exist in unions of inconvenience as more men compromise their happiness and oftentimes men absent themselves from home after work to avoid confrontational partners. Similarly, Simba sees marriage in South Africa as a place to forfeit patriarchal privilege.

"You get married it's like you sacrifice yourself. Too much stress and problems like disrespect, fighting..."

Kaloba and Kabila also echoed this sense of vulnerability. The duo believes that in South Africa, engaging women in a dating relationship is better than marrying or cohabitating with them to avoid *"this problem of suffering"* (Kabila).

"Now men are afraid to marry, they are afraid to bring women home. This new mentality of equality that women have, it brings more problems. So it's like taking a problem and bringing it into the house. So, it's better to be apart, you just meet maybe on a weekend but not stay together that's it."
(Kaloba)

In a similar vein, Thabo and Them bani indicated that more men perceive working-class women and women who can properly articulate their rights as threats to men's sense of themselves:

Thabo: "Men are now afraid to be in relationships with women who know their rights too much. Such women end up abusing them. A woman who knows too much about rights is a problem; she will tell you don't do this, do that..."

Them bani: "A woman who works it makes her have that thing which makes her think that she is the head of the family or house. She will tell you that she works as you do, and she provides as you do."

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Many of the men expressed this position. For example, Jabulani feels threatened because he can no longer assert his masculine privilege in his relationship: *“In fact, now we are feeling threatened by women because you can’t say anything without getting any response from a woman,”* whereas Chucks sees a threat from women in terms of their involvement of the law and police in intimate issues:

“For this kind of law, it’s a threat ooh. Because when you have a little problem with your wife, the next thing you will see her in the police is that you raped her, before they know that she is lying they have stepped you down for many weeks or many months making you suffer for something you didn’t do...”

Mpho expressed his fears. He believes that present-day women are dangerous *“and they can put you in jail”*. Gwagwa personalised the threat from women: *“Mine is a threat to me.”* He illustrates how scared he has become in his relationship: *“My life is not easy. I was that person who was not even scared to leave even my account details, and then my passport on the phone, money was so easy in the house, but here you have to make sure everything is hidden.”* Hence, Langa believes that: *“...most men are not coping in their relationships”*. As a result, Kabila commented:

“If you go to family court here in Johannesburg, there are always at least 50 cases of divorce every day, I know, I was there. Every day when I get into my car in the morning I always listen to the radio, the number of divorces is too high, and it’s too high because of this law.”

However, Kabila believes that not all women are threats. He reasoned that women *“who love their partners are not threats”*. Aligning with these comments, Obinna and Ndlovu both have the views that women living in modern societies and urban areas are more of a threat than those from traditional and rural backgrounds.

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“Some women are threats, and some women are good because you can’t say all women are 100 per cent and all men are 100 per cent, it is impossible. But in modern society women are becoming threats now, they established the thing of 50/50 between men and women, women are on top now, and the law puts them on top, so men are suffering.” (Obinna)

“It depends on whom you are going out with, is she from a rural area? Women that grew up in Joburg don’t know how to treat a man.” (Ndlovu)

Mrs Thobeka differed with the above narrative. She argued persuasively that these are just “*stereotype minds*”. She believes that gender equality jurisprudence in South Africa neither discriminates against gender nor favours women nor excludes heterosexual men. She emphasises that the law promotes equality and protects the weak, and victims of crime. Hence, “*crime is crime, it doesn’t have gender*”.

Overall, the men expressed the view that their rights are violated and expressed their insecurities about their intimate unions. The men’s narratives illustrate their perceptions of intimate unions, appreciating a fear of vulnerability and articulation of powerlessness, demonstrating a sense of backlash and potentially threatened images of their notions of manhood within the gender equality dynamics in the context. We are reminded by Hearn and Morrell (2012) that hegemonic manhood theorisation is inapplicable in gender environments that are cognisant and accommodative of gender equality.

“Suffer in Silence”: Gender discrimination and police stereotypical attitudes

The views of some of the men interviewed in the study suggested that men who believe that the South African gender law favours women and disadvantages men are less likely to obtain official responses against their abusive partners, thus are likely to allow themselves to be subjected to multiple episodes of abuse. Ndlovu, in response to whether the relevant

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gender equality laws have a gender-neutral impact in relationships, commented:

“...women have too much power now, if you talk to her, she goes to the police station to arrest you, whereas you are paying rent doing everything for her.”

It appears that men in low socio-economic classes with less academic achievement, unable to articulate their rights properly, might allow their partners to threaten them with the law. Furthermore, a majority of the men in the study demonstrated a lack of knowledge and trust regarding the legal and persecution system of intimate relationship matters in South Africa. These men alleged that gender discrimination in police response to domestic violence incapacitates them, and they are more likely to accommodate and tolerate tensions and possible abuse from their intimate partners instead of pressing charges. This position was echoed by Mr Mabaso, who interacts with most men who approach the facility for medical examination and the completion of the police incident form, the J88 form. He suggested that amongst other reasons, the police's attitude towards the male gender is likely to be responsible for about 90 per cent of unreported cases of IPV against men. He said:

“Well, let me tell you something, about 90 per cent of men don't open cases... they are just afraid they don't want to go to the police station and wait on a long queue and still be laughed at after. But 10 per cent of them open cases. I have seen very, very few having that report from the police station called the J88 Form.”

However, his position was dismissed by Mrs Thobeka, who thinks that some police officers' tendency to laugh at men is an allegation and an old phenomenon against the police:

“It is not true, Eeeh. I think that is the allegations that the community have in their mind. The laughing thing is just an old thing; it is just a stereotyped mind, no such. Even if you can go

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through the statistics there is a lot of women who are serving, those women who kill their husband or partner. Surely, some are serving their life sentence in jail.”

Mrs Thobeka further argued that most men do not approach the police for assistance because they do not want to speak out to cover up for their sense of masculinity.

“As I mentioned earlier, the reason why you see that it looks like women are mostly abused is that men don’t come out and speak out about their problems. But I can assure you that there are men out there who are being abused, but they can’t say. I don’t know if it is pride or whatever they can’t speak out. But the actions of a man who killed his wife and the kids, you can see that it’s a result of this man taking punches for a very long time and now he can’t take it anymore.”

Similarly, Mr Shaka further explained in a prejudiced manner why it seemed that the female gender was being given special consideration. He said that while men who are battered come to the police station maintaining their calmness, women arrive at the station traumatised, crying, and soliciting urgent attention, whereas the situation might not be as heavy as presented. In his words:

“But women when they arrive here they even come crying, and you will attend them fast thinking that it is something very serious, only to find out that it’s not a serious matter and the person that they are reporting is not even around Johannesburg, women are like that, they are just like that. But a man even if it’s a serious matter they are very calm to the extent that you would not suspect it’s something serious until you talk to them.”

The submissions from a number of the men interviewed offer suggestions as to why men do not speak out. Some men as foreigners who are in a relationship with a South African already believe that the law disadvantages them. As Gwagwa alluded:

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“No am not scared as such but am just saying she thinks that she has an advantage over me because she is local and I am a foreigner.”

Gwagwa blames his immigrant status as the reason for his abuse. When asked to substantiate his claim Gwagwa responded:

“She always mentioned, you’re a foreigner, whom do you think you are – ‘Kwerekwere’ (laughing), this is my country you don’t have to tell me what to do.”

Gwagwa believes that his partner took advantage of his status as a foreigner even though he claims that he is a properly documented immigrant in South Africa. His view resonates with the widely held stereotypical belief that as a foreigner one is disadvantaged within intimate unions because the custodians of the laws and other social welfare structures, including the police, are xenophobic. Hence, men like Gwagwa do not utilise the services of the law to protect themselves.

Overall, a minority of men in the study hold onto their view of gender discrimination in the administration of justice by the police. They claim to be neglected, laughed at, and even given advice to never allow women to assault them. These points about men’s ignorance of relevant laws, discomfort regarding police attitudes and gender discourses are somewhat complementary to the studies by Barkhuizen (2015) and Thobejane *et al.* (2018) that demonstrate the muted reality of South African men who suffer abuse and seek to address it. The study by Thobejane *et al.* (2018) highlights cultural adages such as the Setswana one encapsulated in the phrase *Monna kenku o lletateng*, meaning that a man is a sheep and must suffer in silence.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I showed that coming home late at night and cover-up tactics are likely causes of conflict that give rise to men’s abuse. Jealousy response is a definite trigger to abuse

of men and explosive anger response patterns are significant triggers of male abuse. The lack of conflict management abilities is also concluded to be likely supporting realities that exacerbate explosive anger responses that lead to abuse. Excessive alcohol consumption is a potential trigger, as is unfulfilled financial expectations (when men no longer serve their resource purposes). Lovelessness in relationships seems to lay the basis for men's abuse as well as what the men saw as "a superiority complex" of South African women. The men feared gender equality efforts, seeing them as increasing their vulnerability and leading to their victimisation. But because of gender discrimination and stereotyped police attitudes in South Africa, men are more likely to experience violence in silence.

I would argue that the consequences of larger societal indicators in the South African context, such as changing gender equality practices and the normalisation of violence, have exposed gender contestations and oppositional dynamics inside intimate partnerships. I would hypothesise that both men and women are exposed to comparable risk factors that ultimately lead to IPV incidents against them in South Africa. On their sense of identity, men and women internalise these experiences in quite different ways. To comprehend the reality of these experiences in relation to the sense of masculine power of the men under discussion, which is the focus of this book, we must first explore their sense of traditional manhood construct in the following chapter.

6

Conceptions of Manhood and Power

A more general and historical perspective is that black African men exist as gendered entities whose intimate relationships and their determinants are informed by their patriarchal positioning and cultural beliefs. This chapter corroborates with facts relating to how black African men in marital, cohabiting and dating relationships represent and perceive manhood, male power and authority in the local African context. Being shaped as gendered subjects in their localities presupposes that some of these black African men inherently understood themselves as dominant entities within intimate spaces with women before migrating to a transnational environment where equality is one of the main variables in organising gender relations, in this instance, the South African environment. Hence, I discuss how men perceive themselves as a normative gender, make demands of achieving hegemonic status, and the implications that this is likely to yield in terms of understanding their subjectivities as victimised men.

The chapter concludes with a summary reiterating the argument that attaining hegemonic manhood within intimate unions in Johannesburg is fraught with other imperatives, particularly in the presence of legal and socio-economic exclusive empowerment realities of women in the South African gender space. Combinations of these factors are likely to promote oppositionality and therefore men's sudden susceptibility to IPV.

Meanings of manhood

In probing into men's conceptualisations of themselves in relation to women within intimate unions, a number of men in the study located themselves in a socially perceived

patriarchal African setting, thereby constructing the gender role of providers and protectors. This was in light of their roles and responsibilities to their intimate partners and the family at large. As two men's comments illustrate:

Obinna: "A man has to be taking responsibility. His major responsibility is to take care of his wife and kids. I think a person should be man enough. You should pay your rent, and pay school fees for your child. If a woman needs anything, a man has to provide those things and buy food,"

Gwagwa: "My duties as a man are to see to her upkeep, making sure that she gets what she thinks she has to get from a man. Am a supportive man, not a man who looks out for what a woman will do in the family. I am a person who is doing everything by myself, I make sure that the rent is paid, she is well dressed, has enough food for her, she has pocket money, so I am trying my best."

In Obinna's thinking, the perception is that being man enough is to provide for most of the basic economic needs of your intimate partner, reinforcing a male sense of socially significant and caregiving companions to both women and children. Gwagwa locates proper manhood behaviour and the gendering of black African men's lives around the orientation of being a responsible supportive provider, thus these men position themselves in the patriarchal social arrangements of intimate unions and gender roles in their local cultures. Similarly, in Kaloba's and Khathu's views, in a relationship:

Kaloba: "A man has to work in order to be able to provide for the family, which includes a wife and kids, and to love his family, so that is the primary responsibilities of a man."

