Silent sufferers: a sociological exploration of gender-based violence against South African men by women

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DECLARATION

By electronically submitting this dissertation, I, **Tshanduko Tshilongo**, declare that the work presented in this dissertation is my own, produced through my own original research.

I further declare that:

i. This dissertation is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in Social Sciences with Sociology at the Potchefstroom campus of the North-West University.

ii. Other authors' work and quotations are clearly cited/referenced in this dissertation.

Iii. Apart from other authors' (referenced) works, this dissertation is my own work.

Iv. The assistance of external individuals in the research process (such as, but not limited to, identifying possible participants and spreading awareness of the research) is clearly indicated in this dissertation.

V. This work or parts thereof have not been submitted before.

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ABSTRACT

GBV has become an epidemic in Southern Africa. With a growing body of research and policies centred on GBV, the phenomenon is largely understood from the male-inflicting-harm-on-female standpoint. Consider the following quotes regarding the importance ascribed to traditional (read hegemonic) meanings associated with masculinity in African culture: "*Mudi wa gwoswi a una malila*" (Translated from Tshivenda it means "the house of a weak man does not stand") (Thobejane *et al.*, 2018). The preceding quote is an example of connotation from an African language and culture that is used to describe or provide an idea of what it means to be a man in a patriarchal society where hegemonic masculinity is promoted and endorsed. Gender-based violence (hereafter GBV) against men in South Africa, has not been as widely or broadly researched as in America or other European Countries. This may be due, in part, to the stereotypical connotations that are attached to men who publicly acknowledge that they have been the victims of GBV. Thus, men tend to conceal the abuse to avoid being labelled as weak or for not being "real" men. This study was conducted to explore GBV against South African men by women. The study's central theoretical argument was informed by a critical reflection on Raewyn Connell's (1987, 2005) theory of hegemonic and subordinate masculinities. This reflection involved critically engaging this perspective in a South African context in order to explore its applicability to a South African context (i.e., avoiding a mere monolithic view of masculinity as per Western theorisation). A qualitative research design was used to provide thick descriptions of men's views on the issues regarding GBV as it relates to male victims in South Africa. Participants were selected using the non-probability sampling methods of purposive and snowball sampling. Participants in this study were selected on the grounds that they met the researcher's pre-established criteria. In this case, the non-negotiable criteria for inclusion included the following: self-identified biological males who were or had been victims of GBV or intimate partner violence in domestic settings based in any of the nine provinces of South Africa. Their age, social class, nationality, gender identity, sexual orientation and race were not regarded as exhaustive criteria in the selection process. This community was considered a "hidden" and hard-to-reach group, because male victims of GBV were not always visible or

obvious. Thus, I (the researcher) gained access through the identification of and obtaining approval from organisations who worked with participants intended for the study. Participants included an initial target of 10 heterosexual men who were either married or in a cohabiting relationship. Six themes emerged from the data collected, which then guided the analysis. The first theme centred on the **conceptualisation of GBV** based on the empirical narratives of male participants**.** The second theme focused on the identification and discussion of **factors** contributing to South African men's vulnerability to GBV. The third theme discussed **forms of GBV experienced by men**. Furthermore, **reasons for**, **and challenges** faced by South African male victims' under-reporting of GBV emerged as the fourth theme. These reasons were associated with the various institutions' lack of care regarding men as victims of GBV. The fifth theme explored **consequences of GBV** for the construction and enactment of masculinity by participants. The last theme highlighted the identification and provision of **recommendations** related to policy formulations to address GBV. Participants reported being negatively affected by such abuse.

Key terms:
Homosociality, inclusive masculinity, intimate partner violence, Masculinities, #MeToo, patriarchy.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENTS

1.1 INTRODUCING

Consider the following quotes about the importance ascribed to traditional (read hegemonic) meanings associated with masculinity in African culture:

"Mudi wa gwoswi a una malila"

(Translated from Tshivenda, it means *"the house of a weak man does not stand".*)
(Thobejane *et al*., 2018)

"Monna ke nku o llela teng"

(Translated from Setswana, it means *"[a] man is like a sheep[;] he cries on the inside or a man does not cry".*) (Gathogo, 2015; Thobejane *et al.*, 2018)

"Ndi Munna nge a ambara vhurukhu"

(Translated from Tshivenda, it means *"[h]e is a man only because he wears a trouser".*) (Thobejane *et al.*, 2018)

The preceding quotes are examples of connotations from different African languages and cultures that are used to describe or provide an idea of what it means to be a man in a patriarchal African society where hegemonic masculinity is promoted and endorsed (Thobejane *et al.*, 2018:5). Gender-based violence (hereafter GBV) against men in South Africa has not been as widely or broadly researched as in America (Fink, 2006; Robinson & Segal, 2022), the Netherlands (Drijber *et al.*, 2013), the United Kingdom (Hall, 2012), Australia (Tilbrook *et al.*, 2010) and Kenya (Gathogo, 2015). This may in part be due to the stereotypical connotations that are attached to men who publicly acknowledge that they have been the victims of GBV (Barkhuizen, 2015; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; George, 2002). Thus, men tend to conceal the abuse to avoid being labelled as weak or for not being 'real' men. The present study was conducted to explore GBV perpetrated by women against South African men. What follows is a background to the noted GBV discourse in South Africa and abroad. The discussion comprises the problem statement, objectives and research questions,

followed by a theoretical framework. Further sections focus on the methodological considerations and ethical practices that I adhered to.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

GBV has been described as a "second pandemic" (Ellis, 2020) in Southern Africa. With a growing body of research in South Africa and abroad (Barkhuizen, 2015; Dzinavane, 2016; Mahlori *et al.*, 2018; Medie, 2019; Mpani & Nsibande, 2015; Mpondo *et al.*, 2019; Stats SA, 2017; Thobejane *et al.*, 2018) and policies centred on GBV, the phenomenon is largely understood from the male-inflicting-harm-on-female standpoint (Kempen, 2019). The concept of GBV is thought of and perceived as having various meanings and interpretations of what constitutes its main features. These interpretations and conceptualisations differ in respect of the forms of violence they address and according to the specific need and interests of the humanitarian or social action. Generally, according to the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (as cited in Kempen, 2019:16), GBV is defined as "violence that is directed against a person on the basis of their gender".

1.2.1 Defining gender-based violence

This form of violence violates and denies a person their fundamental right to life, their freedom and sense of security due to their gender (Inter-Agency Standing Committee [IASC], 2005:1). GBV, as defined by the IASC (2005), is "an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will, and that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between males and females". This definition – constituting the legal, physical and psychological-related components of GBV – is broader than other definitions that assume that GBV affects *only* women. According to Bloom (2008:14) and researchers of the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) (2016:3) in South Africa, GBV, in general, can be defined as the type of violence that occurs because of each gender being expected to perform certain normative roles within the confines of unequal power relationships between men and women in the context of a specific society (O'Neill, 2015). Furthermore, GBV, as defined by the United States Government (2016:6), concurs with the preceding conceptualisations: i.e., GBV is regarded as violence that is instigated against a person based on their biological sex, identity, and based on notions of masculinity and

femininity as stipulated by society. This violence includes, among others, physical, psychological and sexual abuse, verbal threats and economic deprivation, which is likely to occur in private and public spheres (CSVR, 2016:5; Tsui, 2014:121).

According to the CSVR (2016), one of the most common forms of GBV is *domestic violence* that usually occurs between intimate partners. This type of violence, according to Sigsworth (2009) and the Tswaranang Legal Advocacy Centre (2012, as cited in Safer Spaces, 2022) based in South Africa, involves actions of assault, husband or wife battery and sexual assault. Another form of GBV is *physical violence*. This type of violence includes, among others, acts of hitting, punching, kicking and pushing. Such violence may also be characterised by perpetrators often using knives and other sharp instruments when executing physical violence (Sigsworth 2009; Tshwaranang Legal Centre 2012). Further, physical abusers may often deny their victims access to services that are needed for survival and also force victims to engage in activities against their will. The third type of violence associated with GBV, according to Ludsin and Vetten (2005), is *emotional violence*. In this case, the perpetrator uses words/names and language/verbal connotations that undermine and belittle another person. Emotional violence entails actions that affect the victim's self-esteem, confidence and their sense of self, such as humiliation, disrespect and embarrassment (Ludsin & Vetten, 2005:18). Victims of GBV may also experience *economic violence*. This includes the perpetrator's control of the victim's assets and their access to finances and other economic resources (Slabbert & Green, 2013:240). Finally, the most common of these types of GBV is *sexual violence*, which involves rape, sexual harassment and other sexual advances that are forced upon the victim (Mathews, 2010; UNHCR, 2008:201; Vetten, 2003).

The most widely known interpretation associated with understandings of GBV is the violence that men perpetrate against women and girls. According to the United Nations (1993), GBV against women can be defined as follows:

> *…any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life. It encompasses, but is not limited to, 'physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family,*

including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation; physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere; trafficking in women and forced prostitution; and physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the state, wherever it occurs.'

Furthermore, Mashiri and Mawire (2013:97) define GBV as "a form of violence to which girls and women are subjected primarily because of their female gender identity". According to Mashiri and Mawire (2013:97), women's high vulnerability to violent acts perpetrated by men is because of the organised discrimination stemming from the rationalised gendered power relations that present a universalised arrangement of subordination. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) concurs with the preceding definition. CEDAW defines GBV as violence that is directed towards women because of being female, or violence that affects women to an excessive extent (Spring *et al.*, 2010:356). According to Medie (2019), a study conducted in 2009 showed that the mortality rate due to GBV in South Africa exceeded the rates of countries such as America, Canada and the United Kingdom. In 2017, 69% of women were killed in Africa by their partners.

With South Africa being considered a country that has the highest rate of GBV in the world (Mpani & Nsibande, 2015:6), coupled with recent murders and rapes in 2019,[1] movements have arisen in the country to address the vulnerability of women and to help address the seriousness of GBV. One of these movements was a protest that took place at the Cape Town International Convention Centre on 4 September 2019. The main reason for the protest was the death of 19-year-old Uyinene Mrwetyana, a South African woman who was raped and murdered after a visitation to a post office in

[1] The 2019 murders included the murder of the 19-year-old UCT student Uyinene Mrwetyana who was raped and killed in the Clareinch Post office, Cape Town; and Precious Ramabulana, a 21-years old Capricorn TVET College student who was stabbed 52 times and sexually assaulted in her rented room in Limpopo.

Cape Town. Following this protest, movements such as #AmINext, #JustNo, #EnoughIsEnough and #MenAreTrash arose across the country, with women expressing fear for their lives and with the call to reinstate the death penalty as potential measure to end GBV against women (Kempen, 2019:16).

According to Mahlori *et al.* (2018:1) and the South African Department of Social Development (2014:16), GBV against women is caused by gender imbalances, unequal economic privileges, lack of sufficient legislation and norms and standards that further exacerbate their victimisation. Owing to women being biologically perceived as lacking in physical strength, limited in decision-making power and resources, and cultural and patriarchal notions that view them as inferior to men (Kumar, 2012:291), they become more vulnerable to violence (Dzinavane, 2016). Thus, men often use violence as an indication of the normative standards of being authoritative to sustain respect and reinforce their patriarchal power (Enaifoghe, 2019:16).

In keeping with the discussion on GBV directed towards women, it was my main objective to investigate how men may also be subjected to similar modes of violence in contemporary society. This is addressed in the next subsection.

1.2.2 GBV directed towards men

According to Gathogo (2015:3), violence against men can manifest in different ways. This includes, among others:

> *…slapping; pouring hot water while the victim is asleep, and in areas mostly hidden by clothes; chopping men's genitals; verbal insults; insulting the partner in front of children; slashing; pouring petrol over men and setting them on fire. In addition, whipping, throwing chairs, benches, stools, using utensils to attack the partner, as well as other objects in the house, especially after serious disagreement with the man.*

As gendered-violence awareness increases in South Africa with particularly women considered as sole victims (Tsui, 2014:121), men continue to occupy a marginal position when it comes to being considered as victims of such violence. These risks perpetuate a skewed view of reality and in so doing, silence these men's voices as it

relates to their vulnerability to violence perpetrated by women or intimate partners (Tsui, 2014). According to Perryman and Appleton (2016:386), GBV has, as noted, been largely understood from the standpoint of women as victims and men as perpetrators. With a substantial number of studies and policies focusing on GBV against women (e.g., Kempen, 2019; Medie, 2019; Mpondo *et al.*, 2019; Stats SA, 2017; World Health Organization [WHO], 2013), some studies have shown, however, that men also fall victim to GBV at the hands of women (Barkhuizen, 2015; Hogan et al., 2022; Gathogo, 2015; Kgatle et al., 2021; Kumar, 2012; Perryman and Appleton, 2016; Thobejane *et al.*, 2018; Tilbrook *et al.*, 2010). Regardless of the latter studies, GBV against men is mainly ignored or is not given the necessary attention (Barkhuizen, 2015:291). This is attributed to the fact that the topic has not been broadly explored and reported on, and male victims are afforded little support from healthcare professionals and the justice system as it relates to GBV (Tsui *et al.*, 2010:770). This has several implications: firstly, there is an underestimation of the level of abuse experienced by men at the hands of their partners (Kumar, 2012:293); secondly, there is a lack of understanding of the phenomenon of GBV as it relates to male victims (Thobejane *et al.*, 2018:2); and finally, it exacerbates the lack of awareness regarding the lived reality of men experiencing GBV (Hlavka, 2017:483; Litman, 2003:772).

Most of debates about the GBV discourse have depended on perspectives of whether male victims of GVB exist, whether support is required, and whether GBV against men can be categorised as a social problem (Lucal, 1994:95). Various scholars have discussed the prevalence of GBV among men in western and African countries. According to Gubi and Wandera (2022:2), the global prevalence of GBV and/or intimate partner violence among men has been estimated at seventeen percent (17%). According to the BBC News (2018), GBV cases reported by male victims in Scotland, amounted to 19.3 % in 2018, while in the US, 29% of men reported falling victim to GBV in 2013 (Heavey, 2013). Furthermore, Swedish studies were conducted that focused on self-reported exposure to intimate partner violence among men and women, wherein one of the studies reported 8% of men having experienced intimate partner violence annually, a finding similar that of women (Nybergh *et al.*, 2013).

According to Mphatheni and Mlamla (2022:63), with a few studies having explored GBV against men on the African continent, the statistics do not necessarily provide an

accurate reflection of the prevalence of GBV directed towards men. Mphatheni and Mlamla (2022) further allude to the troubling finding that incidences of wives beating their husbands, has increased at an alarming rate in African countries such as Kenya, Uganda, South Africa, Nigeria, Malawi, and Swaziland (cf. Kubai, 2014). The Ugandan study of Gubi and Wandera (2022) focused on the prevalence of intimate partner violence among married men. They reported that 44% of these men experienced some form of GBV and/or intimate partner violence at the hands of their wives; a finding echoed among Kenyan male victims (Gateri *et al*., 2021). According to Obarisiagbon and Omage (2019), some communities in Nigeria, for example, consider men who cannot defend themselves as weaklings. This, according to Gateri *et al.* (2021:89), may be attributed to traditional African culture's denial of the existence of GVB against men due to the fear of losing male integrity. GBV, therefore, is mainly (or only) considered as women's problem.

With much research focusing on GBV against women, it is important and significant to acknowledge the impact that GBV has on both women *and* men. Therefore, to heed calls for an equal society for all persons, regardless of their gender, research related to GBV should include foci on the experiences of men and women – not favouring one to the detriment of the other – as it relates to empirical research or support (Thobejane, 2015:2).

Some social science scholars and activists consider South Africa, like many other African countries, as a patriarchal society that favours male dominance, particularly along the lines of masculinity, where men are socialised to exude an invulnerable, powerful and dominant persona (Barkhuizen, 2015:294; Gathogo, 2015; Gennrich, 2013; Kumar, 2012:291). Proponents of patriarchy are of the opinion that men have power over women and society should be organised in a manner that preserves men's dominance over women (Gennrich, 2013:6). Masculinity, according to Gennrich (2013:6), is generally defined as what it means to be a man. Connotations or adages such as "a man does not cry" and "a man is the provider and is in control" (Gathogo, 2015:3; Thobejane *et al.*, 2018:5) are used to describe an ideal or a strong man who, in this sense, is not susceptible to GBV or is not likely to experience domestic abuse. These notions and normative expectations of masculinity have become a "cocoon" that promotes the invisibility of male victims of GBV (Clarfelt, 2014:2; George, 2002:118)

and potentially hinders men from disclosing their vulnerability to GBV because of the fear that they might be considered as weak, effeminate and gay. For instance, men who are sexually abused, may face social stigmatisation rooting from cultural norms that contribute to a sense of shame for these victims (Kumar, 2012:292). Thus, victimisation of men become less understood, as it is perceived to contradict the cultural narratives of what manhood entails – these being displays of strength, power and control (Connell, 2005; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Sabo, 2003). According to an Australian study of Tilbrook *et al.* (2010) on intimate partner abuse of men, participants reported being "smashed until covered in blood", being held by an earlobe and a portion of it sliced off, being hit by a pan, and being thrown with large objects by their female partners. Furthermore, in another Australian study conducted by Walker *et al.* (2019:4) on men's experiences of intimate partner violence, participants stated that their partners threatened to kill them. For example, some participants noted "[m]y wife threatened to kill me and my family" and "[s]he punched me in the face, kicked me and drove a car toward me" (as cited in Walker *et al.*, 2019:4).

Gathogo's (2015) research on male battering as the new form of domestic violence in Kenya indicated that 15% of participants attributed violence against men to a man's failure to provide for the family. In a South African study undertaken in Limpopo, which centred on experiences of domestic abuse of men (Thobejane *et al.*, 2018), the male participants reported having suffered insults (i.e., verbal abuse), not being allowed to see their children after the couple had separated, and even reported being stalked by their partners. The reasons behind these acts of abuse, according to participants in the study, were related to their partner's insecurities about issues of infidelity, jealousy, the partner's level of education and their job/work status (Thobejane *et al.*, 2018:12).

Male victims of GBV are less likely to report incidents of abuse (Kumar, 2012:294). This results from fears of experiencing a sense of shame. In an American study of Fink (2006) on intimate partner violence, about 7.6% of males were affected by intimate partner violence. Findings showed that 91% of participants stated experiencing physical violence in their relationships, with equivalent occurrences of perpetration and victimisation of both men and women. According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (as cited in Neeley-Bertrand, 2010), one out of four men have experienced physical assault perpetrated by either their current partner, wife or former

partner. Furthermore, close to 835 000 men are abused by their partners every year in the US (Tsui, 2014:121). Neeley-Bertrand (2010) attributes the reason for male victims not reporting abuse to the relevant authorities to the belief that abuse is a personal issue that they need to deal with privately. Another reason is that these men believe that authorities would not necessarily consider their cases due to the stigma that only women experience GBV and not men (Neeley-Bertrand, 2010). According to Thobejane *et al.* (2018), in a recent South African study on the muted realities of men who are victims of GBV, the male participants reported not taking the matter to relevant authorities due to the stigma attached to a man who reports being battered or abused by a woman. Some participants reported that they could not report the abuse because of a religious notion that "couples seek the face of God rather than to wash their dirty linen in public" (Thobejane *et al.*, 2018:12). Some of these men reported that they feared losing their social hierarchal status (Gathogo, 2015:4) and being ridiculed by both authorities and society (Tsui, 2014:128). They, therefore, had to preserve their male egos and protect themselves from such an embarrassment (Barkhuizen, 2015:300; Kumar, 2012:292; Thobejane *et al.*, 2018:12).

In keeping with the preceding references to patriarchal ideologies, Scarce (1997) and West (2000) argue that survivors of GBV indicated that social expectations about masculinity act as a barrier to disclosing their victimhood because of the fear of being viewed as effeminate, being labelled as gay and also considered as weak (Hlavka, 2017). This, according to Hlavka (2017:482), is due to masculine narratives and practices that socialise boys and men to be powerful, impenetrable and invulnerable. Furthermore, men are positioned as perpetrators and sexual aggressors and women as victims. Thus, to view men as victims may contradict dominant heteronormative discourses of sexual assault and risk. Cultural discourses about gender and sexual offenses may have an impact on how the victims view and define their experiences of GBV. It is these notions and myths about gender and sexuality that influence views on *who* can and cannot be a victim of rape and other forms of GBV (Hlavka, 2017).

As such, one of the barriers that restrict men from reporting GBV is the fear that the police and other law enforcements would not believe that they experienced such violence and that the abuse was perpetrated against their female counterparts by *them* instead (Barkhuizen, 2015; Douglas *et al.*, 2012; Drijber *et al.*, 2013; Hines & Douglas,

2009; Shuler, 2010; Tsui, 2014; Tsui *et al.*, 2010). Different countries have varied factors that contribute to male victims' inability to report GBV to the police or the justice systems. In a country such as the Netherlands (Drijber *et al.*, 2013), for example, men do not report GBV to the justice system because there is no belief that the system would come to their aid. In a study done in the UK, Hall (2012:40) found that men who are victims of the violence perpetrated by women are ignored by the justice system and women tend to be released from police detention shortly after their arrest.

Moreover, research conducted by Cook (2009) and Hines *et al.* (2007) reflected on the experiences of male victims who sought help for GBV perpetrated by their partners. According to interviews conducted by Cook (2009) among men who had experienced different kinds of GBV at the hands of their female partners, these men tended to face various challenges. These included that those men who tried calling GBV hotlines for assistance were informed that help could be rendered to only women and that they, as men, possibly were the actual perpetrators of GBV, as noted above. Other male victims stated that when seeking help from the police, the latter failed to respond due to the noted reasons. Other men reported being ridiculed by the police officers (Douglas & Hines, 2011:2).

Furthermore, in a study conducted in South Africa with five male victims, the men reported that violence against them was trivialised and was not considered an issue worthy of further attention (Barkhuizen, 2015:301). A male victim, for example, reported that the police did not respond to allegations of GBV inflicted by women (Barkhuizen, 2015:299). Barkhuizen continues to argue that women perpetrators often claim to be the ones who are being abused and the police, consequently, tend to believe them and not the men. According to Barkhuizen (2015:301), the "…fact that so many people in general, including some academics and government officials, are so unwilling to accept the unilateral abuse of men by women, is testimony to the deep-rooted stereotypes which are accepted by society". Barkhuizen (2015:301) further alludes to the fact that it is the lack of sensitisation through training that has resulted in and further reinforces the stigma around men and masculinity, thus causing and fuelling secondary victimisation by the police and justice officials. Examples include male victims of GBV reporting experiencing physical abuse (Hines & Douglas, 2010;

Mills *et al.*, 2006), although they did not report GBV after-effects on their physical health (Coker *et al.*, 2008; Reid *et al.*, 2008).

According to Afifi *et al.* (2009) and Coker *et al*. (2008), men who sustained physical injury and psychological abuse were more likely to resort to substance abuse and using these substances as therapeutic measures or methods. In so doing, they left their physical health indirectly compromised. The police reports from three police regions/districts (Kalmar, Växjö and Blekinge) in Sweden (cited in Storey & Strand, 2012) indicate that GBV victims have shown to have problems related to the abnormal use of substances, employment challenges and mental health setbacks. Findings that were consistent with the above arguments report that victims suffered stress and psychological harm (Afifi *et al.*, 2009; Coker *et al.*, 2008; Douglas & Hines, 2011; Hines *et al.*, 2007; Houry *et al.*, 2008; Prospero & Kim, 2009; Reid *et al.*, 2008), including depression (Reid *et al.*, 2008) and developing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Hines *et al*., 2007; Houry *et al.*,2008; Prospero, 2007; Tsui,2014:128).

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

As is evident from the preceding orientation and background, research shows that it is less common for men who are victims of GBV to seek help than it is for women (Andrews *et al.*, 2001). According to Kessler *et al.* (1994), this becomes a concern because men may be at increased risk of resorting to substance abuse as a solution and are likely to commit suicide. Dominant social and cultural notions and stereotypes associated with hegemonic masculinity further inhibit the acceptance of male behaviours that portray men as vulnerable and weak (e.g., reporting abuse or seeking help) (Pederson & Vogel, 2007). “Public stigma” is another barrier that has been noted to contribute to men’s silence about their vulnerabilities. This refers to the negative perceptions held by society towards those to opt to seek help (Vogel *et al.*, 2011). According to Vogel *et al.* (2011:369) men tend to internalise public stigma, resulting in self-stigmatisation. Writing from an American perspective, Vogel *et al.* (2011) define self-stigmatisation as “the internalisation of negative views of society towards seeking help” and believing that one is inferior and weak for seeking help. Therefore, researchers argue that when there are high levels of public stigma, one is prone to develop high levels of self-stigma, and this may result in negative connotations associated with seeking help and reporting male abuse (Vogel *et al.*, 2007).

According to an activist for “men’s rights” in a study of Kimmel (1994), GBV in the form of domestic violence exhibits what is called a “gender symmetry”. This presents a holistic view that both men and women should be seen as victims of violence. The argument raised by this activist for “men’s rights” is that policies and policymakers have placed an exclusive focus on women as victims of GBV, thus ignoring or underestimating the effects of GBV against men. Therefore, it is argued that GBV should be viewed as a problem shared by men *and* women (Kimmel, 1994).

In their South African study on men’s invisibility in the South African violence prevention policies, national prioritisation and male vulnerability, Van Niekerk *et al.* (2015) identified discrepancies and limitations in South African legislative documents. The different types of documents they analysed included the White Paper on Safety and Security (2015), White Paper 8 on Corrections in South Africa (SAPS) (2005), the Domestic Violence Act (1998), and the Sexual Offences Amendment Act document (1998). Their analysis revealed that limited emphasis was placed on men as victims or being vulnerable. Findings showed an emphasis on the vulnerabilities of selected groups, such as women and children, and although very important, given the cultural climate in, among others, South Africa on GBV directed towards the latter groups, a focus on similar forms of violence towards men and reasons for their vulnerability are negated (Van Niekerk *et al.*, 2015).

Numerous studies have been conducted on GBV, both abroad and in South Africa, which mainly focused on women’s victimisation and men as perpetrators and challenging patriarchal notions (including, among others, CSVR, 2016; Mesatywa, 2014; Ponton, 2002). Thobejane (2014) focused on re-envisioning the fight against patriarchy, where he argues for a stronger feminist movement to diminish women’s oppression in patriarchal gender relations. However, GBV, as it relates to men as victims and how patriarchal notions of masculinity may be producing “cocooned men” whose views are not considered as it relates to experiences of GBV, has not been largely explored within the South African context. Studies that closely relate to this topic have mainly involved foci on GBV experienced by young boys (Clarfelt, 2014; Thobejane, 2018, 2014) and police reaction to male victims of domestic violence (Barkhuizen, 2015).