Khathu: "Mostly a man needs to provide and has to take responsibility. His children and his wife are his main responsibility he has to ensure that they are fully protected, properly fed, and they have decent accommodation."

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For Kaloba, central to identity projections of black African manhood are the “breadwinner” ideals and a man’s primary responsibility is ensuring economic provision for his family. Paid labour to him is a critical masculine signifier and baseline that qualifies a real man. Khathu perceives himself not just as a provider for basic needs for his family, but also a provider of security. His notion of manhood combines being both a responsible provider and protector of the family. His sense of manhood resonates with the idea of a present father, husband, and protector in the homestead. Thus, to these men’s minds an ideal constituent element of black African masculinities are the roles of provider and protector (Miescher & Lindsay 2003).

In the same vein, Thabo and Makwakwa articulated how they were socialised into being men by logically positioning themselves as providers and protectors, as well as being emotionally present in and for the family.

Thabo: “A real man should provide for his family, whether it is an upper-class job or lower-class job, he should provide for his family, and give joy, shelter and security. And a woman should make a house a home that is how I was raised.”

Makwakwa: “Me as a man, where I grew up, a man has to work for the family and protect the family, even if the wife is working a man should still take care and provide for the family.”

Thabo stressed the essential perception of a man as a provider despite social class or economic status. His transition to manhood is hinged upon having a partner and a family, with an explicit construction of shared responsibility, with patriarchal responsibilities being placed on himself as a provider, protector, and his partner as a homemaker. Makwakwa argued that being partnered with a working-class woman does not exempt a man from the provider responsibility in the family. Makwakwa perceives the provider and protector role as a gendered responsibility that is strictly reserved for men.

Thokozani and Misa added that a man’s responsibility includes taking care of children, even those begotten outside

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of wedlock, close and extended relatives alike. Misa comments proudly, noting how he is taking care of his partner's children:

“Yes, I do everything, like everything in the house such as food, and if she wants to do her hair, I give her money, she has two kids; I buy clothes for them and everything.”

Thokozani believes that providing for one's partner's children springs out of the love for her:

“The role of a man is to take care of the wife, and even take care of her children even if they are not yours, just because you love their mother you have to love them as well. You should love them without boundaries and protect them as well as guide them.”

Emphasis on extending men's responsibilities to include providing and protecting the extended family members, together with the immediate homestead as a typical African practice is voiced in Dr Menzi's comments:

“A real man is first a person who has to provide for his family, to be like a protector for the family. The family I mean your wife, your children, and to the extent in our African culture your siblings and your parents.”

Mrs Thobeka illustrated how being a real man in a black African setting is intricately connected to the provider mandate accorded to men in the family setting:

“An African man is a leader, and father of the house. In Africa, we believe that a man's words are final in the house. That is why I can say an African man is still a leader. We have different cultures, values and morals, but according to African men, African men should strictly be the provider and the leader of the house. Everything about an African man is all about providing for his family as a man.”

Mrs Thobeka's view offers a sense of diversity in terms of cultural settings across the African continent. However, a

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pattern of an implicit homogeneous embodiment of patriarchal manhood and practices of men providing, protecting, and presiding over homesteads in most African cultures is evident. Despite the acknowledged diversity, the presence of this common trait in perceiving manhood is quite evident.

Furthermore, some of the men defined themselves in their submissions as “men” in direct contrast to their social perceptions of women within the family unit structure and intimate relationships. For example, Chucks suggested that the compliance of women in submission to the authority and headship of men in a relationship validates a real man. Affirming men as moral authorities and women as obedient conformists to the patriarchal authority system, Chucks continued: *“women are supposed to be under the men and be submissive in order for the men to achieve a sense of manhood.”* Khathu has a more explicit and complementary view in attempting to define men in the context of a woman’s positioning in the family; he juxtaposed the male pivotal provider function with several synonyms indicative of the numerous functional expectations of a woman:

“We see a woman as a supportive structure, a helper, a supporter, and a comforter. Basically, a woman runs the family and the man provides for the family.”

This view is supported by both Makwakwa and Kabila, who both see a woman’s place to be at home, running family affairs while the man becomes the breadwinner:

Makwakwa: “As a woman she has to do things in the house, she has to help me in the house, and I go to work and bring things and food in the house.”

Kabila: “The Bible says, it is a wise woman who builds the house, so when my wife sees that there is something wrong in the house she should get the plumber or whatever specialist to fix, and then she comes to me and name the price, that’s it, that’s her duty to assist a husband. In most of the families

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where children are successful it is because the woman behind them is strong not a man.”

Kabila sees a woman not just as a comforter, supportive structure, and a helper, as suggested by Khathu, but as wise builders, fixers, and home managers. Kaloba added to the list of a woman’s roles to include stress removers and baby makers.

Kaloba: “A woman first of all, she needs to be a partner who has to take away the stress that a man can be having, because as men we come along so many problems at work that make us stress, so she is the one who has to cool me down. She should also do cooking and other household duties, and to make babies for a man as well.”

These men believe that for manhood to be realised within intimate unions, women should affirm their sexual distinctions, accept emotional objectification, be limited to domesticity, and reject masculine traits by becoming something other than masculine. These views on appropriate womanhood clearly demonstrate culturally polarised gender roles and structured unequal gendered relations in domesticity as common features in African societies. Their views resonate with the understanding that women are primarily socialised to submit to the authority of men, a process which devalues women and ensures a system for the domination and oppression of women (Miescher 2005; Wood & Jewkes 2001).

In integrating the submissions of Mr Shaka, highlighted some of the characteristics of black African manhood, albeit from a Zulu ethical perspective. These characteristics include being versed in ancestral rites, having physical and mental strength, being a defender, reliable, truthful, and punctual, being a breadwinner, provider, protector and actively involved in community activities:

“We African men, for example, in the area where I come from Zululand are cultural. In that land, we still believe that our ancestors are living as African men. We still follow and do what

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our ancestors used to do. We believe in being strong, you can train how to fight and protect yourself and your surroundings. We are reliable; lying is not good at all as a man. We are so punctual with time, we attend meetings when there are meetings, and we stick to whatever decision is made at the meeting. We are strong as men physically and mentally strong. In our land, we are protective, my father makes sure my mum is safe; my father goes all the way to help out when she is sick. As a man you must provide, even if a man is not working, he should do something, and show support.”

It is well noted in masculinity literature that performing the traditional provider and protector role is grounded as a foremost masculine signifier, and it is related to men's conception of their identities across African societies (Kimmel 2017; Connell & Pearse 2015; Barker & Ricardo 2005). A study of migrant African men in Australia by Pease (2009) and Igbanoi's (2018) study of migrant men in South Africa reiterate the acknowledgement of the provider role in their sense of themselves as men even in a transnational context. Moreover, the consistent ability to provide for the family is observed as a critical determinant to achieving respectable masculinity and to exerting control over the homestead across societies and cultures in Nigeria, Mozambique, and South Africa (Odimegwu & Adedini 2013; Sathisparsad *et al.* 2008; Agadjanian 2002) and also in Malawi (Kapulula 2015), Eswatini (Nyawo 2014), Zimbabwe (FAO 2017) and Congo (Lwambo 2013). Sharing similar emblematic affinities to the above contexts from where they hail, the men under discussion pride themselves on fulfilling the provider and protector mandate, thus validating themselves as real men. Their notions of manhood transcend singular roles to include other responsibilities such as being a father, husband, and principal in the home, thus underscoring their positions in the power dynamics with women, as men.

Male power and authority as manhood tenets

Male headship and authority existed as a significant masculine tenet for many of the studied men and the key interviewees.

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They position themselves as being in charge, and wielding power and control as well as offering leadership in their families and relationships, as reflected in comments from Kabila and Thembani:

Kabila: "In our African culture, a woman must submit to her husband, a man is considered a head of the family..."

Thembani: "I am a man, I must take care of her (partner), and I am head of the relationship."

Thokozani's view resonates with Thembani's and Kabila's, who both insist that a man's headship authority in African culture remains a critical coefficient of male social value. Being in charge and in control thus remains an infinite quality, which all heterosexual men are expected to embody and express. Thokozani commented:

"As an African man, it is a must that a man should be in charge. We are brought up knowing that a man is the head of the family. [...] African man, he is a leader and father of the house. In Africa we believe that a man's words are final in the house."

Similarly, Mrs Thobeka observed that black African men are viewed as legislators in the affairs of the homestead and exercise authority through issuing commands. Resonating with Mrs Thobeka's view, Dr Zinzi, had this to say:

"Typical African man is the one who has power, who has control in the house or in most situations."

Similarly, scholars observe that the power dynamics with women, as with men in some African contexts, is the ability to effectively exert monopoly control and dominance over the intimate partner, household resources and decision-making to demonstrate hegemonic manhood (Odimegwu & Adedini 2013; Kapulula 2015; Nyawo 2014).

Furthermore, many of the men under examination held the dominance of modern religions and traditional African cultures as sources that confer them with the authority and

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power over women in the homestead. Thokozani stressed that a man's position as head of the family and their relationship is a spiritual privilege, referring to biblical scriptures that portray a man as the head of the family. Kaloba reiterates religious promotion of a man's headship in the family:

“According to me, a man is supposed to go to church, and according to the Bible, a man is the head of the family.”

These were adamantly supported by Dr Menzi. He contended that women are to emulate Sarah in the Bible, who addresses her husband Abraham as “My lord”. Sfiso subscribes to the view of headship as a cultural privilege, suggesting that being the head of the family is culturally sanctioned: *“In our culture, a man is the head of the house.”* Thokozani's, Dr Menzi's, Sfiso's and others' legitimisation of male authority and headship as hinged on spiritual and cultural dictates that are suffused with the patriarchal logic that is dominant in some African and other cultures. These views demonstrate a fusion of religious and traditional African cultures in making a contemporary black African “real man” grounded in the gendered ideologies of colonisers (Gibbs *et al.* 2014; Seidler 2006; Miescher 2005). The point is to not only articulate the ingredients like control that make up manhood authority culturally and religiously, but also to locate these characteristics in a male body. This was corroborated by Mr Shaka, who stressed having a “phallus” and embracing heterosexuality as constituting real manhood:

“A man obviously must be a male person, [...]. We cannot call a female person a man even if she behaves like a man. You can keep on saying she is behaving like a man.”

Such views remind us of the factual reality that many societies espouse the doctrine of manhood by exaggerating biological potentials with recurrent tendencies of defining proper male behaviour and females as opposite or complementary (Kimmel 2017; Gilmore 1990). Hence, heteronormativity reinforces the belief that intimacy can only be realised by men and women

and ensures patriarchal solidarity for men's dominance over women in the relationship.

Overall, one may argue that these black African men's representations of an undifferentiated concept of manhood as patriarchal figureheads, protectors, providers in the family, etc., are an example of hegemonic manhood constructs (Connell 2005; Kimmel 2001). In both implicit and explicit terms, a man being a family head connotes power and authority to rule over the homestead, including over intimate partners (Kimmel 2017; Hearn 2007). Donaldson and Howson (2009) rightly observed that fulfilling the provider role indicates responsible manhood and confirms male authoritarianism based on economic control. This is peculiar to African societies (Odimegwu & Adedini 2013). Haggis and Schech (2009) note how the notion of "protector" is rooted in the illusions of physical strength and power. However, manhood constructed through the practice of violence, toughness, control, hyper-sexuality, and demonstration of power in relation to other masculinities and women as a group is grounded in the African context (Gibbs *et al.* 2014; Morrell *et al.* 2012; Morrell 1998).

Clearly, these black African men's self-perceptions afford them imagined access to undisputed hegemonic patriarchal power and authority legitimised by some specific religious and cultural traditions. If one interrogates views such as that of Thabo, encapsulating that a real man should "give joy", this then opens up an emotional side of black African patriarchal manhood. Since emotions and feelings are associated with weakness and femininity, it becomes problematic to exclusively analyse the gender power of men without considering the inherent vulnerabilities amongst men as a group in relation to women (Connell & Pearse 2015; Ratele 2008; Seidler 2006). As such, critical to this study is an understanding of the IPV experiences of black African men, underscoring how they negotiate manhood and victimhood within intimate unions, and the bearing of their narratives of IPV on their notions of manhood.