The objective of this study was, therefore, to undertake an in-depth sociological exploration of issues concerning GBV directed towards South African men and how this may in fact be based on patriarchal notions of masculinities. In addition, the study sought to explore how civil society could also play an active role in providing a holistic approach to deal with GBV in order to create a safer environment where both men and women's issues related to GBV are equally considered beyond the constraints of heteronormativity or patriarchy. This is done to, among others, make recommendations on how these issues can be addressed, how policymakers can contribute to addressing and developing initiatives to further educate societies and give attention to GBV faced by men. Regarding latter, this study is significant because not only may it raise awareness and establish understanding of GBV as experienced by men, but it may also prove to be significant in the development and reviewing process of South African policies relating to GBV to include men *and* women.

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

This section outlines the research objectives.

1.4.1 Research objectives

The general research objective was **to explore the lived experiences of South African men who are or have been the victims of gender-based violence (GBV) in marital or intimate relationships**.

The **specific research objectives** were as follows:

- to identify and contextualise the contributions of the broader academic theories and literature on GBV against men as it relates to patriarchy and masculinity, including hegemonic masculinities as the central theoretical argument;
- to discuss the relevant research design and methodology for the empirical study;
- to define the concept of GBV based on the empirical narratives of the male participants;
- to identify and discuss the factors that contribute to the vulnerability of South African men as it relates to GBV;

- to explore the forms of GBV experienced by South African men;
- to discuss the possible reasons for and challenges faced by South African male victims' underreporting of GBV;
- to discuss the consequences of GBV for the construction and enactment of masculinity by the participants;
- to identify and make recommendations related to policy formulations to address GBV in South African society.

1.4.2 Research questions

The general research question was follows: "**What are the lived experiences of South African men who are or have been the victims of gender-based violence (GBV) in marital or intimate relationships**?"

The **specific research questions** were follows:

- What are the contributions of the broader academic theories and literature on GBV against men as it relates to patriarchy and masculinity, including hegemonic masculinities as the central theoretical argument?
- What is the relevant research design and methodology for the empirical study?
- How do the male participants of the present study define the concept of GBV?
- What are the factors that make men more vulnerable to GBV in South Africa?
- What forms of GBV are experienced by men due to their potential vulnerability to GBV in South Africa?
- What are the possible reasons for and challenges faced by male victims' underreporting of GBV in South Africa?
- What are the possible consequences of GBV for the construction and enactment of men's masculinity?

- What are the recommendations related to policy formulations to address GBV in South African society?

1.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Given the background of the challenges and issues faced by male victims of GBV, the study's central theoretical argument is informed by a critical reflection of Raewyn Connell's (1987, 2005) theory of hegemonic and subordinate masculinities. This reflection involves critically engaging this perspective in a South African context to explore its applicability to said context (i.e., avoiding a mere monolithic view of masculinity as per Western theorisation).

Hegemonic masculinity is considered a sociological construct, with its basic principles and nature descending or stemming from Antonio Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony, which seeks to explain power in relation to social classes (Everitt-Penhale & Ratele, 2015:7). The concept of hegemony denotes the changing aspects of culture through which certain social groups lead, sustain and maintain dominant positions in the social structure. The concept seeks to elucidate the reason behind the maintenance of dominant social roles by men over women and other identities that may be seen as feminine in a particular society (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005:831, Everitt-Penhale & Ratele, 2015:7). Connell (2005) defines hegemonic masculinity as a practice in which the dominance of men in society is legitimised and women (as well as men who do not conform to set standards) are justified as the subordinates. In its conceptual phase, hegemonic masculinity embodied a culturally based idea of what it means to be a man (Kupers, 2005; Morrell *et al*., 2012:24). According to Donaldson (1993), this notion depended on a view that advocated for a display of a violent nature, toughness, emotionally restraint and economic success; this reinforced male dominance as socially and hierarchically superior to any other gender and sexual identity or expression. Hence, according to Connell (1987), hegemonic masculinity is a type of masculinity that is viewed as dominant and commendable within a given society and can be used to describe an "ideal man" (Gennrich, 2013:6). Jewkes and Morrell (2012:40), writing from a South African perspective, recently described hegemonic masculinity as follows:

> *…a set of values, established by men in power that functions to include and exclude, and to organise society in gender unequal ways. This type of society brings different features into play: a hierarchy of masculinities, differential access among men to power (power over women and minority groups of men), and the relations between men's identities, men's ideals, interaction, power and patriarchy.*

This concept (hegemonic masculinity) – widely used, debated and reviewed over the years – can be used as a tool for analysing the specific roles and attitudes of men that preserve gender inequality, specifically men's power over so-called subordinate men and women (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005:832). Hegemonic masculinity has also been understood as an institutionalised gender arrangement that results in unique limitations and challenges affecting both women and men. According to Mahalik *et al.* (2003:23), masculinity is socially and culturally perceived. The concept has also been used to denote conservative and stereotypical tenets of masculinity and the dominance of "acceptability norms" of gendered performance of men (Davies & Eagle, 2007:66). It is used to refer to norms of masculine performance and how men present themselves, customs or standards in which masculinity is portrayed (Mfecane, 2008). These performances of masculinity are culturally informed and bound. The norms and role expectations often pressure some men to conform to these hegemonic masculinity ideals and standards. Men and women are expected to perform and adhere to certain roles and norms relevant to a specified society. Men who are socialised into a society that upholds patriarchal attitudes and norms may be expected to uphold the cultural or society's notions of masculinity (Heilman & Barker, 2018:9; Mkhwanazi, 2012:80; Morrell *et al.*, 2012:20). The preceding statements can be linked to the work of Judith Butler (1990). In her much-lauded work *Gender Trouble,* Butler (1990) argues that gender performance entails a "stylised repetition of acts". These acts are an imitation of the dominant gendered conventions prescribed by society. This means that these performed acts that people are socialised into are acts that have been socially established and constructed and then became a form of legitimation regarding how one "ought" to act and perform certain roles in accordance with one's supposed gender (Butler, 1990:140).

Such performances are reinforced by primary and secondary gender-role socialisation agents. For example, consider how, from an early age, young boys are socialised through the use of verbal appellations, including “men don’t cry”, “you are a naughty boy”, “be a man” and “don’t act like a wimp, [or] sissy” (Hlavka, 2017:484), men are providers and self-sufficient, aggressive, they are “strong/powerful” (Gennrich, 2013:6) and controlled (Thobejane *et al.*, 2018:5; Vogel *et al.*, 2011:369). These appellations and roles, according to Oakley (1974), lead to the identification of boys with their gender and also shape their behaviours as adults. This maintains male dominance and “female subservience”. This very system and notions of how men should practice dominance in relation to women and other men have an impact on how they respond to issues regarding their health (e.g., seeking help when experiencing abuse) and quality of life. George (1994:137) argues that issues about victimisation of men are not broadly explored or focused on due to the threat they pose to the self-image of masculinity instead of continued reinforcement of the vulnerability of women and the dominance, authority and protectiveness of men. Men who exude any behaviour or attitude that falls outside these pre-existing hegemonic or patriarchal norms and roles may be considered a threat to the patriarchal authority of men (Allen, 2004:7; Kimmel, 2005) and thus can be categorised under what Connell (2005) calls “subordinate masculinity”. Hegemonic masculinity and heterosexuality are compulsory in that both are assumed to be natural and expected (Rich, 1980; Schippers, 2007) and anything outside of that model might consign boys and men to deviant or stigmatised identities (Goffman, 1967; Hlavka, 2017; Ralston, 2012). This is a type of masculinity in which men display qualities that are in opposition to those that are highly regarded in hegemonic masculinity, for example, expressing or articulating emotions such as sadness, or portraying a physical weakness (Connell, 1987:186).

According to Connell (2005:78), subordinate masculinities focus on any political and cultural exclusion and violence to dominate another masculine group. Subordinate masculinities, according to Howson (2006:63), can be associated with deviancy and tend to challenge the dominance of hegemonic principles. This type of masculinity has been used to refer to, among others, gay men, as they are thought to be deviating from the pre-existing hegemonic principles. Furthermore, this form of subordination includes practices of physical and psychological violence, punishment, social and cultural exclusion, and humiliation (Gomez, 2007:121; Thobejane *et al.*, 2018:8). Considering

this, men who deviate from the hegemonic principles are then regarded as weak, effeminate (mostly associated with homosexuality or metrosexuality), they are not “man enough”, and often get humiliated by people in society. Male victims of GBV are then construed as, for example, subordinate males, with the aim to emasculate them and thus decrease their social status and standing.

It can be deduced from the preceding precepts that these stereotypes and social perspectives of what a man ‘should act’ or behave like may be one of the main reasons why male victims of GBV remain silent and deny being abused (Thobejane *et al.*, 2018:8). This fear of men not wanting to be labelled as gay may, according to Anderson (2009:96), be associated with what is called homohysteria. Homohysteria can be defined as the fear of being given a label associated with homosexuality or being socially perceived as gay. The conceptualisation of this term originated as part of inclusive masculinity theory (IMT) (Anderson, 2009:96). The concept of homohysteria has been used to understand the impact of homophobia on gendered behaviours or performance and to further understand how homophobia can be used to police the behaviours of heterosexual men (Anderson & McCormack, 2018:548; McCormack & Anderson, 2014:153). According to McCormack (2011:80), to avoid potential stigmatisation of these men as gay and to affirm their masculinity and heterosexuality in society, men tend to refrain from any behaviours that are traditionally associated with homosexuality and femininity, such as displaying overt emotions and affection.

Furthermore, Anderson *et al.* (2018) argue that the levels of homohysteria and homophobia in societies are prone to change over time. This change may be driven by sociocultural and legislative processes, for example, in a society where there is an inclusion of homosexuality in the constitution and legislation, the majority of people have positive perceptions of homosexuality and recognise homosexuality as a distinct sexual identity; homophobia is likely to decrease and become less effective in policing behaviours (McCormack & Anderson, 2014:153; O’Neill, 2015:104). In these settings, various masculinities may be allowed, other than hegemonic expectations associated with masculinity, and men may be allowed to perform their unique masculine identity (e.g., inclusive and gay masculinities). These societies may move from an overemphasis on or social sanctioning of homophobia (societies where the rejection of diversity is eminent while emphasising heteromasculinity and femininity as ways of

affirming one's heterosexuality) to inclusive societies where, even with the existence of some level of homophobia, positive attitudes may prevail and the acceptance of gender diversity becomes normalised (McCormack & Anderson, 2014:154).

Although Connell (2005) contends that there are multiple masculinities, of which hegemonic masculinity is one, it has remained dominant in certain countries. To address this, Anderson (2009) proposes a focus on his noted "inclusive masculinities" to explain the social process of the rise of a type of masculinity that critiques the main tenants of hegemonic masculinity (Anderson, 2005). Inclusive masculinity theory has been used and continues to be used to highlight changes in the relationships and levels of emotionality among men. According to Borkowska (2018:3), the inclusive masculinity perspective moves away from the hierarchical order of social relations where men mainly conform to hegemony and mainly enact orthodox and traditional ideologies of manhood. It directs its focus to multiple masculinities; these masculinities can coincide without the supposed dominance of a particular masculinity over the other or aiming to establish hegemonic relationships (Borkowska, 2018:3). Men who identify with inclusive masculinity, while rejecting hegemonic masculinity and many of its precepts, are considered to be socially liberated in the expression of their attitudes and are more likely to willingly portray and embrace behavioural patterns that are supposedly stigmatised (e.g., subordinate masculinities). According to Anderson and McGuire (2010:251), in a society where extreme homophobia is present, one standard or embodiment of masculinity will thrive. However, in the case where homophobia is challenged, varied typologies of masculinity could co-exist in a non-stratified way (Anderson, 2009).

Another critique levelled against hegemonic masculinity is its reduction of the significance of issues concerning power and domination, thus becoming blurred and uncertain in its meaning or conceptualisation (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005:836). The concept is argued to be non-realist, or it is not reality-based because it contradicts its own precepts and notions, and its reliance on flawed and negative conceptualisation of masculinity or ignorance of the positive aspects of masculinity makes it unpragmatic (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005:838). It has also been considered flawed because it tends to essentialise the nature of men and masculinity, giving a false and monolithic unitary view of what both entail, which, in short, contradicts the 'reality' of men

(Christensen & Qvotrup Jensen, 2014:62; Hearn, 2004:59). This concept is also criticised for being grounded in the heteronormative perspective on gender that essentialises the male to female difference, thus ignoring the possibilities of exclusion within these categories. Masculinity should not be fixed; they should rather be more fluid, because masculinities will always differ according to gender relations and social settings. Hegemonic masculinity only addresses one type of masculinity that focuses on one set of dominating ideals. For instance, Morrell *et al.* (2012:22) allude to the fact that hegemonic masculinity has been considered to be the same as or equated with the exercise of violence and control over women and other men. Therefore, the synonymous use of hegemonic masculinity with violence and control has resulted in the loss of hegemonic masculinity's fluidity and may no longer be regarded as representing a set of cultural ideals that can be constructed, endorsed and challenged; its association with violence and control posits hegemonic masculinity as fixed to exclusion of the complexities of diverse and contending types of masculinity. This study sought uncover the way in which inclusive masculinity and hegemonic masculinity, in relation to GBV directed towards men, may be organised in South Africa and how this may reinforce the difficulty associated with men being able (or not) to report on or speak about their personal experiences as victims of GBV.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY[2]

This subsection focuses on the sampling procedures, the approaches that were used to collect and analyse data, and the ontological and epistemological approaches as the basis for the research design and techniques. Owing to the empirical nature of the study, the data collection and analysis methods that were used in this study are clearly documented and justified. To ensure research integrity and adherence to good research practices, a discussion of the ethical considerations concludes the subsection.