The foregoing provides the social arrangements, patriarchal gender stratifications, gendered practices and masculine signifiers that profit these men's positions as "men" within intimate spaces entrenched in their cultural roots. What is particularly established in this chapter are some of the important masculine preferences that inform these black African men's understandings of themselves as men, relationally, firstly in their home countries (as migrant black African men) and local cultures (as South African men). Within the context of modernity, economic and legal transformation, and considering women's economic empowerment and contribution to the family in today's world, oppositional and contested relations exist within intimate spaces in the South African gender environment (Albertyn 2011; Ratele 2008; Robins 2008). This begs the question of whether these black African men are able to retain traditional ideas around the manhood construct within these new contextual realities as they operate oppositionally within egalitarian intimate spaces. Furthermore, how do these men cope with the constraints of articulating their earlier image of proper black African manhood behaviour and masculine expectations as victimised in the South African context?

Conclusion

This chapter examined the underlying components of black African men's conceptions of manhood as well as how these conceptions are ultimately gendered. Although cultural and religious realities inform their constructions, I argue that these black African men ought to be appreciated as men with access to undisputed hegemonic patriarchal legitimacy in their local contexts, fairly grounded in the images of being responsible providers, protectors, de facto heads, wielding power and control as well as offering leadership in their families and relationships. However, I would contend that it is problematic to solely examine the gendered power of men without taking into account the inherent masculine vulnerabilities in relation to modernity, legislative, and economic change, and the oppositional power relations that are sufficient between men

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and women in today's world. The analysis that follows focuses on how these men deal with articulating their notions of black African manhood, power and authority aspirations as IPV victims, and navigate the liminalities of being a real man in a changing South African gender environment.

7

Male Power or Powerlessness: Interpreting the Impact of IPV on Black African Men's Manhood Conceptions

Varied interpretations emerged from the interviews conducted to understand the impact of IPV on the masculine identities of these black African men's lives.

I underlined the altering, dismantling, and reshaping of black African men's sense of gendered identities as opposed to their earlier conceptions of dominant identities in their localities in this discussion on the emasculatory impacts of IPV. Ultimately, I centred on the theorisation of hegemonic masculinities in the analysis of black African men's masculine shifts and the construction of plural masculinities. Thus, as I shall show, Connell's masculinities framework falls short in conceptualising a comprehension of how masculinities relate to men's IPV experiences, particularly how black African men within contested intimate spaces and gender equity environments like South Africa are vulnerable and unable to achieve gender power and dominance over women, hence the constructing of self-redefining identities as men. Inferred from the participant responses, this chapter emphasises a strong relationship between IPV and psychosocial changes in black African men's masculine views towards themselves.

"It has made me a weak man": Abused men constructing masculine powerlessness

Rowlands: Tell me, do you still see yourself as a man after these incidences of abuse?

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Lukah: I can say I am losing my power as a man. I am no longer stable. I have lost focus. I always think about the same problem.

Rowlands: Has there been a shift in your perception of yourself as a man?

Lukah: Yes, my mind became weak. It is no longer stronger anymore as before. It cannot work.

Rowlands: Looking back, did you think the experience made you a better man or devalued you?

Lukah: It has made me a weak man. I do not have power. I have nothing.

The above difficult conversation with Lukah transpired at different stages of the interview sessions to understand his experiences of manhood in the context of his victimisation experiences. As a representative of the sample of a number of migrant men, Lukah constructed the perception of “masculine powerlessness” in the transnational South African context shifting from what patriarchal manhood entails in his traditional local context. In the above example, Lukah grapples with the understanding of himself as a man losing his “gender power” and expresses a dwindling image and idea of his masculine sense of direction in the face of victimisation realities and violent contestations from his partner. He manifested overt evidence of a lack of desire to pursue his aspiration of manhood because he felt powerless, confused, and devalued as a man. It was Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) who suggested that the practice of hegemonic masculinity (HM) is most powerful and legitimated when women and other groups of men comply. Hegemony becomes the honourable version of “real manhood,” as well as the socially accepted dominant stance of men over women’s subjugation. In heterosexual intimate relationships, all men are expected to exemplify hegemonic masculinities through the use of power, persuasion, and cultural consent. Physical strength, roughness, an indifferent attitude, assertiveness, sexual prowess, objectification, and dominance over women

are all important to the expression of traditional hegemonic masculine standards in sub-Saharan Africa (Morojele 2011; Shefer *et al.* 2005; Mamba 1997). Lukah's oppressed position precipitates a shift in his perception to accepting masculine powerlessness, contrary to normative power, authority and dominance relationships of the hegemonic order.

In the interviews, nearly all the men who earlier described themselves as hegemonic family heads and defenders in their relationships appear to have succumbed to the aggressive pattern of their partners. Although it is noted by Connell (2005), that hegemonic masculinities are open to resistance and challenges from groups of women, the explicit vulnerability of men to IPV victimisation by female partners is not envisaged in Connell's masculinities theorisation (Seidler 2006). The theme of violence and male-dominant construction against women that run central to Connell's analysis of gender relationality negates the reality in these men's relationships. Men such as Kgaogelo, revealed that his partner's violent and aggressive resistance to his affirming gender power prompted a shift in the narrative of himself: *"I am a weak man now because she is always fighting me."*

Men's gender power has often been associated with terrible violence, especially in relation to the violence meted out against women in the South African context (Buiten & Naidoo 2016; Ratele *et al.* 2012; Abrahams, Jewkes, Martin, Mathews, Vetten & Lombard 2009.). However, in Kgaogelo's case the persistent perpetration of resistance against him weakens his sense of strength and forces him to redefine himself in emasculating terms. Kgaogelo tries to reassert himself as a strong man in many instances: *"I go straight to her and tell her, 'see what you are doing it's not right'."* His sense of strength is to boldly confront his partner in defence of his reputation and masculine honour, which is being compromised. Similarly, Bafana reflected on the practice of control and harassment by his partner, which has conditioned him into a powerless position in the relationship and this deeply shifted his sense of manhood:

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“I do not still see myself as a man, I feel like I am powerless now. For example, when she talks, I have to keep quiet. I don’t want to argue with her. When she starts her thing, I leave the house and come back later maybe after two hours.”

In contrast to Kgaogelo, who attempts to prove his manhood by confronting his partner, Bafana is unprepared to respond to his partner’s verbal hostilities. Moreover, partly because growing up in a society that requires a woman to keep quiet when a man is talking, experiencing the reverse appears to be emasculating for some men. Hence, Andile felt the contestations in his relationship have “*made me less of a man*”. Mpho said, “*Yeah, now, I am a weak man.*”

Thabiso, in his case, mentioned how his IPV experience altered his sense of being a man; he “*lost power and control*” in his relationship and has learnt to live with IPV experiences. From the perspective of his local cultural context, he said, “*I don’t still consider myself as a man, seeing myself I have been degraded, challenging me in front of people.*” Thabiso felt his experiences has shifted his self-perception as a man:

“It has impacted me a lot because even when I’m with my friends I feel like I’m less of a man. I don’t feel like I’m man enough because like the abuse she doesn’t care where she does it even in front of people.”

Thabiso evaluated himself in terms of homophobic sentiments (Kimmel 2017) and considers himself “*not man enough*” (Seidler 1997). He felt that his partner’s coercive behaviour and continued transgressions have reduced his sense of manhood before his peers. This could be difficult for him because men have learnt as boys to be strong and stoic and could not show weakness, particularly in relation to women (Morrell *et al.* 2012; Morrell 1998). Hence, in competitive relations of power, other men could use this against him (Kimmel 2017; Ratele 2008; Seidler 2006). This sentiment is reflected in Ndlovu’s experience, where his peers are already challenging him to tough it out and suppress his emotions to demonstrate a proper sense of manhood:

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“No, I don’t see myself as a man, because I can’t cope as a man. My colleagues always say please change and go back to who you are.”

Ndlovu expressed his inability to articulate decency and organise himself properly in the workplace as a result of the contestations in his relationship. He also feels uneasy, confused, and shifted narratives about what it means to be a man in his local South African context because of the gendered challenges from his partner. In another case, Misa reflected on the implication of IPV thus:

“It is gonna take time for me to see myself as a man. I think I have failed. I failed myself, not society, because of the way things are going. Now I don’t want to do another thing. I want to stay on my own.”

Misa expressed a shift from masculine stoicism and strength to a feeling of powerlessness and blames himself for not assuming the social power men continue to exercise against women universally (Seidler 2006). Threatened by impending uncertainties, Misa felt inadequate and expressed his inability to realise expected masculine standards and feats within a short time and space in his relationship. This in Seidler’s (1997) view reinforces and “sustains homophobia as an integral part of heterosexual masculinities”. Thus, losing power and control creates a fear of continuing to remain in intimate relationships for men like Misa, who think that their male identities would disintegrate (Seidler 2006). The fear of abused men losing manhood value is collaborated by Mr Shaka, who stated that abused men usually say:

“I don’t feel like I can date anymore, I don’t trust myself anymore because this woman has taken my value away, I don’t feel like a man because of being abused like this.”

Mr Shaka continued:

“Some even move away from their places of residence to start a new life elsewhere. They do not even want to be seen by their

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friends who know that they are victims of female abuse. They are scared that they will be undermined.”

In many ways, this remains the reality for most men, as I shall argue, that battered men are more likely to leave an environment where traditional heterosexual masculinities are not supported because of homophobic considerations. Ratele (2008), in explaining the complexities of achieving traditional manhood in the South African gender environment, notes that achieving masculine power and control in intimate relationships is becoming fraught with complications because of changing imperatives in the South African contexts. Hence this is a reminder of the disregard for patriarchal relationality by more women and the oppositionality that exists within intimate spaces influenced by factors such as gender equality mores and other transformations that advantage women (Shefer *et al.* 2008; Hearn & Morrell 2012; Ratele 2008).

More of these black African men characterise the IPV transgression against them as having pathological, emasculatory, and shifting effects on their sense of power and male value. Sfiso felt that his IPV experiences “*shifted three-quarters*” of his perception of himself as a man. He also felt that his experiences of violence had devalued him and instead taught him dishonesty. He commented: “*It has devalued me, [...]. I am learning dishonesty. She has shifted by perception.*”

His view emphasises how masculine characters are malleable, and subjects can redefine their values to fit into the context in which they find themselves. Masculinities are not fixed subjectivities and entities but fluid and shifting, being done and undone in a relational context, shaped and reshaped over time in the face of challenges and contestations (Morrell 2007).

In her observation of male IPV victims as police officer, Mrs Thobeka believes that the IPV experiences of men create significant shifts in their understanding of themselves as men. She explained that “*if a man is involved with an abusive woman, and once that man starts to feel the woman’s emotional abuse, that is where the lack of confidence starts. Such men begin to lose*

trust in themselves.” (They ask) ‘*Am I still a man enough?*’ and ‘*Am I doing enough as a man?*’ It shifts, it does shift, she said. She further stated:

“Abused men are assured during counselling sessions ‘no matter what is happening one inherently remains a man’. At least you are a brave man; you are not just a man; you are a brave man because you came forward to discuss the problem of abuse.”

The loss of confident masculinities was further corroborated by Khathu, who explained that IPV imperatives have a particularly strong grip on his inner sense of manhood:

“There is that part that I lost due to this; I even lost my voice. [...], you know for a woman to tell you that you are not man enough, someone you have been with for 4 years, [...], it’s something that destroys the inner part of a man, it destroys your self-confidence, it really, really.”

Khathu expressed thoughts of inner struggle and shifts in his perceptions of himself as a man. He felt excluded from those identified as “*tough*”, which symbolically, albeit arbitrarily, makes for a real man in his home context. He portrays a sense of losing his voice as an active man due to the violent experiences he endured with his partner. Hence, his case is a reminder of the psychodynamic shifts that are associated with men who experience masculine failure (Ratele 2008).