For the purpose of this study, the ontological approach (social constructionism) was used in conjunction with the epistemological approach (interpretivism). Both approaches, according to Hoffman (1990:1), aim to "replac[e] the objectivist ideal with

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[2] A detailed discussion of the research design and methodology is provided in chapter 4.

a broad tradition of on-going criticism in which all production of the human mind are concerned" and are linked to the central theoretical argument's focus on hegemonic masculinity theory. These approaches allowed me to investigate the subjectively unique ways in which the male participants experienced and actively constructed and reconstructed their experiences as men through social interaction and self-reflexivity (cf. Bryman, 2016: 29; Creswell, 2009:8; Slevitch, 2011:77; Tuli, 2010:100). Through this study, I sought to inductively explore and provide a thick descriptive account of the interpretation of the participants based on their personal views, values and interests to gain a better understanding of GBV against men.

Moreover, for this study, an explorative qualitative research design was used to provide thick descriptions (Jarbandhan & Schutte, 2006:672) of men's views on issues regarding GBV as it relates to male victims in Johannesburg. The study was inductive in nature and sought to formulate and build new theories. Qualitative research is an ideal design for researchers who endeavour to discover and learn about participants' lived experiences, the meaning they attach to a phenomenon or action, and how they subjectively interpret their experiences (Tuli, 2010:100). Therefore, the strength of this design is that it allows room for discovery and prioritises the voice of the participant (Lune & Berg, 2017:20). Furthermore, the qualitative approach is concerned with the holistic understanding of the human's lived experiences in specified settings – for example, in this study, the focus was on exploring the experiences of men as victims of GBV at the hands of their partners in marriage or cohabiting relationships. This project was informed by a deductive (using reference of the existing literature on the phenomenon being explored) and an inductive (using empirical data collected to formulate and build new theories) approach. For this study, existing literature on GBV and masculinities was cited along with the data collected to inductively foreground new insights into GBV.

The participant group in this study consisted of 10 self-identified biological males who were or had been victims of GBV or intimate partner violence in South African domestic settings. Their age, social class, nationality, gender identity, sexual orientation and race were not exhaustive criteria in the selection process. This emphasises the importance of providing an intersectional focus on the narratives of the participants. Participants were selected using the non-probability sampling methods of purposive

and snowball sampling. The study employed the use of semi-structured interviews to obtain information based on questions posed in an interview schedule (Addendum D). Furthermore, considering the COVID-19 outbreak and in line with the North-West University (NWU) and South African Government's requirements to minimise contact between workers and between workers/researchers and the public to prevent transmission, I conducted telephone and video-conference interviews using Skype, Zoom, Google Hangouts, WhatsApp, and Vidyo. The interview schedule contained four sections: the first section covered biographical and employment background; and the second, third and fourth sections involved opinion-related questions (based on themes from the literature). The narratives from the interviews were transcribed and analysed through thematic and discourse analysis. Open and selective coding were used to code both the existing themes (theoretically engaged as part of chapters 2 and 3) and new themes from the data.

1.7 CHAPTER LAYOUT

Following chapter 1, the chapter layout of the thesis is as follows:

Chapter 2: Interrogating the notions of patriarchy and problematising hegemonic masculinities: a theoretical discussion

This chapter focuses on the relevant theories and literature review on GBV. Existing literature – for example, books, articles and journals focusing on GBV in South Africa – is discussed. Furthermore, the chapter engages the critical theoretical assumptions associated with hegemonic masculinity as a theoretical argument.

Chapter 3: Men's experiences of gender-based violence: A literature view

In this chapter, literature on the experiences of men subjected to GBV, both in South Africa and abroad, is provided. Here, primary emphasis is afforded to, among others, challenges faced by these men as well as how notions of masculinity play a role in reporting GBV.

Chapter 4: Research design and methodology

This chapter focuses on the use of the specific metatheoretical bases of the study, the research design, and methodological underpinnings and components used during the

research (i.e., sampling procedures, data collection methods, data analysis, and ethical considerations).

Chapter 5: Findings

This chapter provides an in-depth report on the research findings.

Chapter 6: Discussion of findings

I use this chapter to critically engage the research findings through an integration of the narratives of the participants and the central theoretical argument and literature discussed in chapters 2 and 3.

Chapter 7: Conclusion and recommendations

This chapter provides concluding remarks and recommendations

CHAPTER 2
INTERROGATING THE NOTIONS OF PATRIARCHY AND PROBLEMATISING HEGEMONIC MASCULINITIES: A THEORETICAL DISCUSSION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Consider the following as introductory thought to chapter 2:

> *She is obliged to do everything because I have paid ilobola. … Men are always considered as the head of the household while women are subordinates to men. Therefore, a woman is not allowed to equate her husband when it comes to household decision-making.* (Ratele *et al*., 2010:562)

Gender-based discrimination and violence are worldwide issues. Social and culturally defined roles, men and women's behavioural patterns and gendered responsibilities may contribute to inequalities and the respective experiences of men and women relating to GBV. If, for example, gender identities are informed by patriarchal and heteronormative ideologies in a particular society, men and women may enact said expectations to ensure their social inclusion in their respective cultural, work and familial contexts, among others. It is, therefore, imperative to understand how patriarchy informs our understanding of masculinity (or masculinities) in contemporary South African society – that is, whether we view it in a deterministic way or in terms of its multiplicity, inherent intricacies and shifting dynamics.

In this chapter, I discuss the theoretical dimensions of hegemonic masculinity theory (hereafter HMT) and patriarchy that tend to manifest in various forms of inequalities, inferiorities and the position of men and women in society, particularly along stratified lines.

2.2 HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY THEORY: A CONCEPTUALISATION

In this subsection, I introduce the main theoretical statement of the present study – that is, Raewyn Connell's (1987, 2005) theory of hegemonic and subordinate masculinities.

This reflection involves critically engaging this perspective in a South African context to explore its applicability here (thus, avoiding a mere monolithic view of masculinity as per Western theorisation).

Hegemonic masculinity, as sociological theory, stems from Antonio Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony, which elucidates power relations associated with particular social classes in society (Everitt-Penhale & Ratele, 2015:7). According to Gramsci (1971), cultural hegemony describes how the state and ruling capitalist class tend to use cultural or social institutions to preserve power in capitalist societies. According to Gramsci, the bourgeoisie develops a hegemonic culture using ideas as opposed to violence and physical intimidation. Hegemonic culture proliferates its own values and norms so that they become the common or universal values of all and therefore preserve the status quo (Cortes-Ramirez, 2015:124). Cultural hegemony is, therefore, used to sustain consensus with the capitalist order rather than the use of pressure to maintain order. This form of hegemony is produced and reproduced by dominant groups through the institutions that comprise the superstructure. The notion of hegemony signifies the changing aspects of culture through which there is leadership, sustenance and maintenance of positions in the social structure by certain social groups.

Applied to masculinity, the concept of hegemony seeks to explicate the motive behind the maintenance of dominant social roles by men over women and other gender and sexual identities that may be categorised as feminine in certain societies (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005:831; Everitt-Penhale & Ratele, 2015:7). According to Carrigan *et al*. (1985:592), hegemony is "the ability to impose a particular definition on other kinds of masculinity" – that is, a "valorised" ideal that people should aspire to emulate. This concept is used to explain how particular groups of men occupy positions of power and wealth and how they reproduce social relationships that maintain and preserve their dominance.

Addressing the fallacious use of HMT by others, Connell (2005) is of the opinion that HMT seeks to provide a contextualised view of masculinities as social constructs (i.e., characterised by multiple tenets that are in contestation). Segal (1993:635), among others, argues that a type of masculinity "gains its symbolic force and familiar status from a series of hierarchical relations to what it can subordinate". Morrell (1998:608)

further alludes to the fact that in addition to the oppression of women, hegemonic masculinity also seeks to subjugate so-called subordinate, marginal and complicit forms of masculinities, locating these in relation to itself such that other masculinities may not seem legitimate. Hegemonic masculinity, therefore, represents a supposed "valorised" and stoic ideology of how and what men should be – thus what it entails to be "real men" (Connell, 1987; Genrich, 2013:6; Kupers, 2005; Langa & Eagle, 2007:154; Morrell *et al.*, 2012:24). This notion, according to Donaldson (1993), depends on the understanding that encourages a demonstration of a violent nature, economic success, emotional restraint and toughness, which may lead to reinforcing male dominance as socially and hierarchically superior compared to any other gender and/or sexual identities or expressions (Graaff & Heinecken, 2017).

In her work on gender and power, Connell (1987:184) describes the term hegemony as follows:

> *… a social ascendancy achieved in a play of social forces that extends beyond contests of brute power into the organization of private life and cultural processes. Ascendancy of one group of men over another achieved at the point of a gun, or by the threat of unemployment, is not hegemony. Ascendancy, which is embedded in religious doctrine and practice, mass media content, wage structures, the design of housing, welfare/taxation policies and so forth, is.*

Dominant positions are thus attained through relative consent instead of the use of brute power, thus, the use of certain ideologies. Consent is built between those who benefit from the authorisation of masculinity, along with those who are oppressed by it, mostly women. Therefore, the *hegemonic* in "hegemonic masculinity" denotes cultural dynamics in which particular social groups claim and uphold dominant positions within a social order (Connell, 2005).

2.2.1 HMT and typologies: towards a vertical understanding of masculinities

Based on her work in *The Men and The Boys*, Connell (2013:2) stated how hegemonic masculinity may be recognised to say that a certain form of masculinity is hegemonic

means that it is culturally or socially exalted. Common stereotypical and culturally 'exalted' indicators of dominant (read a stoic application of hegemonic ideals) masculinity in South Africa, among others, include courage, fearlessness, and having "guts". Ratele (2010:21) argues that the pressure of wanting to be viewed as man enough and not fearful and anxious encourages young males to support the ideal that masculinity should be equated with an avoidance of physical and emotional pain and never walking away from a fight. Furthermore, for young Black men, successful masculinity may represent a "no fear" stance (Ratele, 2010:21).

According to Morrell *et al.* (2013:8), much of the early research on masculinities emphasised that violence is mainly associated with men. Though not all the research used the concept of hegemonic masculinity, it was characterised by the focus on men's power and how the power is used in violence, adding a new perspective to what had been considered as an obvious and taken-for-granted facet of men's behaviour. In some of its initial applications to the South African context, the concept of hegemonic masculinity was used to describe the nature, form and dynamics of male power (Morrell *et al*., 2013). Morrell (1994, 1998, 2001, 2013) referred to various masculinities that typify the typical hegemonic man. These typologies include "white" masculinity, which was represented in the political sphere and the dominance of the white ruling class; "African" masculinity which preserves masculinity through native institutions such as chiefship and communal land lease; and "black" masculinity that develops within the context of culturally diverse African communities. This application of the concept of masculinity diverged from the use associated with the dominance of one masculine ideal (Morrell *et al*., 2013). Therefore, for one form of masculinity to thrive, other forms must be marginalised (Borkowska, 2018:3), as per Connell's (2005) differentiation between *subordinate, marginalised* and *complicit masculinities* below.

Connell (2005:78) states that there are various masculinities that do not necessarily sustain one another. The notion of hegemonic masculinity explains the dynamics of how men tend to be in and acquire authoritative stances in relation to women and each other in society, albeit, in diverse and dynamic ways. As such, proponents of HMT critique the monolithic use of the theory. They emphasise the importance to acknowledge the inherent plurality among hegemonic masculinities (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Messerschmidt, 2019). Connell (2005:71), for example, notes

that “to the extent the term can be briefly defined at all, is simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of those practices in bodily experience, personality and culture” (cf. Rothmann, 2022).

Similarly, writing from a South African perspective, Jewkes and Morrell (2012:40) describe hegemonic masculinities as follows:

> *…a set of values, established by men in power that functions to include and exclude, and to organise society in gender unequal ways. This type of society brings different features into play: a hierarchy of masculinities, differential access among men to power (power over women and minority groups of men), and the relations between men’s identities, men’s ideals, interaction, power and patriarchy.*

Hegemonic masculinity, as a widely used and debated concept, can be used as an analysing tool for particular attitudes of men who are used to preserving gender inequality regarding men’s power over subordinate women *and* men (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005:832; Davies & Eagle 2007; Henderson & Shefer 2008:8; Langa & Eagle, 2007; Oxlund, 2007:61). This identity association seems to encompass a procedure of aligning with the hegemonic forms of masculinity and assuming hegemonic ideals as fundamental for the establishment and maintenance of an adequate masculine identity. Young men are also affiliated by other young men and women to this gendered and arguably “erotic” pyramid (cf. Rubin, 1993) that renders men either as being dominant, successful and desirable or as disregarded, stigmatised and deficient of social status (Mfecane, 2008; Morrell *et al*., 2013:10).

Three types of masculinities, according to Connell (2005), typify the non-ideal form of masculine expression: subordinate, marginal and complicit masculinities.

(a) Subordinate masculinities

Subordinate masculinities refer to men who are viewed as having a subservient or inferior masculinity. These men are thought to display qualities that are contrary to the ones highly esteemed in hegemonic masculinity, such as physical weakness and display of emotions like sadness or pain (Connell, 2005:78). Homosexual or more

effeminate men (e.g., metrosexual persons), among others, serve as an example of men who are considered to display a subordinate masculinity. Proponents of patriarchal thought argue that homosexuality and effeminacy are those “repositor[ies] of whatever symbolically [must be] expelled form hegemonic masculinity” (Connell, 2005:78). Therefore, in their view, homosexuality is mainly associated with femininity (Connell, 2005:78). For instance, according to Ratele (2013:4-6), gay masculinities are a visibly ostracised and subjugated manhood, which, relating to Africa in the last number of years, have particularly challenged heteropatriarchal politics (Epprecht, 2008; Usiwa-Usiwa, 2010). Marginal groups, like gay men, are seen as being oppositional to dominant forms of masculinity. Younger Black men (such as among the Xhosa), are often structurally silenced due to the prescriptions of their particular cultural teachings.

(b) Marginalised masculinities

Marginalised masculinities refer to a type of masculinity where men do not have access to hegemonic masculinity based on certain features that form part of their identity, for example, their race, class, and physical abilities (Connell, 2005:80). For instance, Black men as compared to White men: South African young Black men as a group tend have relatively limited opportunities to achieve the masculinity exalted by society and the body offers one of the few opportunities to portray masculine dominance (Ratele, 2013). Connell uses marginalisation to characterise the relations among men. Based on the intersection between their class and race with gender, their masculinities are co-constitutive of unique and context-specific practices. This, according to proponents of critical masculinity studies, represent examples of “many masculinities, each with a characteristic shape and set of features” (Morrell, 1998:607). The contours of these masculinities change over time, are affected by changes elsewhere in society and are at the same time affecting society itself. Within a single racial category, for example, there is not one single form of masculinity. Among Black persons, different masculinities with unequal social value exist. Nevertheless, these men still adhere to the norms that are underscored by hegemonic masculinity, such as violence, suppression of emotions like sadness, and physical strength (Connell, 2005). Black men are considered examples of marginalised masculinities due to, amongst others, skin colour, little or no income, level of education, nationality, and language (Connell,

2005:80). Gender may not be the only factor fundamental of the form that (subordinate young Black) manhood assumes (Ratele, 2013:6).

(c) Complicit masculinities

Complicit masculinities are masculinities where some men do not necessarily and fully conform to the tenets of hegemonic masculinity but still attempt to do so rather than challenging its ideals. In so doing, they accrue similar benefits for being a man and masculine. By conforming to and/or exuding the tenets of hegemonic masculinity, men become complicit in retaining and even reinforcing its dominance (Connell, 2005:79). This resonates with Bridges and Pascoe's (2018) work on hybrid masculinities. They noted that "hybrid masculinities" is the selective integration of elements of identity typically associated with various marginalised and subordinated masculinities and femininities into privileged men's gender performances and identities (cf. Arxer 2011; Demetriou, 2001). They maintain that the rise of hybrid masculinities shows that normative ideals associated with valorised masculinity are changing. These changes, however, do not necessarily extend to an overt critique of heteronormativity and hegemonic masculinity. These are, rather, sustained.

According to Thobejane (2012), conformity to notions of hegemonic masculinity may be a risk factor for men's experiences of depression. Men tend to compound the issue of depression by positioning themselves in traditional masculinity. This is due to the idea that the principles of masculinity tend to impede the expression of weakness or emotional distress and the quest of support or help to remedy it. Furthermore, analysis of accounts of men's depression suggests that depression tends to threaten a man's masculine identity and recovery, assumed a reconstruction of their masculinity and self-image (Thobejane, 2012). This reveals the lack of directness to reform or change in traditional masculinity. Traditional masculinity is considered less equipped to address and respond to the challenges that impend its integrity, such as depression (viewed as emotional weakness), GBV, and gender equality.

2.2.2 HMT and heteronormativity: cisgenderism as ideal

Heteronormativity is an ideology that propounds the argument that heterosexual relationships are the sole normal and valorised form of sexual and gender expression

in society (Peake, 2017:1). It is entrenched in an essentialist and dichotomous understanding of sexuality (a person is either heterosexual or homosexual) and gender (a person can either be a man or a woman) and the view that these are fixed and unchanging. Herz and Johansson (2015:1) mention that from the early 1990s, heteronormativity developed as one of the main concepts in gender and queer scholarship and is claimed to have its origins in the Second Wave of Feminism.

(a) Defining heteronormativity

Heteronormativity has been conceptualised in several ways. For example, Kitzinger (2005:478) defines heteronormativity as "the myriad ways in which heterosexuality is produced as a natural, unproblematic, taken-for-granted phenomenon" that sets up insentient and automatic conventions about heterosexuality as the standard of life and all other forms of sexual experience as abnormal. According to Russell *et al.* (2012:188), heteronormativity can be defined as "a societal hierarchical system that privileges and sanctions individuals based on assumed binaries of gender and sexuality; as a system it defines and enforces beliefs and practices about what is 'normal' in everyday life" (cf. Ingraham, 2006:309) regarding gendered and sexual identities. These sets of standards and beliefs work to preserve the dominance of heterosexuality by confining homosexuality from being a type of sexuality that becomes taken for granted or goes unchallenged (Corber & Valocchi, 2003:4).

Like Corber and Valocchi (2003) maintains that heteronormativity creates a set of oppositional relations between femininity and masculinity that support men's greater power and position in relation to women, subordinate men and sexual minorities. Herz and Johansson (2015:3) contend that scholars should investigate how hegemonic masculinity and heteronormativity work as policing structures in contemporary society. This, they argue, would enable researchers to scrutinise systems of coercion and contribute to an understanding of how more general gender structures and hierarchies are created and maintained in society. Additionally, according to Herz and Johansson (2015:5), heteronormativity is understood as a system that sanctions and condemns individuals who do not adhere to or fail to act in accordance with an "acceptable" and "given" societal value system. Heteronormativity is claimed to be associated with power, relating to who is included or excluded, who is expected to adjust or not, and occasionally even who must fear for their lives or not. This consequently describes how

heteronormativity *per se* both affects and is affected by our understanding of gender and sexuality.

HMT relates to institutionalised heteronormativity – that is, gender becomes a structured arrangement that may result in certain confines and challenges affecting both women and men regarding permissible or impermissible gender and sexual performances. Mahalik *et al.* (2003:23), writing from an American perspective, maintain that masculinity is socially and culturally perceived. Hegemonic masculinity has also been used to signify conservative and stereotypical creeds of masculinity and the dominance of "acceptability norms" of gendered performance of men (Davies & Eagle, 2007:66). According to Mfecane (2008), it is used to denote norms of masculine performance and the way men *ought* to present themselves. These gender performances of masculinity are argued to be informed and bound by cultural expectations. Irrespective of their ubiquity, relatively recent scholarship about the construction and enactment of gender roles in different cultures over time points to the fact that people may in fact construct gender and sexuality differently (i.e., related to the current study's focus on GBV directed towards men, we tend to speak of masculinities and not solely masculinity) (Connell, 2000; Cornwall & Lindisfarne, 1994; Skelton, 1997; Swain, 2002).

(b) Heteronormativity, hegemony and South African men

Applying it to the South African context, Morrell (1994, 1998, 2001) used the term "hegemonic masculinity" to describe the nature, type and changing aspects of male power. Morrell proposed at least three examples of masculinities that proved to be hegemonic, albeit socially constructed, versions of said masculine expressions (Anderson, 2014; Morrell *et al.,* 2012, 2013): a "white" masculinity that is embodied in the political and economic dominance of the white ruling class; an "African", rurally based masculinity that exists in and was preserved through indigenous institutions (such as chiefship, communal land tenure, and customary law); and lastly, a "black" masculinity that developed in the context of urbanisation and the development of geographically distinct and culturally different African townships. These masculinities characterise a hybridisation of hegemonic and subordinate typologies.

According to Du Pisani (2001:158), during the Apartheid period, at the national level, the Afrikaner nationalist government used its political power to propagate new

conceptions of masculinity that superseded the English-capitalist forms which had preceded it. This was presented as *the* cultural ideal and was strongly associated with a set of puritan values (i.e., "rigid austerity and strictness in conduct and morals") (Du Pisani, 2001:158) – a strictly hierarchical social order that favoured orthodox archetypes of masculinity (i.e., being Christian, strong, aggressive and dominant). This type of masculinity (i.e., so-called "white masculinity") was preserved by a "synergy between religious, political and cultural leadership in Afrikanerdom" – a set of political procedures and coalitions that protect and reproduce hegemony (Du Pisani, 2001:158). After the South African democratic elections in 1994, the nation stood on the brink of reconciliation and clear obligation to human rights and, more generally, an agenda of remedying the inequalities created by colonialism and apartheid (Morrell, 1998; Sonnekus, 2013).

Former president Nelson Mandela embodied a "new" masculinity, described as being "heroic" – a form of masculinity that is associated with the inherently diverse "African masculinity" (Morrell *et al.*, 2012:17). Mandela's public depiction challenged much of the violent and authoritarian behaviours and attitudes that accompanied Apartheid's White male politicians, some elements within the liberation movement and the patriarchal, traditional African masculinities of Bantustan leaders (Unterhalter, 2000). This paved the way for a repositioning of masculinities when a surge or rise in popular view among the African National Congress (ANC) and its alliance associates brought Jacob Zuma to the office of President (2009). Zuma's educational background was not considered as depicting that of the elite. He personified a refutation of Mandela's more thoughtful approach to masculinities. He was a proponent of a masculinity that was typified as "traditional", heterosexist, patriarchal, covertly violent and that esteemed ideas of male sexual entitlement, particularly polygamy (Morrell *et al.*, 2012:18). In tandem with Zuma, a new youth masculinity has been encouraged by the ANC Youth League's then president Julius Malema, who evidently celebrated declarations of power and wealth, with attainment established on entitlement, use of violence and physical strength rather than personal achievement or respect for the legitimate use of power. At present, for example, in his capacity as leader of one of the South African opposition parties, the Economic Freedom Fighters (hereafter EFF), Malema continues to favour land seizures without compensating its current (predominantly White, Afrikaner owners) and forced nationalisation (Morrell *et al.*, 2012:17). While alliance

dynamics still necessitate gestures of support for gender equality, Zuma and Malema thrived in presenting them as being “anti-African”, equating them with Western, modern (read White) and secular imports (Morrell *et al.*, 2012:18). Therefore, they jointly launched, what amounts to, an overt criticism of gender equality while building a movement that allowed contestation of hegemony at the highest levels of national power (Decoteau, 2013:148; Dube, 2016:78; Ratele, 2008).

Scholars contend that Zuma and Malema exude “hypermasculinity” – that is, a masculine typology associated with men who seemingly attempt to overcompensate for insecurities about their gender identity by increasing their aggressive and violent behaviour to demonstrate their masculinity (Hong, 2000; Jewkes *et al.*, 2015:114). This type of masculinity embraces ideas of manhood that emphasise dominant men who are of the view that violence and aggression are legitimate ways of expressing themselves, asserting their power and resolving conflict (Ratele, 2008). Hypermasculinity is characterised by a belief that danger is exciting, believing violence as an acceptable means of portraying dominance, and sexual attitudes that reflect a disregard of women’s rights. These characteristics tend to singly and in conjunction with others increase the prospect that men will perpetrate violence, and more specifically GBV, against women and other men. For instance, gender-inequitable views are considered a strong indicator of violence. The more gender inequitable a man’s beliefs, the more likely the report of having enacted some form of GBV (Barker *et al.*, 2011). Lau (2009) argued that patriarchal beliefs (e.g., that men should have control over women, and that men are entitled to sex from their partners at any time) are among the factors mostly associated with GBV in South Africa. Therefore, the socialisation process that many men undergo during their lives in South Africa may contribute strongly to levels of GBV in their societies. However, it is important to note that hypermasculinity can become widespread in a society, meaning that the use of violence and aggression becomes acceptable for most men in that context (Graaff & Heinecken, 2017). These roles and norms that men are expected to perform and conform to often pressure some men to exude the tenets of hegemonic or orthodox masculine archetypes (e.g., strength and dominance over others, and the innate restrictive stereotypes require men to be stoic, independent and powerful) (Arxer, 2011; Barber, 2016; Bridges & Pascoe, 2018; Connor *et al.*, 2021:1; Messerschmidt & Messner, 2018; Pfaffendorf, 2017). Both men and women are expected to adhere to

certain roles and standards that are deemed relevant to a specific society (Heilman & Barker, 2018). Men who are socialised into a society that maintains patriarchal ideals and norms are often expected to support, or defend, the cultural or that society's notions of masculinity (Heilman & Barker, 2018:9; Mkhwanazi, 2012:80; Morrell *et al.*, 2012:20). The former assertions can be linked to the work of Judith Butler (1990). In her much-lauded work *Gender Trouble,* Butler (1990) maintains that gender performance entails a "stylised repetition of acts". These acts are a simulation of the dominant conventions of gender that society puts into performance. This means that these performed acts that people are socialised into are acts that have been socially established and constructed and then became a form of legitimation regarding how one "ought" to act and perform certain roles in accordance with their supposed gender (Butler, 1990:140). These performances are reinforced by primary and secondary gender-role socialisation agents.

2.2.3 Gender-role socialisation and its consequences

One can reflect on how boys are socialised from an early age through the use of verbal appellations, such as "men don't cry", "you are a naughty boy", "be a man" and "don't act like a wimp, [or] sissy" (Hlavka, 2017:484), men are providers and autonomous (Joseph & Lindegger, 2007), aggressive (Langa & Eagle, 2007) and emotionally restrained/restricted (Adams & Govender, 2008), they are "strong/powerful" (Gennrich, 2013:6) and controlled (Thobejane *et al.*, 2018:5; Vogel *et al.*, 2011:369) and subscribe to compulsory heterosexuality (Joseph & Lindegger, 2007; Langa & Eagle, 2007). In addition, Haywood and Mac an Ghail (2003:248) contends that there is a proliferation of the idea of womanhood that tends to confine women's mobility and put a burden on them with the responsibilities of educating, nurturing and rearing children. These responsibilities and the social positioning of women are commonly linked to the biological factor to bear children. Patriarchal and masculinity notions tend to distort the difference between sex and gender and adopt a stance that the socio-economic and political differences between women and men are entrenched biologically. Gender, like other social aspects, such as social class and religion, is significant in understanding social disparities, oppression and unequal relations between men and women (Graaff & Heinecken, 2017:2).