In Khathu’s observation, men who do not practise hegemony against their female partners are significantly likely to be vulnerable and lose their gender power in the process: *“The more I am not that controlling type of man the more she gained power over me.”*

His comments suggest that men who maintain patriarchal relationships do not only have the resources to do so but also because of compliant women. However, it is dependent on and controlled by him, as he has no urge to engage in or execute patriarchy. Even so, it is important to

acknowledge that some of these black African men express beliefs that are implicitly congruent with socially acceptable notions of male dominance and power over women (Connell 2005). However, as a result of being victimised, many men are forced to examine themselves and their preconceived notions of manly authority and power, which are being challenged by feminism.

Mandla narrated how tension and contestation from his partners eroded his position of power in his relationship:

“I am not a man. She got power, me I don’t have power, you understand. I am not a man. I am supposed to listen to her. She is supposed to tell me things to do and not to do. Me, I have never slept outside, I never go out to drink come in the morning, when it is 10 o’clock I am supposed to go to sleep. She goes to sleep outside three days, four days. She got power.”

Mandla’s case clearly reinforces the questions around the universal theorisation of masculinities exclusively in terms of power relations and violent subordination of women (Buiten & Naidoo 2016; Ratele 2008; Seidler 2006). While being aware of his inherited masculine construct of power, Mandla grapples with his partner’s overwhelming display of masculine prowess and sustained forcible contention of his position of authority as a man in his relationship. According to Mandla: *“she put me down like I am not a man, she is the one that is a man,”* and when she comes back home after spending days out, *“she can’t explain to me, she can’t talk anything.”* However, if Mandla stays out late, *“she talks, she gets angry, tries to phone me, shouts me up”*. Mandla’s view suggests his partner constructs the corresponding ideal of hegemonic masculinity that is perceived as the preserve of men (Munsch & Willer 2012; Krane *et al.* 2004). This, in Aboim’s (2010) view, should account for a reason why the concept of dominance should replace hegemony since the embodiment of power transcends sexualising bodies and differentiating groups. Furthermore, the case above illustrates the analytical inadequacy of over-exaggerating male dominance and power, implying that all men can muster the same degree of dominance and power

over women. Other intersectional factors such as social class, ethnicity, age, migrant status, economic standing and other changing social practices in spaces and subspaces can influence gendered relationships and shift the balance of power between the intimate partners and in extending the impact of the dynamics of IPV (Scott & Schwartz 2006). In Mandla's case, his partner has a huge body size and is older in age. In Mandla's view, this reality, as well as his migrant status and existing gender equality jurisprudence in South Africa, are plausible factors that shift the dynamics of power and usher in opposition within his relationship.

The expressions of most men in the study suggest an absence of countervailing energy on their part as men in their relationships. A plausible explanation is that most of them as migrant men may not be properly documented, and some of them are struggling breadwinners because of their educational status. This is coupled with the xenophobic sentiments against black African men that exist in the South African context (Igbanoi 2018; Mangezvo 2015). Thus, these men are further weakened in their position as men in relationships. The tenuous nature of migrant black African men in the South African transnational space is well noted in gender literature suggesting the mobilisation of sections of South African nationals against black African migrants (Mangezvo 2015), and the masculine liminality and eroded respectability amongst migrant black African men even within intimate spaces (Igbanoi 2018). The sharp masculine contestations and the use of derogatory remarks such as *amakwerekwere* against black African migrants (Mangezvo 2015) were enacted by female partners against the migrant men in the current study. Men like Thokozani, Gwagwa and Kabila were emphatic in their submissions about the contributory role xenophobic sentiments and their migrant statuses play in emasculating them in the eyes of their partners. For instance, Gwagwa noted his partner always mentioning to him “*you're foreign; who do you think you are, Kwerekwere?*” (laughing). *This is my country; you don't have to tell me what to do.*” Such construction of xenophobia and the perceived structural resources women

in the context are able to obtain in these men's minds empower their partners and promote contestations in their relationships. These in effect structurally position them as powerless men within the South African context outside the primacy of dominance over women in Connell's hegemonic characterisation. This is suggestive of the shifting and individuated constituents of masculinities men continue to embody in different contexts.

At the core of their narratives is how IPV has altered their traditional experiences of being men, and these alterations must be considered in the theorisation of the relationality of masculinities. The argument, therefore, is that both theoretically and technically, in allowing themselves to be victimised or relinquishing relationship control, all black African men in the sample did not live up to the HM models of manhood: "*men of power, with power and in power*" (Kimmel 2001). In this sense, the experiences and narratives of these men demonstrate a shift from hegemonic to subordinate, complicit, and protest forms of masculinities, in Connell's masculinities framework. However, whilst some of these men told shifting narratives of themselves as embodying "*failed masculinities*", "*weak masculinities*" "*powerless masculinities*" "*useless masculinities*" and "*abuse masculinities*", others rejected this notion, stressing that they have achieved some form of masculine power in the face of victimisation, hence constructing multiple and individuated variations of masculinities within and outside Connell's masculinity framework.

Abused men constructing masculine power

"Men are used to enduring things"

A few of the men who fought back in self-defence against the violent assertions from their intimate partners constructed opinions of embodying dominant versions of masculinities in validating themselves as men of power. As Chucks asserted:

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“I still see myself as a man, because as much as I did not allow it to weigh me down, or to maybe lose focus on what I am doing or stand by the court to every day say she did this to me, what we know we men to do is to forget things and move forward. Men are used to enduring things. That is what they know a real man used to do. That is why I endure everything.”

Although Chucks retaliated with moderate force to free himself in a violent altercation with his partner, he acknowledged his slack approach to achieving naked dominance in his relationship. However, he articulated the notion that men’s identities are not only constructed around the discursive realm of prevailing masculinities and power relations with women, but also within the personal and inner emotional tendencies. Men need to prove their masculinity by showing that they can endure pain (Seidler 2006). He appreciates how his experience of IPV could not emasculate or reduce him to a state of depression. He highlights his demonstration of strength to counter his partner’s aggression, ability to contain uncertainties, endurance, and resilience as rational categories in defining hegemony. To him, manhood involves being independent, self-reliant, and intelligent as well as having problem-solving abilities, which are features of a hegemonic demonstration of masculine value in some black African contexts (Mkhatshwa 2017; Fielding-Miller *et al.* 2016). Similarly, Kabila believes that his ability to stand strong, maintain happiness and provide solutions in life amidst the experiences of violent contestations demonstrate successful manhood articulations. Kabila said:

“Yeah, I still see myself as a man, and I think going through this experience it has shown me that yes I’m a real man because I could, and I can handle this and find solutions and stay happy in life.”

Chucks and Kabila, who made efforts to defend their masculinities by responding to their oppressed conditions with moderate violence, alluded that the enactment of masculinities should not be knitted to privilege and power

alone but also extended to perseverance and resilience as key constituents of masculine embodiment in the face of opposition and violent contestations over time. These men extrapolate the interplay between personal agency, bodily emotions, and a sense of self-worth as against what identity failures could mean traditionally or theoretically (Ratele 2008; Miescher & Lindsay 2003). Hence, the practice of masculinities is not fixed but situational and changes over time for individual men (Connell 2005).

Clearly, these men's narratives do not challenge hegemonic norms or the systems of hegemonic gender practices. These men advance notions of flexible versions of masculinities to compensate for their failure to achieve ideal patriarchal power in their local context. Thus, Connell (1995) asserts that the behaviours and masculine constructs of such kinds of men exemplify a *complicit masculinities* construct; that is, they receive and appropriate benefits of patriarchy as being men. They are conspirators in the hegemonic project of patriarchal power and dominance, even though they fail to enact absolute dominance over their heterosexual partners, yet they enact self-defence to position themselves as men of power. Thus, they exhibited complicit forms of masculinities (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005).

“I still provide for my family”

Some of these black African men argued that the “righteous” fulfilment of gender roles as providers also consolidates and justifies their sense of manhood in relation to women, not just an uncontested display of authority and power within the relationship. For instance, Kgaogelo asserted, “*I still see myself as man, because I still provide for my family.*” Thabo felt that manhood is significantly related to being engaged in paid labour despite being victimised. He declared that:

“For the fact, I’m able to wake up and go to work is enough for me to see myself as a man. I don’t need her to tell me that I’m not a man. I don’t need anyone to tell me I’m a man. I just know that I’m a man now.”

For Thabo, being an active workman is enough to qualify one as a real man despite other social relational factors of dominance and exploitation that are instituted between the sexes. Thabo grappled with the impact of IPV on his experiences as a man: “A year ago I used to see myself as a weak man, as a useless man.” However, what is critical for Thabo is how he was able to regain his sense of manhood over time, indicating he has shifted over time from failed masculinity to proper working-class manhood. This to him reinforces his notion of a real man. In fact, Donaldson and Howson (2009) correctly noted that carrying out the provider role denotes responsible manhood and affirms male authoritarianism based on economic power. This is exclusive to African societies (Odimegwu & Adedini 2013).

These men’s narratives as successful providers engage with the hegemonic characterisation of masculinity, even though their narratives in part also fall under the *protest masculine identity*. According to Connell (1995), masculine protest is associated with an exaggerated sense of self to reassert masculine triumph in the face of tension and defeat. Protest masculinities are operationalised at the individual personality level where men construct the masculine self in protest against the dominant normative ideals to claim gender positions of power and exaggerate self-esteem in response to powerlessness in their relationships. In fact, many of the men analysed have diverse conceptions of patriarchal authority and power that are definitely related to the protest kind of masculinities (Connell 1995).

Pass-mark and protective masculinities

A number of the men narrated introspective views of themselves as men of power in spite of significant hegemonic practices and expectations advanced in relation to women in their home context. These men construct variations of what could be termed ‘pass mark’ and ‘protective masculinities’ in the context of their victimisation. Struggling to reassert masculinities within a victimised identity, Chucks illustrates

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how successful masculinities can be individualistic, and not necessarily social perceptions, citing his father's tutelage:

“There is a word my father used to tell me when we were growing up if you examine yourself you get a pass-mark, but when somebody examines you that person will say whether you are qualified or not. If I give myself an examination, I pass myself.”

Most of these black African men examined themselves and then gave themselves a pass mark in masculine terms. Hence, these men perceive and appreciate themselves as “*better men*” for subjecting themselves to coercive control and violent oppression by their partners without a fightback or resistance. As Makwakwa asserted:

“I see myself as a better man because I didn't beat her back or slap her. I know how to control myself so that makes me a better man.”

Makwakwa constructed his sense of manliness around his ability to endure pain and demonstrate self-control rather than adopting the common expectation to pursue dominion over his partner. He never resorts to violence because he learnt that “women are like babies so you must treat them like babies”. Similarly, Kgaogelo who earlier admitted embodying weak masculinity, keeps on trying to reassert himself and providing his reasons why matters could have happened differently. According to him, he is “*supposed to resist*” his partner's aggression, but deliberately did not because they will “*end up fighting*” and “*it will affect the children, even people will be saying we are always fighting*”. Hence, Kgaogelo's construction of masculinities also involves pursuing dialogue and peace rather than the show of force. Similarly, men like Thokozani, Jabulani and Langa willingly contributed to their own domination, by accepting the desecration of their honour as men. They chose restraint in instances that demanded assertions of manliness. In Thokozani's view, this attitude makes him a better man because he uses power and “*control in*

a good way” in his relationship by not abusing or fighting back against his partner’s aggression. Jabulani affirms himself as a better man because instead of:

“beating her, I just told myself let me deal with this by law. So I mustn’t beat her because if I beat her, she would open a case for me. So, let me handle this through legal process, which I think I haven’t gotten any help.”

Jabulani felt that enacting legal processes against his aggressive partner is a proportionate and manly response rather than enacting force, which might result in grave consequences. Similarly, Langa believes that exercising restraint, not summoning his manly power and obtaining an official response proved him worthy and made him a better and stronger man. These men suggest that engaging the law is a pre-emptive move on their part in a context that prioritises women’s victimhood, underscoring a hidden sense of fear of their female partner’s ability to access official response against them even on occasions that may warrant self-defence.

In these men’s views, pass mark masculinities may somewhat include a shift to emotional strength and cognitive stability despite the sufferings meted out to them by their partners. This thinking resonates with Senzo, who expresses being a better man by accepting his ordeal and not contemplating committing suicide:

“Yes, I am still a man, because everything that has happened to me, I did not take any decisions that involved killing somebody or committing suicide...”

Obinna constructs pass mark masculinity in relation to cognitive stability: *“...So I have not changed because I am not behaving abnormally”*.

For these men, the will to dominate, exploit and oppress women in heterosexual relationships is relegated to rather what matters about being a man in pursuit of cognitive and

personal stability, and the ability to forge ahead in life in the face of victimisation.

Furthermore, most of these men demonstrated what could be termed *protective masculinities* as they continuously refused to fight back, enacted dominance and in some instances protected their partners by not obtaining an official response. This is a clear masculine signifier across certain African contexts where men are seen as protectors of their families, land and communities (Miescher & Lindsay, 2003). This is corroborated by most of the current study participants who locate themselves as protectors of the homestead and their relationships. Hence, in the context of their victimisation, these men increasingly shifted to adopting a non-violent and protective masculinity construct. In this sense, Khathu perceived himself as a better man largely because he knows “*how to tolerate women*”. He further stated that:

“If fight back, she is defenceless, and with the anger that I have at that time, you know women are so fragile you can just give one blow then she is dead, so I just calm myself. You know since the first of December they’ve been preaching about 16 days of activism, so let me just let things go. I don’t want to become a victim.”

Significantly, Kathu reflects on the physical bodily power he possesses as a man, as against the fragile make-up of his partner. To him women are defenceless to men’s enactment of force, hence he prefers adopting protective masculinities rather than being called out as a perpetrator of IPV against a woman in a gender-sensitive society like South Africa. This resonates with Tinyiko’s view of himself as a better man who has never abused his partner, who in turn has been subjected to multiple forms of abuse. Tinyiko described himself thus:

“I still see myself as a better man, because I respect women. I don’t fight with women. We rather argue, but I never took it to a level of physical abuse.”

Simba, who refuses to pursue legal response against his partner argued that his experiences did not devalue or shift his sense of manhood; rather he emerged as a better patriarchal man from them because the same experiences further taught him how to handle his violent partner and to become a present father:

“It makes me a better man. Now I have experiences with this woman, now if I am late I will stay in the office I will not go home, or if I am late, I won’t get inside the house. I will be avoiding those things, violence.”

Simba’s new practice of relations appears to be a demonstration of cowardice in sexes rhetoric, but to him protecting a ten-year relationship and the children involved is more masculine in all senses of the word ‘masculinities’. Obinna shared similar thoughts on the construction of protective masculinities because of the children involved: *“I can even stop this relationship, but I told you my reason why I am not stopping it, is because of my child.”*

In line with this thinking, Dr Menzi pointed out how the element of ‘love’ can also be the basis of men constructing a pass mark or protective masculinities and continuing in an abusive relationship. He stated:

“It depends on the level of love the male have for that woman. If he still loves his partner, he will still consider himself a man that has to protect the female and give her support (financial and psychological support). But if he lost that love and realised that his female partner doesn’t love him anymore that’s when they lose their masculinities.”

Dr Menzi painted a picture of men’s hidden desire for love as against patriarchal manhood stoicism (Seidler 2006). However, it appears that the construction of protective masculinities over dominant enactment exhibited by these men may be because, in certain environments, especially those where activism on violence against women is present, the veritable tests of manliness are oriented and validated

towards men's respect for women, non-violent tendencies, and chivalry (Hearn & Morrell 2012). However, the danger is that a number of these men perceive accepting female partner victimisation as ideal and giving them a sense of nobility and honour.

These pass marks or protective masculinities are referred to as "*protest masculinities*" in Connell's, (1995) characterisation of masculinities. Men who do not benefit from the privilege of ideal hegemonic norms and practices shift to construct softer versions of masculinities in protest against dominant identity expectations. In the study, more men construct varying views of patriarchal authority, compassionate views on women and children, upholding gender equality ideals and portrayal of a sense of support for feminist activities. However, these men emphasise the fact of how they feel about themselves and show variations of the masculine identities individual men may embody at a given space or time. Thus, men who suffer from IPV could be better appreciated for their different dimensional expressions and constructions of masculinities.

Dual masculinities: Shifting between power and powerlessness

The case of Gwagwa who was heavily brutalised by his female partner, reinforces the position of the dual construction of masculinities amongst the black African men under examination. He recounts several episodes of violence and presents a diary documenting his abuse experiences from his female partner during the interviews. Gwagwa's case exemplifies the embodiment of unique sets of masculinities in individual men in and out of typical environments of challenges and comfort. Gwagwa views himself as having failed as a masculine black African man in his intimate relationship, yet exists as an ideal and respectable man in his official working environment:

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“As an African man, which I know I am, I have failed as a man. In this relationship am not seeing myself as a man. The things that I am doing are the things I expect a woman to do. When u go to work you can pass through a Tavern if you drink get one beer or so but I am not the one who is doing I have to rush into the house and make sure to do things in the house. As I see it in this relationship, I don’t have value as a man. Outside my relationship, I am fine. Even at work, I am an assistant manager where am working, everyone respects me.”

Gwagwa seems to dualistically appreciate himself in separate spaces, on the one hand expressing powerlessness in submitting to femininity, and on the other hand exercising power affirming respectable masculinity in a homo-social context. He never had to negotiate the private and public spheres on equal terms, because as a manager he is positioned authoritatively in relation to groups of men and women. On the home front, his partner, whom he described as abusive and acting out masculine characteristics, challenges his authority. He felt his value as a man diminishing in his relationship; however, he remains a glorified man in his homo-social relationship of power. Gwagwa’s case suggests what could be the hidden lives that some of these abused black African men live within intimate spaces that are concealed as they put on shining faces with others, yet carry a burden of emotional depression, shame, and confusion because the domestic arena is troubled. To this end, for men like Senzo and Kaloba, their experiences have made them reconsider their position in relation to intimacy with women in the South African context. Senzo claims, *“No woman in the city is good,”* whereas such claims to demonise all women in the city could serve as a justification to men who are not willing to pursue relationship commitments and perceive women’s resistance to patriarchy as oppression of men. For Kaloba, cheating with and dating South African women is an invitation to trouble because South African society *“gives women a right to do many things wrong, a man cannot discipline a woman at all these days”*. Stereotypical as these may sound, the fact remains that times are changing and growing resistance to patriarchal power relations exists

in the context, hence dogged patriarchal men are alarmed (Robins 2008; Walker 2005). However, men who shift notions of the masculine self in multiple arenas and environments both beyond the cultural notions of masculinity and gender role expectations are in a better place to negotiate their manhood and adapt and survive the inhibiting challenges as victimised men in different spaces and times (Hunter & Davis 1994).

Conclusion

Foregrounded in the foregoing are the implications of IPV on the self-perceptions of these black African men, the deeply buried nature of these implications in the men's subconscious and conscious psyche and how these men are reviewing this impact on their masculinities and their relationships. From these men's submissions, it is clear that men may employ their spatial agency to maintain the identity of power and not all men can be grouped in terms of a hegemonic expression of power. These men in the study expressed shifts in masculine understandings in relation to and outside of Connell's masculinity framework to claim proper manhood in the face of victimisation. Hence, I shall argue that Connell's (1995; 2005) framework of masculinities fails to explore intermediate gender oppositionality and contestations that link masculinities to women's IPV oppression and fails to suggest possible lines of variations in oppositionality, masculine-feminine contestation and IPV oppression of masculinities. Several theorists have discussed the acknowledged dominant-subordinate patriarchal relations assumptions in the hegemonic theorising of women's experiences of IPV (Wang, Fang & Li 2019; Fulu *et al.* 2013). Moreover, and partly because of this focus, masculinities studies offer truly little on female perpetrated IPV and the resulting impact on masculinities (Barkhuizen 2015). Scholars note the inherent vulnerability of masculinities in their interactions with women in intimate spaces (Seidler 2006). Perhaps the submissions of the men examined in the current study give us some revealing insights into and deepen our understanding of some forms and feelings of victimised heterosexual masculinities and the violent

contestations some men have to bear. I would contend that through participation in patriarchy a majority of these men have learnt endurance, perseverance, and resilience as critical masculine signifiers, and it remains a veritable part of them even in the context of their victimisation.

The behaviours and masculine constructs of some of these black African men may exemplify “*Complicit and Protest Masculinities*” in Connell’s masculinities framework. This is because they receive and appropriate benefits of patriarchy as being men, even though they fail to enact dominance against their partners. Many of these black African men project an image of what could be referred to as pass-mark or protective masculinities because their IPV experience did not immobilise them. They chose not to organise dominance against their partners; rather they enacted a strand of patriarchy, which is to be protective of the family household including their partners. A sense of moving from being called perpetrators of IPV to protectors of women appears in these men’s narratives. Therefore, I would argue that men’s expressions of power need not always involve overt physical violence against others. It can be concealed by more nuanced individual subjectivity and nonviolent behaviour practices.

Although some men who subscribe to notions of traditional standards of masculinity accept masculine powerlessness, few black African men construct varying notions of their masculine selves in multiple environments to negotiate, adapt and survive the challenges of their victimised identities. Furthermore, by situating the majority of these black African men as migrant men in the South African transnational context, I demonstrated that operating as migrants precariously places men within a context of established gender equality discourses, further weakening and disadvantaging them in the eyes of their partners and leaving them without a source of energy to resist violent contentions in their relationships. Despite victimisation, however, they are reviewing their relationships and masculinities. On the other hand, I would hypothesise that some battered men, are more likely to leave an environment where typical heterosexual

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masculinities are not reinforced due to homophobic concerns. Overall, this chapter demonstrates a definite and tangible link between IPV victimisation and shifts in these black African men's manhood conceptions of power.

8

Concluding Reflection

This book has used both relevant literature and vivid vignettes to draw attention to men's experiences of powerlessness at the instances of their IPV experiences and their significant impact on heterosexual relationships within the South African context. Through the narratives of the selected 25 black African men and five key informant interviewees, this book endeavours to offer original insights into the lived IPV experiences of these different black African men and highlight the potential triggers and sources of relationship tensions that lead to the abuse of men. The study has offered insights into the effects of IPV on men's masculine identities by systematically examining how their notions of traditional manhood intersect with the dynamic nature of gender power relations in the transnational space of Johannesburg. These men's victimisation contexts were also judged to produce varieties of masculine expressions as a result.

Although the men take time to explain their victimisation, it is evident that some heterosexual men are complicit in violent and non-violent acts against their female partners. The book reveals the various types of violence that men are subjected to. As such, a woman's agency in wilfully initiating and intentionally perpetuating violence against their male counterparts is widely underestimated. The study demonstrated the capacity of women to freely inflict diverse forms of violence and sustain battering against men. Of special empirical importance is the inevitable occurrences of IPV on black African men's gendered selves, a concept that this book was able to highlight. Policymakers in South Africa and beyond might benefit from these findings, and in a sense appreciate the complexities of IPV and masculine fragmentations with respect to formulating a more gender-inclusive and fitting policy approach to domestic violence and spousal relational issues.