According to Schilt and Westbrook (2009:451), the *cisgender ideology* leans towards the perpetuation of the belief that a heterosexual gender and sexual identity is more valued than sexual minority identities and expression; it produces an inherent system of associated power and privileges, therefore enforcing hierarchy (rigid beliefs, rules about issues concerning gender, expressions and roles) to which men and women are expected to adhere (Eagly & Wood, 2017:59; Graaff & Heinecken, 2017:2). The failure to adhere to these prescriptions and set standards may then be viewed as aberrant behaviour that threatens the existing norms that may lead to sexual violence to 'correct' a perceived deviant gender or sexual identity (Eagly & Wood, 2017:60; Ratele, 2013:140). For instance, a woman may be expected to convey an expressive character (akin to a structural functionalist view) of accentuated femininity as the subordinate party (Connell, 1987:61; Schilt & Westbrook, 2009:443), and a man may be expected to exude a hegemonic performance reminiscent of Parsons' (1959) reference to instrumental behaviour (i.e., being the more dominant of the two genders). By subscribing to such a view uncritically, heterosexuality could remain an uninterrogated standard of life. These binaries tend to exercise supremacy over individuals, predominantly those who do not fit neatly into the existing normative arrangements.

Gender-role socialisation, according to Kimmel (2000:214), also pertains to men's "fear of being perceived as a sissy that dominates the cultural definitions of manhood". Although somewhat dated, Oakley's (1974) seminal work on primary gender-role socialisation still refers. She argued that parents may, either implicitly or explicitly, motivate boys and girls to identify their respective and clearly demarcated gender roles through adolescence to adulthood. Dulla and Priyadarshini (2021:3) and Halpern and Perry-Jenkins (2016:3) attest to this. By aligning male sex roles on one side of the continuum and concurrently distinguishing them from female sex roles on the other end, we risk further perpetuating traditional, stereotypical and fixed ideologies of permissible and impermissible gendered behaviours. This arguably exacerbates GBV directed towards men and women (Graaff & Heinecken, 2017; Lau, 2009). According to George (1994:137), matters relating to the victimisation of men are not broadly explored or given attention because of the threat they may pose to the self-image of masculinity instead of continued strengthening of the vulnerability of women and the authority, protectiveness and dominance of men. Men who project any behaviour or attitude that falls outside these pre-existing hegemonic or patriarchal standards may

be considered as posing a supposed threat to the patriarchal dominance of men (Allen, 2004:7; Kimmel, 2005) and therefore recalls Connell's (2005) previous reference to "subordinate masculinity". Hegemonic masculinity and heterosexuality are compulsory in that they are presumed to be natural and expected (Rich, 1980; Schippers, 2007), and men whose behaviour or performance is outside the "natural" or the set model may be viewed as deviant or may form part of stigmatised identities (Hlavka, 2017; Ndashe, 2010:6; Ralston, 2012). This is a form of masculinity in which men who demonstrate qualities and behaviours that may be contrary to those that are highly enforced or commended in hegemonic masculinity, for example, are displaying or articulating emotions such as desolation or depicting physical weakness (Connell, 1987:186; Mshweshwe, 2020:2; Tonsin & Tonsin, 2019).

As a result, the sex-role theory is critiqued for linking certain behaviours with either sex instead of exploring the intended and prescribed performances of a person's gender. By defining certain characters allied with either sex as inert, there is a challenge of reproducing stereotypical notions of what may be proper sex-role behaviour. This understanding constrains research by its failure to provide ways of looking at the interaction and boundary between these behaviours that play off against each other. By producing a binary in which male and female behaviour are set up as equally restricted, the impression is fixed that the behaviour of one gender should inevitably be dissimilar from the other gender as a way of knowing authentic masculinity or femininity (Hanke, 1998; Wester *et al.*, 2005).

Fundamental to the analysis of the sex-role paradigm is the basic assumption that men and women's performances, feelings and thinking are because of their biological sex, and these supposed differences are determined at birth and fixed throughout life (Connell, 1992, 2000, 2004; Herek, 1986; Kimmel, 1987). Typically, sex-role theory asserts the dominance of men over women, whether the contrasts are based on intellect or their strength to perform in workplaces conventionally occupied by men. The placement of masculinities in gender studies has expanded the foundation of the study of gender to consider the role social constructions, such as race, culture, class, play in the construction of gender (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Haywood & Mac an Ghail, 2003; Mshweshwe, 2020). Intrinsically, a multiplicity in masculinities (and femininities) should be documented, because diverse social, cultural, generational and

racial environments construct different systems of gendered behaviour (Mshweshwe, 2020:2). By directing the focus to the biologically determined behaviour of the sexes, the performance that is observed by social researchers who support this theory may be at risk of bestowing certain sex-related behaviour as fundamental or innate to the sex. Thus, the sex-role paradigm that critiqued the presence of power relations between genders as productions of powerful behaviour of one sex in relation to the other is assumed to be an indicator of biological fact.

2.2.4 Patriarchy, gender-role socialisation and South African masculinities

Patriarchy, according to Dawes (2004) and Jewkes *et al.* (2002), is one of the main causes of GBV. This violence is mostly used to control women. Owing to patriarchal ideologies, women tend to be in subordinate positions in society. According to Morrell (2001), writing from a South African perspective, patriarchy is a form of authoritative male domination that is based on the role of the father as the ruler of the household, which may be manifested in various ways. It is a socially constructed phenomenon that considers men to be superior to women. According to Walby (1990), it is a system with social structures and practices used by men as means to dominate, oppress and exploit women. The oppression and subjugation of women vary from one society to another, with differences in class, religion, ethnicity, and socio-cultural practices (i.e., along intersectional lines). Notably, patriarchy is not considered an ongoing effort by men to dominate women; however, it is a structure people are born into and unconsciously participate in. This means people of any gender can preserve and maintain patriarchy, though it is most advantageous to men. For instance, according to Mshweshwe (2018), violence in rural traditional settings may not be perpetrated by males only; mothers-in-law may contribute through their male children by demanding respect and submission from their wives by using violence. Patriarchy is viewed to be more serious in the private sphere where women are subjected to abuse due to their perceived inferior status (Mazibuko, 2017).

(a) Gender and intersectionality

This speaks to the work of Kimberley Crenshaw (1989) on intersectionality. She adopted this concept to identify how these interlocking systems of power tend to affect those who are most marginalised in society. Intersectionality describes a connection

between gender, race, class and other systems that function together to oppress while allowing privilege. It demonstrates how these systems work to shape other people's experiences. She maintained Black women's experiences of GBV and rape involve both racism and sexism. She further alluded that because Black women are present in the discourse that is meant to address either race or sex (however, not simultaneously), they are inclined to be marginalised in both systems of oppression as a result.

Crenshaw (1989) further describes three diverse forms of intersectionality to explain the oppression faced by women. She alluded to *structural intersectionality*, which is used to explain how various structures function together and create a complex gender system that speaks to the differences in Black women's experiences of GBV and rape. Second, *political intersectionality* involves two conflicting systems in the political arena that separate women and Black women into two subordinate groups. The experiences of White women tend to differ from those of Black women and men because of the intersection of their race and gender. Third, *representational intersectionality* upholds the creation of imagery that is supportive of Black women and condemns sexist and racist marginalisation of Black women in media or contemporary settings (Allen, 2018; Hooks, 2014; Segalo, 2015:73). This is based on hierarchy and unequal power relations where men control women's production, reproduction and sexuality.

According to the study conducted by Sikweyiya *et al.* (2020) in the Central Region of Ghana on patriarchy and gender-inequitable attitudes as drivers of intimate partner violence against women**,** subordination and dehumanisation (an approach often used in genocides or conflict situations) was obligatory to validate the treatment of women when they were thought to have been disrespectful, disobedient, or had contravened the assigned gender roles. Men, in their study, opined that "culturally authorised responsibility to control and discipline their female partners" as part of fulfilling their gender roles. The men's sexual violence against their wives was further legitimised by the cultural practice of bride-price payment, which reinforced the "men's sense of ownership of their wives, making them believe they have unrestricted access to their wives' bodies".

While women are considered equal and have gained many rights in South Africa, there is still discrimination, not only in the law but in everyday interactions among women

and men. Men tend to believe that they are the curators of African culture and regard women as subordinates and believe that women must submit to men. Women's place is considered to be in the home where their main responsibility is to bear and nurture the children. Although some women have gained rights and opportunities in recent decades, inequality among men and women is still prevalent. African culture continues to endorse patriarchy, and this preserves the subordination of women. GBV against women is still common and encourages the tradition of male supremacy. Women were subject to cultural and social acceptance of GBV with no policies to protect them. Though policies have been developed by the government of South Africa over the years to protect women, GBV remains a challenge for women in a society where culture and tradition remain dominant (Akangbe Tomisin, 2020; Mshweshwe, 2018). Culture and tradition have been found to legitimise patriarchy and maintain male dominance through encouraging hegemonic masculinity – that is, "a configuration of gender practices which guarantees the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (Mshweshwe, 2020:2; Tonsin & Tonsin, 2019).

An article by Gqola (2009) highlights such subordination of women as regards sexual relations:

> *Sex with multiple partners is so entrenched in South Africa that it is a religion, a basic moral philosophy for most people here. It is often simply called culture or, specifically, African culture. Political leaders who marry an increasing number of wives and royalty that flaunts an equal number of wives and concubines are highly visible.*

Gqola argues that among the Zulu and Xhosa people, two terms are given to men that encourage multisexual relationships by men: "isoka" (playboy) and "amakrwala" (initiated men). The first term (isoka) is a commendation of those who are evidently promiscuous, heterosexual African men. This pressure to be promiscuous to demonstrate manhood is considered to be quite pervasive. The second term (amakrwala) is about the myth of newly initiated men who "need to have sexual intercourse with a woman other than their regular sexual partners upon exit from initiation school. This is ostensibly to avoid passing on misfortune to the valued girlfriend, even though the source of such misfortune is unidentified" (Gqola, 2009).

This is done through imposing feminine and masculine stereotypes in society to strengthen the unequal power relations between men and women.

(b) South African genders and socialisation

The key agents of socialisation consist of the family, school or education system, peer group, and mass media (Bukowski *et al.*, 2016; Dunn 2014; Grusec & Davidov 2015; Prot *et al.*, 2014; Wentzel, 2014). These agents help boys and girls to acquire their roles throughout their social life (Brewer, 2001). Thus, these roles are socially created and are not simply natural. Nevertheless, many studies display that in most societies, socialisation takes place in diverse ways for girls and boys, and this difference is put in effect before birth when the sex of the foetus has been revealed. For instance, when parents acknowledge that their foetus is boy or girl, they tend to associate different colours with the sex of the baby (pink for girls, and blue for boys) (Abbott *et al*., 2005; Leaper & Farkas, 2014; Stockard, 1999). So, girls and boys learn diverse values and behavioural patterns, which is termed *gender socialisation*.

In essence, “gender socialization denotes the transmission of norms, behaviors, values and skills necessary to be a successful women or men” in society (Lawson *et al.*, 2015:27). In effect, when individuals want to be acknowledged by society as fitting in, they tend adhere to these norms as women and men. What we view as natural women and men’s behaviour is what society has considered and defined as femininity and masculinity (Millett 2005; Stockard 1999). The process of socialisation continues for almost all of an individual’s social life. Therefore, gender socialisation creates gender stereotypes and strengthens gender discrimination (Abbott *et al*., 2005; Cvencek *et al.*, 2011; Leaper & Farkas, 2014; Witt, 2000), since it can produce and reproduce gender roles as social truths and spread gender discrimination as a natural problem. According to Morrell *et al*. (2013:12), hegemonic masculinity may also be used in aspirational behaviours to show the type of ideals to which boys and men aspire. In research conducted by Gibson and Lindegaard (2007) with schoolboys in Cape Town in 2007, boys associated being a man with characteristics of boldness, speed and strength. Acts of violence or reactions to violence were used as mechanism to be accepted as masculine. Therefore, boys desired to be “manly” in some ways while also disdaining suggestions that viewed them as unmanly.

Therefore, we can describe “gender socialisation” as a “process by which individuals develop, enhance and learn to “‘do’ or perform gender through internalising gender norms and roles as they interact with the main agents of socialization, such as their family, social networks and other social institutions” (John *et al.*, 2017). Then, women and men adopt gender norms as their own gender identity. In effect, society outlines different social roles for women and men, called gender roles. Gender roles may be one of the key influences of gender domination over women in the patriarchal system (Millett, 2005). Related to this, are gender stereotypes. A Stats SA (2015:178) report has also revealed gender stereotypes as one of the voluntary influential factors that challenges the participation of women in the labour force. Gender stereotypes maintain that men and women have naturally diverse attitudes, traits and abilities. For example, it is expected that men become aggressive, independent and strong, whereas women are considered kind, sympathetic and vulnerable; or women are vulnerable, and they should be cautious, but men are fearless (Eijk 2017). Thus, gender stereotypes are considered to be closely linked to social roles and reproduce gender inequalities (Prentice & Carranza 2002).

To understand the use of violence by men in domestic settings, according to Mudau and Obadire (2017), there needs to be a theoretical understanding that South African society is patriarchal. South Africa holds a patriarchal social structure that reassures male dominance, male perpetrated oppressions, exploitation of women in both the public and private sphere (Stromquist, 2014). This system of how men ought to practise dominance in relation to women, and other men who may not subscribe to the placed standards, may have an impact on their responses to issues relating to their health (for example, seeking help when experiencing pain and/or abuse) (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010) and quality of life. Patriarchy persists worldwide, irrespective of an improvement in women’s social position and rights. For example, according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) (2017), all parliaments in the world have less than 50% female representation, excluding Rwanda, which accounts for 61.3% female representation, and Bolivia with 53.1% female representation. Child nurturing is still considered a female’s responsibility within the family across different cultures, and it is largely not rewarded. Men are still usually viewed as heads of households in the family structure and make all decisions in that regard.