The book (see Chapter 4) has explored the forms and nature of IPV that some black African men living in Johannesburg have experienced. While the most obvious form of IPV against these black African men is physical aggression, what the book revealed is that these men were direct victims of frequent and excessive emotional and economic abuse before a follow-up of physical violence. However, sexual coercion as a form of abuse was generally not prominent, though instances were reported. A minority of the men had been both perpetrators and victims of violence in their relationships. This violence occurred in the different contexts of IPV proposition - that is, situational or common couple violence, violent resistance, mutual control, and intimate terrorism (Johnson 1995:2006). In the study, three case instances appeared to be situation-bound, whereby the women used physical violence in isolated episodes of disagreement but never subjected the men to a pattern of emotional violence. However, although the women's motives to coerce and control were not immediately apparent, their actions, which included scalding with hot water, and biting and sticking sharp nails into a man's genitals, all demonstrated an uncommon and wilful intent to commit assault (see Table 4.1). These situational episodes were disastrous for the men. One argument raised by Swan *et al.* (2005) explains women's aggressive practice as a strategy to confront and resist the oppressive and domineering attitudes of their male partners, thereby fitting men's victimisation into the context of violent resistance and self-defence. Findings from this study debunk that assertion and suggest that we see through and question the agentic capacities of some women to willed violence with oppressive intent against their male counterparts. As I have hypothesised, when physical violence and sexual violence experiences are considered as the persistent and injurious sorts of violence perpetrated by female partners, the evidence is overwhelming that gender symmetry in IPV remains in full effect. Thus, some women fundamentally utilise violence as an instrument to achieve control, rather than as a tactic to express anger, frustration or urgent emotions in family violence (Rowlands 2021; Kimmel 2008.). In fact, as shown in this book, the self-defence

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paradigm encourages a sustained pattern of emotional and physical aggression from women, yet when provoked men respond in self-defence, like in the case of Bafana, whose response was stereotyped and criminalised. As a result, the female partner's claims of self-defence should be scrutinised to establish whether they were the actual perpetrators or whether the motive was to verbally or physically attack their partners in order to obtain official justice against the men.

In relationships with dynamic power structures, framed by prevailing complex political, economic, and gendered realities, it is becoming increasingly difficult to ascertain if both partners are victims and perpetrators, and probably exercise the same degree of motive to control and coerce. Two of the cases in the study fit into this category of mutual control violence IPV. These men reported themselves as having committed and being subjugated to physical violence. While the context of abuse is uncertain amongst scholars (Nybergh, Enander & Krantz 2016), one case in this book showed both partners enacting proportionate levels of violence and altercations, blurring the gendered paradigm on IPV outcomes. In a second case, a situation was reported whereby the participant expressed his intense anger and frustrations by hitting things such as glasses and inflicting physical injury on himself during disagreements. In a way, the latter case reinforces the display of the performance of masculinity and the nuances of the categorisation of such contexts of violence but still shows how situational disagreements can be tense and provocative. Hence, to avoid being called out as an abuser within the South African context that is marked by stereotypes against masculinities and actively promotes activism on violence against women, such participants might resort to non-suicidal self-injury. However, how men and women can be implicated in IPV perpetration is highlighted in this book showing cases of injuries sustained, the sense of fear, emotional hurt and the degree of control achieved by their partners. These suggest that some of these men's experiences fit into the context of *intimate terrorism* - a typical term used to describe the implication of patriarchal

power relations and female experiences of IPV in heterosexual relationships (Johnson 1995; 2006). However, although most of the study's participants are not immobilised, in contrast to the predicament of female victims of intimate terrorism, the abuse represents a devastating assault on the body, esteem and sense of self of the affected men. Some of the participants claimed that they had the capacity to survive economically should they discontinue their abusive relationships. Many of them persevered because of the love they had for their partners and their children, and to demonstrate masculine prowess and power that can contain the excesses and aggressions of a violent woman. On the other hand, however, some of the men indicated leaving their relationships to avoid shame and ridicule. Thus, I argue that victimised men are likely to relocate from an environment that lacks support for heterosexual masculinities to avoid homophobic reactions, framed by stereotypic realities against masculinities.

The book also revealed a xenophobic pattern of IPV associated with some of the migrant black African men who are sometimes subjected to intimate terrorism because their non-citizen statuses are identified by their partners as a source of weakness and potential manipulation. The objective reality of this is the construction of xenophobic verbal attacks against these men by their transnational South African partners, such as describing them derogatively as *amakwerekwere* to remind them of their precarious statuses. To these migrant black African men, such remarks are emotionally draining, emasculating, and intended to allow for absurd control behaviours and intimidation and to crush their spirits of black African maleness before the physical attack. This suggests a strong link between xenophobic sentiments and IPV against migrant men. Migrant heterosexual black African men, therefore, find themselves vulnerable and susceptible to IPV existing in a context with strong xenophobic sentiments against immigrant communities. This finding points to the originality and novelty of the study because it brings a new dimension to our understanding of the experiences of migrant men and xenophobic attacks in the South African context. I

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shall argue that IPV has to be understood in an intersectional manner: thus, recognising the intersections between gender, age, race, ethnicity, class and nationality will help build a more complex and balanced understanding of the manifestations of violence in South Africa.

I argue that the nature and forms of IPV against the study's participants cannot be conceived outside the structured social conditions and sentiments in which they find themselves and, in this instance, the South African context, in Johannesburg. Clearly, a relationship between these men's partners' agencies and the structural contexts intersects with other disadvantages to promote the practices of IPV against them. In these men's minds, their partners are expressing themselves violently because the environment and socio-legal conditions make it possible. In this sense, this book draws attention to men's power and control within heterosexual unions and provides a reason to suggest that we should take seriously the basis of *reward* and *cost* in pursuit of interpersonal conflicts within intimate spaces. This position is consistent with Homans's (1984) aggressive-approval Exchange theorisation of social actors in a relationship, which advances that males or females relate oppositionally and violently when their actions are defined as rewarding, valuable and highly attainable (Homans 1984). For example, most of the participants' partners considered the construction of violence as desirable, less costly, and attainable behaviour due to the norm complexities and the sentiments against masculinities within the context. Thus, I argue that IPV against men is borne out of oppositionality, and the reality that masculine and feminine agencies are not fixed contingents but are products of structural norms, suggesting that the enactment of force might be treated in terms of the inherent normalisation of violence in the South African environment. Also given South Africa's progressive gender regime and state protection for women, it is feasible for men to feel powerless and vulnerable in such circumstances (Robins 2008), especially for migrant black African men who are precarious within a transnational space.

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How these black African men describe the underlying tensions within their intimate unions support interactional exchanges and other driving factors that give rise to men's abuse (see Chapter 5). What emerged from the data is that the female partners of the participants acted aggressively when they felt frustrated, angered, and unsatisfied with the men's actions. For instance, attitudes such as coming home late at night, suspicious phone contact numbers and incoming calls, and accusing a partner of infidelity triggered tension between partners. The men's partners exhibited jealous responses and acted out in violent ways - indicating the costs they were not willing to incur in the relationship. From the standpoint of Homans's (1984) aggressive-approval Exchange theory proposition these women to feel that their men's actions are not rewarding. Hence, the explosive anger response becomes valuable in expressing their frustrations. For many of the migrant men, the violence is the enactment of a superiority complex, played out to cover up for their misdeeds, and to coerce and gain control over them because of their precarity as foreign men. Further still, the findings show that some of the women's constructions of aggression are expressions of lovelessness not being satiated with the reward they obtain, in terms of expectations of necessary financial benefits and obligations in the relationship. Thus, this book suggests that the experience of violence is likely to be perceived by the men as something their partners have no regrets about as the acts are justified, given their failed statuses as men who should be providing and serving. The book found other interplaying factors linked to the promotion of tensions, anger reaction and subsequent victimisation of these men. They include the lack of conflict management abilities in resolving or managing early signs of tensions in the relationship, the delay in seeking counselling or reporting the violence and the lack of relevant knowledge of the gender laws in South Africa (and the ways in which the laws can be drawn upon to protect both men and women). In light of the foregoing, I hypothesise that both men and women are exposed to comparable risk factors that ultimately lead to IPV incidents against them in the South African context.

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The book examined the subjective concepts of manhood-power connected with black African heterosexual men in Johannesburg (see Chapter 6), and how these concepts have altered through time for them as victimised men. The book showed that, at first, almost all of the participants recognised themselves as patriarchal men aligned with the patterning of patriarchy in their perceptions of women and gender relations. Their sense of proper manhood is situated in their local cultural and religious orientations of patriarchal power relations, including being responsible providers, protectors and figureheads within intimate spaces and the home. Some of the participants saw women in very traditional ways and thus struggled with the reality of their intimate unions in the Johannesburg context. The participants' views suggest structured unequal gendered relations in domesticity as common features in African societies. Key informants in the study support the patriarchal code of productive role responsibility and power for men as a defining characteristic of a real black African man. Speaking from an ethnic Zulu perspective, Mr Shaka highlighted hegemonic characteristics of a black African man to include being versed in ancestral rites, physical and mental strength, being a defender of the family, reliability, truthfulness, punctuality, being a breadwinner and protector, and active involvement in community activities. Mrs Thobeka noted that the patriarchal Zulu system of male authority in intimate spaces upholds men as "lords" who legislate and present the final say on issues through issuing commands. The presence of this common trait in perceiving manhood is quite evident amongst participants in the study. Thus, I argue that these black African men have undisputed access to hegemonic gender characteristics of power entrenched in their cultural and religious roots. However, I contend that it is problematic to solely examine the gendered power of men without taking into account the inherent masculine vulnerabilities in relation to modernity, legislative, and economic change, and the oppositional power relations that are sufficient between men and women in today's world.

Whether these men's notions of masculinities and their articulation of traditional identities changed in the context of their victimisation became an interesting facet explored in this book (see Chapter 7). It appeared that most of the participants were faced with the constraints of articulating their earlier image of proper black African manhood as related to more assertive women in the South African context who violently oppressed them. As a result, the men expressed a shift from their perceptions of patriarchal manhood. Whereas a number of men perceived themselves as an embodiment of powerless masculinities in the context of their victimisation, other groups of men express a shift to other essential manifestations of patriarchal manhood to technically reinforce their perceptions as men of power in spite of their victimisation experiences. Findings show that the IPV experiences of the former group of men forced them to judge and redefine themselves in emasculating terms such as *"I'm a weak man"*, *"I'm a devalued man"*, as well as questioning their maleness *"I'm [not] man enough."* In many senses, such expressions of losing masculine confidence and grappling indicate a shift from traditional hegemonic masculine norms such as physical strength, assertiveness, and dominance over women. This group of men may technically fall under subordinate masculinities in Connell's masculinities framework for being soft and not upholding hegemonic masculine standards in relation to their female partners. Thus, men who allow themselves to be violently oppressed by their female partners are disqualified as patriarchal men, to which the men in the study allude. This finding then led me to argue that IPV imperatives have a particularly strong grip on men's inner sense of self and psyche, and they are capable of producing ambivalence and a shift in masculine interpretations.

The latter group of men rejected the notion of powerless masculinities, alluding to having achieved some form of successful masculine prowess and power in the face of victimisation. These men shifted to advance notions of flexible versions of masculinities to compensate for their failure in enacting hegemonic standards of dominance over their

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partners. The following highlight how these participants shifted in their narratives to reassert power masculinities within a victimised identity:

- They constructed a sense of manliness around the ability to endure the pain of abuse.
- They perceive their construction of perseverance and resilience after episodes of abuse as critical masculine signifiers and remain a veritable part of them even in the context of their victimisation.
- They view their capacities to fulfil their gender roles as providers as part of what constitutes successful manhood rather than the show of force.
- Some of them argue that their exercise of restraint, self-control and not summoning manly power in the face of aggressive provocation locates them as better men who understand a woman as the weaker gender. They perceive and appreciate themselves as “*better men*” who do not dominate, exploit, or oppress women.
- Their narratives suggest that the public display of emotional stability, character and active engagement with social activities or paid work validates ideal manhood.
- They enacted a form of protective masculinities. They review their actions of not fighting back, not abandoning the relationship or their children and not obtaining legal response as a clear masculine signifier across certain African contexts where men are seen as protectors of their families, lands, and communities.