2.3 A CRITIQUE OF HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY THEORY

This section discusses the criticism as it relates to hegemonic masculinity.

2.3.1 Hybrid and inclusive masculinities as successor to HMT?

According to Connell (2005:78), subordinate masculinities emphasise the political and cultural exclusion and violence of other groups to dominate other men that seemingly do not conform to cultural ideals of masculinity. Subordinate masculinities can be considered unorthodox and tend to contest the supremacy of hegemonic ideologies (Howson, 2006:63). This form of masculinity has been used to denote abused men or gay men, as they are often viewed to be conflicting with the pre-existing hegemonic moralities. Moreover, this system of subordination reinforces practices of physical and psychological violence, punishment, social and cultural segregation, and dishonour (Gomez, 2007:121; Thobejane *et al.*, 2018:8). In view of this, men who stray from the hegemonic ideologies are then considered weak, effeminate (mostly associated with homosexuality or metrosexuality), they are not “man enough” and frequently get shamed or stigmatised by others in society. Male victims of GBV are then constructed as, for instance, inferior with the intention of emasculating them, consequently decreasing their social status and standing (Gateri *et al.*, 2021:89; Gathogo, 2015; Kigaya, 2021; Obarisiagbon & Omage, 2019). It can be reasoned from the former principles that these stereotypes and social perspectives on how a man ‘should act’ or behave may be one of the key reasons why male victims of GBV persist to be silent and deny being abused (Thobejane *et al.*, 2018:8).

In his article on White American masculinity, Kimmel (1994:133) argues that the “the fear of being perceived as gay, as not a real man, keeps men from exaggerating all the traditional rules of masculinity. Kimmel traced the history of dominant forms of masculinity in the US to show that masculinity is not a trait with which male children come into the world. As a pattern of practice that men (and women in their capacities as mothers, for instance) construct as a group and in their subjective lives, masculinity is a historically located cultural project in which sexuality figures centrally. Kimmel’s work emphasises the complex (sexual) fears that males live with, including the fears of heterosexual males that they do not measure up to the standards of hegemonic masculinity. This is akin to recent accounts of Ratele’s (2014) article on the ways in

which the dread of homosexuality together with the fear of being viewed as homosexual, may challenge hegemonic African men and masculinities. Ratele's work shows that homosexuality and non-heteronormative sexualities along with homophobia and homophobic acts tend to play an important role in the practices, identities, constructions and social reproduction of hegemonic African masculinity. The article notes that this subject has been largely ignored in the literature on homophobia in Africa. Reports of homophobia – such as those from Human Rights Watch and other multinational non-governmental organisations – tend to disregard the fact that gay, lesbian, trans and other forms of non-conforming sexualities are vital in the arrangement of hegemonic men's gender practices. The debate here, thus, is that matters relating to lesbian, gay and "othered" sexualities are important for a more multifaceted understanding of the working-out, construction and reproduction of ruling forms of masculinity and gender in Africa.

(a) Towards or away from inclusivity: South African men, homohysteria and homosociality

Homohysteria is conceptualised as the fear of closeted gay men and heterosexual men alike to be categorised or socially perceived as being homosexual. This concept originated as part of inclusive masculinity theory (hereafter IMT) (Anderson, 2009:96). The term homohysteria has been employed to understand the changing dynamics and influence of homophobia on gendered behaviours and how it may be employed by the proponents of patriarchy and heteronormativity to further police the behaviours of heterosexual men in accordance with hegemonic expectations (Anderson & McCormack, 2018:548; McCormack & Anderson, 2014:153). A homohysteric culture, according to Anderson (2013:4), exists in a society where people either *refute* the existence of homosexuality and sexual diversity (i.e., homoerasure) or acknowledge its existence but *not accept* it. Cultural homophobia mainly propounds the idea that heterosexual hegemony is highly prized – that is, all men, irrespective of their sexual orientation, are expected to exude heterosexual, *not* gay masculinity (Adams, 2011; Anderson & Filder, 2018). Most of the research about IMT focuses on the increased likelihood of younger men (based on findings among younger men in the US and the UK) to espouse the need for physical and emotional tactility with other men and, in the case of the present study, to display emotionality and stereotypical feminine traits

without the concern that they will be labelled as gay, weak, or subordinate (Anderson & Filder, 2018; Drummond *et al.*, 2015). For instance, the tenets of HMT, according to Demetriou (2001:354), had American and European men look to orthodox prototypes of masculinity to best construct and perform their masculinity (in terms of appearance and emotional stoicism) – for example, *Rambo* – in order to demonstrate their heterosexuality. As a result, Anderson (2013:5) and McCormack (2011:80), for example, contend that men, depending on their particular cultural context, aim to elude said probable stigma of being seen as gay or subordinate, and thus attempt to affirm their masculinity and heterosexuality by avoiding behaviours that are not regarded as masculine, such as exhibiting overt emotions and affection.

Moreover, Anderson and McCormack (2018:551) maintain that the levels of homohysteria and homophobia in societies are subject to change over time, though those said changes are "uneven" and culturally specific. This change may be motivated by sociocultural and jurisdictive process – for instance, in an inclusive social order where there is an inclusion of homosexuality in the Constitution and legal provisions (e.g., the progressive South African Constitution) (RSA, 1996), and the fact that more South Africans display positive attitudinal changes towards homosexuality (Aung & Sha, 2016; Munyuki & Vincent, 2017; Ncanana & Ige, 2014). If this occurs and continues to prevail, homophobia may be likely to decline and become less influential in its "draconian policing" (Posel, 2011) of men and women (McCormack & Anderson, 2014:153; O'Neill, 2015:104). In these situations, various masculinities may be permissible, other than hegemonic expectations associated with masculinity. Men, therefore, may be allowed the opportunity to enact their unique masculine identity (e.g., inclusive and gay masculinities) more freely. These societies may move from an overemphasis on or social sanctioning of homophobia (i.e., societies where the rejection of diversity is eminent while emphasising heteromasculinity and femininity as ways of affirming one's heterosexuality) towards inclusive societies where, even with the existence of some level of homophobia (Anderson & McCormack, 2018; McCormack, 2020), positive attitudes may prevail and the acceptance of gender diversity becomes relatively normalised (McCormack & Anderson, 2014:154). Men then become less afraid to associate with behaviours that may have been considered as gay or effeminate, thus, *subordinate.*

According to Anderson's (2009) research among self-identified heterosexual men in the US, masculinity among these groups is characterised by inclusivity rather than orthodoxy or hegemony. Masculinities in this concept are organised horizontally rather than hierarchically (Hammarén & Johansson, 2014:5). Thus, men tend to adopt practices that are characterised by the acceptance of different masculinities, therefore providing contemporary meanings of masculinity in a manner that consents wide-ranging selection of performances to count as masculine. Inclusivity, like hybridity, incorporates performances that are culturally considered as the "other". Anderson (2009:9) claims that these practices may result in "decreased sexism" and the erosion of patriarchy. Therefore, inclusive masculinities are prevalent and is essential to the contestation of the existing systems of power and inequality.

While it has maintained great utility in explaining increased homophobia, particularly during the 1980s and 1990s, Anderson (2013) contends that HMT was (and remains) unable to account for the changing dynamics associated with masculinities (i.e., men's propensity to display inclusive masculinities) at the meso and macro levels in contemporary society, which have contributed to the decline in cultural homophobia (cf., Anderson & McCormack 2016; Borkowska 2016; Roberts 2012; McCormack 2014). This may be due to the assertion that HMT mainly allows one "valorised" form of masculinity as the ideal and dominant typology in a social hierarchy that continues to fail to explain the social processes in a setting where more than one form of masculinity have equal petition (Anderson, 2005; Anderson, 2013:5).

These assertions are supported by the work of Plummer (2015:74) on "cosmopolitan sexualities", where he reminds us of multiplicity, fluidity and plurality associated with an intersectionality of gender and sexual identities at a global level (Rothmann, 2014:8). Plummer argues that instead of viewing gender and sexuality as autonomous, the aim should be towards building what he terms a "cosmopolitan imagination", which suggests an attitude of openness and tolerance towards gender and sexual difference. Plummer (2015:11) advocates "cosmopolitan sexualities" as a way forward through the dense field of difference, conceptualising such sexualities as those configurations that exist convivially and reciprocally with a variety of the diverse genders and sexualities of others, both within and across cultures. It attempts to evade outright disapproval, adopting an appreciative stance of difference. It further asserts a grounded, shared

humanity and that it is through everyday minor actions that people get to accept and live with the differences of others (Plummer, 2015:74).

To progress with the appreciative stance of difference, Plummer proposes an adoption of a cosmopolitan sexuality stance towards gender and sexual identity in contemporary society. Such a view determines an agenda for legal and political transformation as well as a “utopian imaginary” and critical way of thinking. It provides one with a number of utopian ideas for “forward dreaming” to assist in creating a better sexual and gender world for all. He maintains that this approach may encourage the construction (and potentially deconstruction) of a world that fosters a wider willingness to live with, through and across differences (Plummer, 2015:75). According to him, these inclinations are dependent on the development of social structures that allow diversities, autonomy and freedom to flourish (e.g., new global social movements and new global media and technologies, all of which may foster global intercommunication). These social movements and approaches, according to Plummer (2015:76), question the existing orders by inventing new worlds, mobilising resources, setting up new practices, tactics and strategies through activist performance, and using the media to enable their messages to diffuse into varied cultures and potentially challenge and change the social order. Like Plummer, Van den Berg (2016:26) asserts that it is a researcher’s task to interrogate existing unjust principles that uphold disciplinary structures of conformity and visions of heterosexuality that intimidate and constrain people’s identities and life choices. However, with such an increase in the awareness of differences in gender performance and sexualities, some conflict in human values may arise. These attacks or conflicts can be, according to Plummer, primarily motivated by culture, religion, nation and power, which are mostly linked to gender and masculinity. He argues that in order to have development in having universally shared values, we need not look at norms regarding gender and sexuality negatively; he suggests looking at norms positively (Plummer, 2015:3).

While this concept is not assumed worldwide among masculinity researchers, the term “hybrid masculinities” (not be confused or conflated with inclusive masculinities; see Anderson & McCormack, 2018:556) is suitable to explain those processes relating to practices of cultural interpenetration (Burke, 2009) – thus, two different cultural

elements are incorporated into privileged cultural performances. Hybrid masculinities can be defined as the "selective incorporation of element of identity typically associated with various marginalised and subordinate masculinities and-at times-femininities into privileged men's gender performances and identities" (Arxer, 2011; Demetriou, 2001). IMT, to some extent, hybrid masculinities *both* challenge the main tenets of HMT and reinforce them (Bridges & Pascoe, 2018; Morales, 2018).

(b) How IMT and hybridity differ: hybridity as a challenge and an antecedent to HMT

According to Bridges and Pascoe (2018), hybrid masculine practices often function in a manner that creates some distance between young White straight men and hegemonic masculinity, permitting some to categorise themselves as separate from the existing systems of privilege and inequality. In South Africa, this is highlighted by News24's (2022) documentation of men from the *Lions Club of Tokai*, dressed in heels to raise funds and awareness of GBV. This practice of standing with women and dressing in women's regalia, according to Bridges and Pascoe (2018), seemingly distances them from the sexism and gendered supremacy that in part creates hegemonic masculinity. However, the men in this walk can reproduce gender disparity even as they actively work against it. The way men interact during this walk echoes forms of gender disparity that undergird GBV. The male participants tend to make jokes about wearing women's clothing, about their capability to walk in heels, and about same-sex sexual desire. These jokes broadly align participants with hegemonic masculinity even as their performances might appear to distance them from it.

According to Anderson and McCormack (2016), the idea of hybridity can be agreeable due to its open recognition of some change and resistance, which means it tends to take the middle ground that integrates both perspectives. Nevertheless, this idea of hybridity is regarded to be challenging because the change it identifies may still be considered as simply 'stylistic' (Bridges & Pascoe, 2018:256). The current changes in masculinities not only reproduce modern systems of gendered, race and sexual inequalities but also obscure this process as it happens, maintaining that inclusive masculinities are in fact a form of hybrid masculinity (Bridges & Pascoe, 2018:247). There are some concerns with this framing. First, notions that inclusive masculinities may not be part of larger transformations that contest inequalities reject the real social

transformation that has occurred. This may consist of changes in laws relating to LGBTQ people (equal marriage, the removal of anti-sodomy laws); the visibility of straight allies; the improving experiences of sexual minorities; and other social changes (Anderson & McCormack, 2016:10). It also appears to disregard how individualisation is closely related with the decrease in homophobia (Twenge, 2014; Twenge *et al.*, 2016). Therefore, inclusive masculinities cannot be considered a form of hybrid masculinity (Anderson & McCormack, 2016:10).