Clearly, this group of men try to bring together elements of patriarchal masculinities and egalitarian masculine notions as an explanation to consolidate and justify their sense of manhood in relation to their victimised conditions. These men’s characterisation of their masculinities positions them in Connell’s masculinities framework as complicit and protest men. In Connell’s (2005) view, the suggestion of individuated constituents of masculinities outside the practice of dominance over women excludes a man as proper hegemonic man. Thus, victimised men claiming hegemonic

prowess negate Connell's preposition of hegemonic power relations with women. However, this focus tends to ignore the realities of contextual complexities that ensure masculine liminality and tenuous situations. In fact, for the participants of this study, particularly the migrant men, the existing stereotype against masculinities and xenophobic sentiments against foreigners in the South African context leaves them without a source of energy to assert themselves or resist their violent partners. These findings then led me to argue that, since enacting hegemony against women in precarious spaces is complicated, masculine expressions may not always take the form of overt practice of physical force. It can be hidden in more complex practices of individual subjectivity and non-violent behaviours that men may shift to, a trait that was apparent in the narratives of some of these black African men.

Another interesting facet of the participants' submissions is the shift to an emotional side of black African patriarchal manhood. To some of the participants, an ideal constituent element of black African masculinities is to be emotionally present for your spouse and to give joy to the family. This then compels me to support Seidler's (2006) argument that, since emotions and feelings are associated with weakness and femininity, it becomes problematic to exclusively analyse the gender power of men without considering their emotional lives.

Well within a sociological analytical framework, the book contributes to the theorisations of IPV as a gender construct, using the Johnson (1995; 2006) IPV typologies, albeit from the perspective of men's masculine vulnerabilities in relation to women. Johnson's typology traditionally pays attention to gendered-based IPV outcomes. To an extent, this theory assists our understanding of the forms of violence experienced by different black African men at the hands of their partners within the South African context. The book found black African men describing their experiences in terms of situational couple violence, mutual resistance, violent resistance, and intimate terrorism, as proposed by Johnson. Furthermore, the cases of the severity of injuries sustained

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and the degree of control achieved by these men's partners technically blur the gendered framing of these categories. Still, the findings of this book explicitly account for micro and macro dynamics that accentuate violence and other patterns of violence against these black African men in Johannesburg, that were not considered in the typology categorisation of IPV forms. For instance, this book established a qualitative association between xenophobia and IPV outcomes within the South African context. Thus, a framework that will thoroughly capture these complexities considering the actualities of serious forms of IPV against men is needed.

The capacity of women to inflict violence on men is still a subject of debate in gender scholarship. The aggressive-approval Exchange theory of Homans (1984) was used to explain the interaction and patriarchal exchange breakdown that might have prompted these black African men's female partners' abusive behaviour. In line with Homans's proposition of aggressive-approval Exchange theorisation, reward and cost dynamics, the book found that: firstly, IPV against these black African men is a response from their female partners in venting their anger over the quality of reciprocity and benefits derived from the relationship. For instance, coming home late at night may be considered an emotional loss for the loyal female partner who then acted violently to express her frustrations and anger. Secondly, the approval of violence as a response is because it is highly attainable, given the interplay of forces which tilt the power balance and advance the power of their partners, including masculine stereotypes, xenophobic sentiments, migrant precarity as well as these men's reluctance to retaliate or fight back to avoid backlash and to maintain a sense of masculine prowess in order to fit into the gender friendly narratives in the context. Thirdly, violence rewards their partners with power and control over the relationship and it is less costly to their partners because of the lack of social cohesion and legal consequences against female-perpetuated violence in the context. Thus, the book suggests that men see females engaging in aggressive behaviour because it is a rewarding,

valuable and a highly attainable form of engagement. In effect, with the increasing decline of patriarchal relationality, and as more female partners assertively seek material gains, emotional satisfaction, and power in the relationships, IPV is fast becoming a gender-neutral outcome in the Johannesburg South African context. The utility of the exchange theory helps us understand the realities of male victimisation, capturing the various factors that influence tensions and conflicts in these black African men's intimate unions. Thus, the study offers relevance for the expansion and progress of Homans's (1984) "*approval aggressive*" Exchange theoretical proposition that was not originally intended for IPV analysis.

The study acknowledges and notes the discourses on profiled, configured gender practice of hegemony and dominance over women as juxtaposed with constructs of marginalised, complicit, subordinate and protest relationality amongst men (Connell 1995; 2005). However, I argue that Connell's masculinities framework fails to explore intermediate gender oppositionality and contestations that link masculinities to women's IPV oppression and fails to suggest possible lines of variations in oppositionality, masculine-feminine contestation and IPV oppression of masculinities. Thus, this study suggests possible lines of violent masculine-feminine oppositions and contestations, appreciating women's construction of hegemony against men in their perpetuation of IPV. I illustrate the inherent vulnerability of masculinities in their interactions with women in intimate spaces and offer some helpful insights into some forms and feelings of victimised black African heterosexual masculinities (local and migrant in South Africa) that were not previously envisaged in the hegemonic characterisation of western masculinities and masculine theorising of IPV outcomes. My study opens up the idea of multiplicities of black African masculinities and constructions of varying notions of the masculine self in multiple arenas and environments both beyond the cultural notions of patriarchal masculinity and gendered selves. I found that men are likely to devise ways in which to adapt to victimisation, and yet try to

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express elements of patriarchal masculinities such as being a protective partner in order to maintain their identities as men of power in private and public spaces. Thus, such a disjunction from hegemonic characterisation brings to the fore that masculinities are not fixed but relative. That is, there is no core point, it is de-territorialised, malleable and it evades definite parameters. It is information at a given moment and context. This then expands on Howson's (2014) argument that hegemonic masculinities do not fully exist but are virtual and aspirational in such contexts as relating to norms, mores, ethical truths, and common sense of what is right in a given context. In this sense, I argue that the men's articulation of critical masculine signifiers such as endurance, resilience, and protectionism in the context of their victimisation appears to be an aspiration to attain the spectacle of 'real men of power' in a modern constitution of gender equity order, even if they are not considered as strong versions of hegemonic power expressions. However, appearing to be magnanimous one should not lose sight of the contextual and social realities such as xenophobia and other masculine precarity that account for the tenuous nature of these (local and migrant) black African men's masculinities in the Johannesburg context.

The study approach is thought to be an important methodological contribution to social science / humanities research (see Chapter 3). Firstly, it demonstrates from a qualitative case study perspective a suitable approach to the exploration of sensitive issues, in this case black African men's experiences of IPV and their masculine subjectivities. Secondly, the drawing of data from men from seven countries, namely, South Africa, Zimbabwe, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, Malawi, Mozambique and Eswatini, all resident in Johannesburg, demonstrates a broad implication of our understanding of the phenomenon in the African continent considering the paucity of studies around male IPV victimisation. Thirdly, the introduction of dialogue sessions with some of the participants is an innovative qualitative method of gathering real-life information, which allowed me to observe and interact with participants involved in

recent instances of abuse with the alleged abusive partners present in the same room. Fourthly, the study supports the conclusions of a body of evidence which counter the assumptions about the risk of engaging traumatic participants in a research process. The interview sessions were valuable and were not a distressing experience for the participants. Fifthly, my experience with IPV, as well as his utilisation of reflexivity throughout the study, contributes to our knowledge of autoethnography as a viable methodology approach (Rowlands 2022b). Lastly, by volunteering to assist and support IPV victims at the RH health facility, I demonstrated participatory fieldwork and commitment to reciprocity. That is, serving the local community and yet undertaking the collection of research data concurrently made me a valuable researcher who is beneficial to the community and my career field. These are significant methodological approaches and useful contributions to a method that future researchers may consider adapting during fieldwork.

9

Theory, Policy and Practice Impact Recommendations

“With the challenges of feminism, many heterosexual men from different backgrounds have become confused about what it means to be a man. Often we have lost a sense of our gender grounds, as it has been easy to feel that because men have power we are not entitled to have our own pain or suffering. Since it is women who have so long been oppressed by the institutions of patriarchy and suffered rape, violence and harassment at the hands of men, it is easy for men to feel that there is no way that we might begin to celebrate the conditions of manhood. When we are aware of the violence that is exercised against women and the ways their experiences is devalued and their bodies abused, it can seem almost immoral to complain about the conditions of (victimised) manhood”.
(Seidler 1997:201)

Obviously, feminism continues to be the dominant element of state, national, and international legal attempts to address intimate partner violence around the world (Haastrup 2020; Dragiewicz, 2008; Anderson 2005). In South Africa, feminist movements attempting to advance their agendas for change took advantage of systematic measures to address apartheid-era inequalities and discrimination to advance concerns of inequality and gender-based violence against women (Maher 2022; Troup 2020; Goetz, Hassim & Luckham 2003; Nowrojee 2001). These advocates set out to enact and enforce laws against intimate partner violence, rape, and harassment of women, and to train the police and persecutory authorities to use these laws to protect women from the violence of men as a group that is pervasive and acknowledged by the state (Goetz et al. 2003; Nowrojee 2001). Undoubtedly, these efforts had an impact on the laws, policies and practices that addressed

intimate partner abuse in South Africa, which has less concern for the male victim experiences (Rowlands 2022c; Ratele *et al.* 2016).

Thus, the policy and practice orientations in South Africa are informed by rights that are granted to South African women that draw on three bodies of law. The first includes international instruments ratified by the country such as the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women in 1993; UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security in 2000; and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa in 2003. The second is the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996 (Chapter 3 Bill of Rights). The third includes acts and regulations that address the situation of women. The most important piece of legislation affecting women is the Domestic Violence Act No. 116 of 1998, Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act No. 6 of 2012, and Protection from Harassment Act No. 17 of 2011. Policies and practices are also influenced by bodies of research evidence, as well as the sector-specific policies and programmes for which policies are developed.

Notwithstanding the enormous progress feminists have achieved in their representation of women in the policy and practice arenas, the persistently high prevalence of gender violence against women threatens to undermine these accomplishments of the post-apartheid state. The victimisation of males by women, on the other hand, poses a concurrent challenge or hindrance to the advancement of policies and practices in the fights against IPV and domestic violence and may weaken the support for gender equality in the South African constitution. In this section, I provide a variety of men's perspectives on how to strengthen the nation's policies and programmes to prevent and respond to IPV, particularly towards men.

Theory impact recommendations

An integrated theoretical approach is suggested.

Programmes that prioritise integrated sociological theorising against feminist-focused speculations can help in responding to IPV issues in a more systematic and sustained manner. For instance, Johnson's typology of IPV can help practitioners differentiate and gain insights into individual victims' circumstances, while Homans's aggressive-approval Exchange theory can assist in understanding the everyday behavioural exchanges and breakdowns between intimate partners that give rise to IPV. Thus, practitioners armed with multiple theories are better equipped to address the risk factors that are linked to IPV outcomes, particularly against men.

Addressing victimised men's masculine well-being

Programmes can be targeted at victimised men to build self-confidence and strategies for survival in order to address the emotional effects of their shifting masculine circumstances. This is in view of the reported findings that some men expressed shame and suicidal contemplations as they grappled with the understanding of their victimised selves and sense of masculine failure. This situation can create a retaliatory response from male victims in a precarious state, who may choose to exert their masculinities, thus moving the relationship into a "*violent resistance*" or "*mutual control*" context of IPV (Johnson 2005). Other abuse outcomes reported include emotional stress, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Thus, a programme that will help in addressing the emotional well-being of victimised men is likely to de-escalate IPV amongst heterosexual partners.

Family-level engagement

Programmes and interventions should be tailored in order to encourage family participation, support victims and serve as an exit path for leaving abusive intimate relationships.

Victims should be encouraged to engage with and speak out to family members about their experiences of abuse before it gets out of control. In this study, a number of interviewees expressed trust in utilising family and friends. This view is in line with evidence that supports that male victims of IPV are more likely to seek help from informal structures such as the family. For instance, one study of male IPV victims indicates that 44 per cent of the sample disclosed their experiences to family members, while 41 per cent disclosed it to friends and neighbours, 12 per cent sought help from doctors or nurses, and only 3 per cent approached support groups and centres for men (AuCoin 2005). However, since in African societies the family institution is the bedrock of the promotion of traditional identities and gender relations (Miescher & Lindsay 2003), it is important to ascribe equity and non-hegemonic narratives to senior members of the family as they intervene in conflict resolutions and monitoring of developments between partners. The migrant status of the men, however, implies that accessing family may not be that easy, thus a medical / health facility may also be preferred.

Community-level engagement

This entails programmes designed to mobilise communities in addressing the shifting norms that give rise to IPV and abuse, including the general attitude towards male victims of IPV and the promotion of respectable gender relations. In the views of most participants, inclusive discourses about male and female abuse at the community level will help change the community's attitude towards male victims of IPV. This, in one of the key informants' minds, is a starting point towards reducing and preventing the occurrence of interpersonal violence.

Direct partner-level engagement

In order to sustain peace and non-violent resolutions of issues in relationships, there is a need for the formulation of programmes and interventions targeted at the relationship level and intended to build intimate partners with practical

knowledge of interpersonal conflict management and communication skills. This was suggested in the reflective narratives of a number of men in the study who believed that it is emasculating to go public with domestic issues and also want to protect their relationships. They believe that dedicated efforts and attempts should be made by intimate partners towards resolving issues of violence in their relationships. From a theoretical perspective, such programmes can help to de-escalate “common” or “situational” relationship violence (Johnson 2005) and present occasions where both partners will discuss equity exchange in their relationship (Homans 1984). The lack of partner-level engagement is pointed out in Chapter 5 as one of the contributing factors to the tensions and abuse in some of the study participants’ relationships.

Policy impact recommendation

Legislative efforts include the development and enforcement of programmes, policies and legislative enactments that will reflect the government’s gender-neutral interventions and pursuits on IPV issues. Most participants in this study believe that there are direct and indirect implications of the laws and policies in South Africa in relation to male IPV outcomes. For instance, one key informant observed that legislature and policies in South Africa are framed to support vulnerable groups but excluding men. He noted that popular discourses on male dominance had foreclosed the needs of vulnerable others. This observation is evidently supported by the analysis of Ratele *et al.* (2016) of 20 legal instruments from various government departments in South Africa with a mandate for violence prevention. The analysis revealed that these documents pay no attention to men’s experiences of violence although they acknowledge violence as a national concern and advance the need to reduce the risk factors without considering males’ vulnerability. Thus, addressing IPV in a gender-neutral manner could help protect vulnerable groups of men, particularly migrant men, with many of them in precarious contexts. Such could also encourage men to rely on obtaining official responses instead of fighting back.

Practice impact recommendations

Professional counselling

Another intervention could be scaled up, investing in and placing professional counsellors in the community in order to address the emotional traumas of victims and counselling perpetrators. Most of the study participants expressed their willingness to utilise the services of professional counsellors in addressing relationship tensions and conflicts. A few indicated having sought professional counselling in handling tensions in their relationships. One of the participants noted: *“I believe that if this problem were reported on time to a counsellor, it would not have gone much far.”* Hence professional counselling that is accessible by the general community may in a way help to address and reduce the scourge of IPV in the community.

Advocacy and social marketing

These efforts may include engaging the mass media, including social media platforms, to raise awareness of male IPV realities and men’s rights and the organising of special days for national activism to raise nationwide awareness and support for men’s concerns and plights in intimate spaces. Some of the participants in my study reasoned that an inclusive campaign strategy would most likely address women’s use of violence against them and create awareness of men’s rights in sexual relationships. In fact, one key informant, a police captain with 20 years of experience in helping domestic violence victims, suggested that *“the solution is the awareness; we must keep telling people to report this kind of cases”*. As noted in Chapter 5, men’s ignorance of relevant laws in the context affects their ability to obtain official responses against their abusive partners. Thus, such awareness should aim at educating men about their rights and the undiscriminating standards of the law, encouraging more men to speak out and seek professional help as a response to violence against them.

There is, however, a shortage of community-based organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs)

offering services to male IPV victims in South Africa, leading to a lack of awareness and activism. For instance, as vast as Gauteng province is, only nineteen organisations are registered with the Department of Social Development and are delivering services to men and boys. They include: SAMAG–South African Men’s Action Group; Agisanang Domestic Abuse Prevention & Training (A.D.A.P.T.) Alexandra Township; Akasosha Men’s Forum; Carroll Shaw Memorial Centre; Shelter for abused men, Randfortein; NICRO Tshwane; Lungelo Women’s Organisation Soweto; Vanderbijlpark Trauma Counselling Empowerment Centre; Tshwane Leadership Foundation (AKANANI); Sechaba–Community–Care Etwatwa; Agape Lerato Community Services; Indibano Victim Empowerment Project; The Mali Martin Polokegong Centre; Together As One Sharpeville; NICRO Soweto; NICRO Vereeniging; NICRO Germiston; Agape Lerato Community Services Meyerton; and The Gender–Based Violence Command Centre. Thus there is a need to encourage the establishment of more NGOs that deal specifically with men issues.

Access to courts, medical facilities, and police response

This entails the monitoring and evaluation of the legal and medical activities, and the quality of help centres for IPV victims, especially in their response to male victims of IPV. This is in view of the fact that the majority of men in the study indicated that they received poor and trivialising responses during their visits to the family courts, health facilities and police stations. This may be because of community perceptions of IPV from a gendered perspective, hence the disregard for the severity of male IPV experiences. A call, therefore, is necessary for the evaluation of the underpinning activity of these facilities and their personnel to scale up informed action and capacity building to address the burden of IPV in South Africa.

Final notes

One may be forgiven for feeling depressed after reading this book, despair at the prevalence of IPV in South Africa, as well

as the pain and suffering it causes men and women alike. In terms of under-reporting, even though IPV against men is a criminal act, severe physical assault is trivialised by the female perpetrator, the male victims themselves and the criminal justice system. Some men who are regularly battered by their female partners hardly report such cases because of the fear of secondary victimisation and humiliation from officials of the police services under the pretence that abuse from women is minor and insignificant and men are to be stoic and strong in contrast to women. No doubt, such masculine stereotypical views around men's IPV victims adversely affect men's help-seeking attitudes.

It is necessary to create awareness of men's rights as part of a larger gender-inclusive networking effort and campaign to eliminate all forms of IPV, including IPV against men. Agents of formal support services, particularly police officers who mock and demonstrate stereotypical views of male IPV victimisation should be sanctioned. Even though gender equality as a culture is embraced in contemporary times, it is important to establish a peaceful egalitarian relationship between men and women in domestic spaces in order to ensure harmonious and functional intimate unions. The findings of this study have clear implications for policy responses and future research directions.

As I have argued, IPV perpetration should not be analysed based on men's masculine positions of dominance or their assumed expressive power over women. Instead, it ought to be appreciated in the context of the relationships, how individual men construct power or powerlessness and the factors that accentuate IPV outcomes. I have foregrounded this in the chapters of this book.

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Glossary of Key concepts

Economic violence: is a form of unethical financial behaviour where one partner controls or intends to control the finances, assets, and other economic resources of the other to gain undue advantage and control over the relationship (Ludsin & Vetten 2005). It includes manipulation, stealing, extorting, force or making excessive demands of money beyond the capacity of one's partner.

Emotional violence: the presence of a pattern of destructive behaviour aimed at embarrassing, humiliating, disrespecting, and undermining the other. Here the abuser intends to erode the self-confidence, self-esteem, and the sense of self by verbally insulting, name-calling, swearing at, and belittling the other to achieve control over the other in the relationship (Ludsin & Vetten 2005). According to Polsky and Markowitz (2004), victims of this form of abuse are usually associated with traumatic conditions caused by acts, or coercive tactics of the abuser (Migliaccio 2001).

Femininities: refers to a set of social attributes and behavioural patterns expressing implicitly and explicitly the role expectations of girls and women.

Gender: is a range of socially constructed characteristics that differentiate expected masculine from feminine behaviour, and biological sex differences between males and females.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV): is violence based on gender difference that is inflicted on a person. It includes violence on women, men, girls, boys, and other non-conforming gender identities. It breaches the person's fundamental human right to life, liberty, dignity, equality, and non-discrimination (Brander, De-Witte, Ghanea, Gomes, Keen & Pinkeviciute. 2012).

Gender relations: are socio-culturally or religiously defined rights, privileges, and responsibilities, intersecting the race and class and identities of men and women in relation to one

another (Bravo-Baumann 2000). Gender inequality: means the systematic structuring of gender, intersecting with race and class, which marginalises and deprives women's ability to rights, resources and opportunities (Albertyn 2011).

Heterosexual men: gendered males who are emotionally, romantically, and sexually attracted to the female opposite sex.

Hegemonic masculinities: "a mesh of social practices productive of gender-based hierarchies, including violence and dominance that supports these hierarchies; that is, the unequal relations between females and males as groups" (Ratele 2008; Connell 2005).

Intimate partner: a person in a relationship with another, whether current or former spouses, cohabiting boyfriends, or girlfriends, courting partners, or sexual partners. Such relationships are characterised by the concerned partners' emotional connectedness, ongoing sexual intimacy and physical contact, familiarity, and good knowledge about each other's lives (Center For Disease Control and Prevention (CDC 2017)).

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV): In the dominant sociological usage, this is a structural and systemic interpersonal violence in marital, cohabiting or dating intimate relationships where one partner uses patterns of destructive behaviours and violent tactics to exert power and control over the other partner, within a short or long period of time (World Health Organization (WHO), 2013; Lawson 2012; Heise 2011).

Legal administrative violence: is considered an act in which one partner threatens to or actually uses the judicial system, for example, by making false allegations against the other partner in order to silence and gain control in the relationship. Such kind of abuse is usually perpetrated by women and flourishes in contexts of chivalry for women and IPV stereotypes against men and masculinities (Hines *et al.* 2014).

Male Power: embodied muscular abilities and available structural resources men can access to achieve control and

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dominance over women as a group (Ratele 2008; Connell 2005).

Male Powerlessness: individual men unable to exert physical force or obtain structural resources for establishing control and dominance over more assertive women (Ratele 2008; Seidler 2006).

Manhood: The indigenous notions explicitly related to men's physiology, often referred to as the state of male adulthood with responsibilities (Miescher & Lindsay 2003).

Masculinities: is conceived as the social configuration of actions, practices, and omissions as well as an individual's psychological reality. It encompasses cathexes, desires, anxieties, and other cognitive and affective processes. It is as much about where men are located in societal traditions, laws, institutions, discourse, and rules (Ratele 2013).

Oppositionality: non-conforming and resistant groups of males or females in response to the collective cultural, structural relationships of gender.

Patriarchy: is a social system structured to give absolute and legitimate power, rule, social privilege and control to the father or eldest male overall women in the family. It sanctions masculine dominance over women.

Patriarchal relationality: Collective cultural conforming relationships of gender in terms of converging structural notions of masculinities exercising absolute dominance over femininities.

Physical aggression: an act whereby any one partner uses physical force to gain compliance from and dominance over the other. The perpetrator may engage in threatening behaviour, attempt, or actually inflict physical harm on the victim (Tjaden & Theonness 2000). This kind of abuse is synonymous with simple and aggravated assault entailing the use of physical violence such as punching, slapping choking, biting, throwing objects and the use of instruments and weapons at a partner (Sigsworth 2009).

Relationality: collective cultural conforming relationships of gender in terms of converging structural notions of masculinities and femininities.

Sexual coercion: the use of force to achieve sexual pleasure from victims. This type of abuse involves sexual assault, rape, sexual harassment, unwanted sexual contact, and sexual exploitation whether attempted or completed (Mathews 2010; Vetten 2003). This act is usually without the consent or induced consent of the victim. Women are more likely to be subjected to this form of abuse than men (Mathews 2010).