While Connell (2005) contends that there are multiple masculinities, of which hegemonic masculinity is one, it has remained dominant in particular countries. To address this, Anderson (2009) proposes a focus on his noted “inclusive masculinities” to explain the social process of the rise of a type of masculinity that critiques the main tenants of hegemonic masculinity (Anderson, 2005). IMT has been used, and continues to be used, to highlight changes in the relationships and levels of emotionality among men. According to Borkowska (2018:3), IMT moves away from the hierarchical order of social relations where men mainly conform to hegemony and mainly enact orthodox and traditional ideologies of manhood. It directs its focus to an emphasis on multiple masculinities, where these masculinities can coincide alongside or, depending on the context, the absence of hegemonic or orthodox masculine archetypes (Borkowska, 2018:3). The latter, according to Anderson (2005), refers to masculinity where men refrain from public displays of physical or emotional connection with other men. Men who identify with inclusive masculinity while rejecting hegemonic masculinity and many of its precepts are considered to be socially liberated in the expression of their attitudes and are more likely to willingly portray and embrace behavioural patterns that are supposedly stigmatised (e.g., subordinate masculinities). This, according to Anderson and McGuire (2010:251), is to say that in a society where extreme homophobia is present, one standard or embodiment of masculinity will thrive. However, in a case where homophobia is challenged, varied typologies of masculinity could co-exist in a non-stratified way (Anderson, 2009).

Another critique levelled against hegemonic masculinity is its reduction of the apparent significance of issues concerning power and domination, thus becoming blurred and uncertain in its meaning or conceptualisation (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005:836). The concept is argued to be non-realist, or it is not reality-based because it contradicts

its own precepts and notions, and its reliance on flawed and negative conceptualisation of masculinity or ignorance of the positive aspects of masculinity makes it unpragmatic (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005:838). It has also been considered flawed because it tends to essentialise the nature of men and masculinity, providing a false and monolithic unitary view of what both entail, which, in short, contradicts the 'reality' of men (Christensen & Qvotrup Jensen, 2014:62; Hearn, 2004:59). Additionally, it is grounded in the heteronormative perspective on gender that essentialises the male-to-female difference, thus ignoring the possibilities of exclusion within these categories itself (cf. Morrell *et al.,* 2012, 2013; Plummer, 1998, 2003). Masculinity should not be considered as fixed but rather as more fluid since masculinities are dependent on the particular gender relations in certain social settings.

For instance, Morrell *et al.* (2012:22) allude to the fact that hegemonic masculinity has been considered to be the same or equated with the exercise of violence and control over women and other men. Therefore, the synonymous use of hegemonic masculinity with violence and control has resulted in the loss of hegemonic masculinities' fluidity, which necessitates a critical engagement with how it is constructed, endorsed or challenged to be inclusive of a focus in favour of the inherent complexity and diversity of masculinities. Connell contends that HMT should not be used in a fallacious way. She critiques its stoic application by other scholars and labels this tendency as "the trait approach to gender". Connell and Messerschmidt (2005:847) maintained that "[t]he notion of masculinity as an assemblage of traits opened the path to that treatment of hegemonic masculinity as a fixed character type that has given so much trouble and is rightly criticized in recent psychological writing". This usage tends to violate the historicity of gender and ignores the evidence of change in social definitions of masculinity. Some research that uses hegemonic masculinity also tends to essentialise or homogenise masculinities (Anderson, 2013). Additionally, present in much gender theory work is a tendency towards pathologising. This study sought to uncover the way in which inclusive masculinity and hegemonic masculinity, in relation to GBV directed towards men, may be organised in South Africa and how this may reinforce the difficulty associated with men being able or not to report or speak about their personal experiences as victims of GBV.

2.3.2 Hegemonic masculinities and GBV

According to Morrell (1998), masculinity is considered a shared gender identity and is not a natural attribute. Furthermore, and in keeping with my above discussion, there is not one common masculinity but multiple masculinities (Ammann & Staudacher, 2021; Mfecane, 2018:292; Ratele, 2013). The masculine characters are not fixed but are arrangements of practice that evolved from particular situations in the changing structures of relationships. Therefore, any society may consist of multiple masculinities, with each masculinity having certain characteristics and a set of features. The delineations of these masculinities change with time and may be affected by changes in other parts of society, conversely affecting society itself. Not all masculinities have the same control and influence as social forces in society (Morrell *et al.*, 2013). Subordinate masculinities are considered to exist as marginals or inferiorities and may be oppositional and contrary to the dominant masculinity.

According to Morrell *et al.* (2013:4), the "beauty" of Connell's precept is its ability to provide an alternate to essentialist and gender role treatments of men and associates various interconnected features. The concept demonstrates how men can take various positions, including subordination, oppose hegemony and differential access to power among men and women. Recognising the presence of multiple masculinities, gender-related research is presently focused on and concerned with diverse perspectives, feelings of men, and how manhood is represented. This is not to allude that Connell's principle is not outlined by issues encompassing power relations between men and women and disregards gendered experiences of women.

2.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter highlighted views on how GBV may be a result of patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity and how culture and tradition may legitimise hegemonic masculinity to preserve male dominance. To understand GBV in contemporary South Africa, there needs to be a theoretical understanding that South Africa is a patriarchal and hegemonic society. South Africa, although having progressed in terms of gender equality and policies that embrace equality, is still characterised by the heteronormative structures and norms that tend to play a role in governing how individuals should and should not behave. This means that those who do not conform

to the norms set by the heteronormative and masculinity systems tend to be subjected to subordination and exclusion by society overall and imprisonment (Ndashe, 2010:6) in other African countries.

With gender and performances being explained in binary terms (e.g., feminine and masculine), it creates and maintains certain identities as privileged based on particular norms that indicate or define the social self. Contrary to these views, Anderson, on the other hand, critiques and interrogates these views and notions. To address this critique, Anderson (2009) proposes a focus on IMT to explain the social process regarding the rise of a type of masculinity that critiques the main tenants of hegemonic masculinity (Anderson, 2005). He argues that IMT can be used and continue to be used to highlight changes in the relationships and levels of emotionality among men.

In keeping with the primary focus of the study, a hegemonic theory is critically problematised to comment on the position of men as silent sufferers and their experiences of GBV at the hands of their female partners in South Africa. Also, in line with the exploration of GBV against South African men by women in South Africa, the next chapter provides a contextualisation of said experiences using the theoretical lenses of HMT, IMT and hybrid masculinity.

CHAPTER 3
THE EXPERIENCES OF MALE VICTIMS OF GENDER-BASED AND INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE: A LITERATURE REVIEW.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

A considerable number of empirical investigations have been conducted on GBV against women (see Kempen, 2019; Medie, 2019; Mpondo *et al.*, 2019; Stats SA, 2017; WHO, 2013). On the other hand, very few studies have been conducted on male victims of GBV (Barkhuizen, 2015; Gathogo, 2015; Kumar, 2012; Thobejane *et al.*, 2018). Although South Africa continues to make significant efforts to address women's empowerment and gender equality, men still occupy a marginal space when it comes to gender transformation and are mainly positioned as perpetrators of violence against women. However, men are just as vulnerable to physical and sexual violence and health-related problems that arise from patriarchal norms as their female counterparts (Clowes, 2013; Ratele, 2014). This may be because it is difficult to get male victims of GBV or intimate partner violence to come forward and report such experiences. This is due to the societal stigma that might be placed on them for doing so, since they may be labelled as weak (Graham-Kevan, 2007:3) or as "subordinate" (Connell, 2005). Consequently, and in keeping with crimes of GBV directed towards women, men similarly remain silent about such crimes. This chapter provides a conceptualisation of GBV and intimate partner violence. The discussion focuses on the causes of GBV, male experiences of GBV at the hands of their partners, and the effects, help-seeking behaviours and underreporting of GBV by male victims.

3.2 GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE: A CONCEPTUALISATION

According to Ratele (2014:30), South African research on men and masculinity seems to focus less on the topic of GBV. Read-Hamilton (2014:5) argues that GBV is a complex and problematic phenomenon. This is due to the conflicting views about what GBV entails and what it does not mean. There are various conceptualisations and interpretations regarding what constitutes its main topographies. These conceptualisations and interpretations differ with regard to the forms of violence being

addressed in accordance with the needs and interests of the humanitarian or social action (Read-Hamilton, 2014).

Generally, GBV can be defined as the violence directed or inflicted upon a person on the basis of their gender. According to Bloom (2008:14) and researchers of the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) (2016:3), GBV occurs as a result of each gender being expected to execute certain normative roles within the restrains of unequal power relations between men and women in the settings of a specific society or culture (O'Neill, 2015). According to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) (2005:1), this form of violence denigrates and violates a person's right to life, freedom and security and causes humiliation. GBV, as demarcated by the IASC (2005), is an all-encompassing term that refers to any harmful activity that is inflicted upon and against a person's will on the basis of socially ascribed gender differences between men and women. Constituting legal-, physical- and psychological-related aspects of GBV, this definition is more expansive than definitions that assume that GBV mainly (or even *only*) affects women. Furthermore, GBV as described by the United States Government (2016:6), echoes the preceding conceptualisations, namely GBV is viewed as a form of violence that is instigated against a person on the basis of their biological sexual category, socially constructed gender identity and ideas of ideal and expected forms of masculinity and femininity as specified by society. GBV constitutes, among others, sexual, physical and psychological abuse, verbal threats and economic deprivation, which are likely to transpire in both the private and public sphere (CSVR, 2016:5; Tsui, 2014:121). This interpretation suggests that violence is used against women, girls, men and boys to emphasise and reproduce traditional (and arguably, stereotypical) gender roles and normative standards (IASC, 2005:1). According to this conceptualisation, GBV may, therefore, be imposed on a person irrespective of their sex or gender and is used to emphasise the importance to conform to gender roles.

GBV has mainly been viewed from the 'male perpetrator–female victim' perspective (Kempen, 2019). The most widely known interpretation associated with understandings of GBV is the violence that men perpetrate against women and girls. It is worth recalling my previous reference to the United Nation's (1993) conceptualisation of GBV against women:

> *…any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life. It encompasses, but is not limited to, 'physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation; physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere; trafficking in women and forced prostitution; and physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the state, wherever it occurs.*

In keeping with this quote, Mashiri and Mawire (2013:97) define GBV as a form of violence that women and girls are subjected to because of their female gender identity. According to Mashiri and Mawire (2013:97), women's susceptibility to acts of violence enacted by men may be attributed to attaining an end-result of organised discrimination stemming from the rationalised gendered power relations that present a universalised arrangement of subordination of women at the hands of men. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1992, 2017) concurs with the preceding definition. CEDAW (1992) defines GBV as violence that is directed towards women because of being female, or violence that affects women to an unwarranted degree (Spring *et al*., 2010:356). According to a study conducted by Medie (2019) in 2009, South Africa has the highest rates of mortality due to GBV compared to the rates in America, Canada and the United Kingdom. In 2017, about 69% of women were murdered in Africa by their partners. Mahlori *et al*. (2018:1) and the South African Department of Social Development (2014:16) argue that GBV against women is exacerbated by the lack of adequate legislation and standards that further encourage the victimisation of women and unequal economic rights for and gender disparities among men and women.

According to Dzinavane (2016), as women are viewed as physically weak with supposedly limited power and resources and are considered inferior compared to men (Kumar, 2012:291), they tend to become more vulnerable to GBV. Therefore, men repeatedly use violence as an indication of the normative ideals of being authoritative in order to sustain respect and uphold their patriarchal supremacy (Enaifoghe, 2019:16). Conversely, research on men has also shown that men are embedded in gendered systems. This means that they may have interests as a gender, they may be subjected to power because of their gender identity and are also performers of power in a gendered way. Therefore, men should be understood as not only or necessarily being outside of and above gender structures or gender politics but within and as a part of the circulation of gendered ideas in a culture (Lorentzen, 2011:111; Ratele, 2014:31).

3.2.1 Forms of GBV: An overview and context-specific South African discussion

GBV is enacted in many different forms (Thobejane *et al*., 2018:2), from its most widespread form – that is, intimate partner violence (abuse that occurs in intimate or romantic relationships) – to acts of violence carried out both publicly and privately. According to the CSVR (2016), one of the most common forms of GBV is *domestic violence* that usually occurs between intimate partners. This type of violence, according to Sigsworth (2009) and the Tshwaranang Legal Advocacy Centre (2012) based in South Africa, involves actions of assault, husband or wife battery, and sexual assault. According to Pandea *et al*., (2019:27), this type of violence is a relational violence, thus the dynamics thereof differ from violence that occurs between strangers. Domestic violence includes acts of physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence occurring within the family, domestic unit and/or between partners. Although most incidences of domestic violence are considered to be perpetrated against women by men, there are cases of women abusing their male partners. Domestic violence has an impact on the victim's physical and mental health. Such violence occurs against the will of the one subjected to it and with the intention to humiliate, control and intimidate the victim.

Another form of GBV is *physical violence*. Physical violence is used to cause pain and physical injury to the victim. As with other forms of violence, the perpetrator's objective

is not only to cause harm but also to limit the victim's determination. Physical violence is also used to send a message to the victim demonstrating difference in power or control (Enaifoghe, 2019:16). Such violence in intimate relationships continues to be a widespread phenomenon in every country. This type of violence includes acts of hitting, punching, kicking and pushing (Thobejane *et al*., 2018:2), among others. Perpetrators may use knives and other sharp instruments when executing physical violence (Safariolyaei & Amiri, 2017:44; Sigsworth, 2009; Tshwaranang Legal Centre, 2012). Physical abusers may deny their victims access to services that are needed for survival and may also force victims to engage in activities against their will.

The third type of violence associated with GBV, according to Ludsin and Vetten (2005), is *emotional or psychological violence*. All forms of GBV have a psychological aspect associated with them, since the main aim of violence and abuse is to negatively impact on the dignity and integrity of the victim. Apart from other forms of GBV, there is a certain form of violence that takes place using techniques or strategies that are meant to achieve psychological abuse in a "pure" form. These strategies include confining the victim to social contact and limiting their movements, withholding information with regard to, for example, joint finances, and threatening the victim with abandonment and harming their family or their children (Dokkedahl *et al.*, 2019:2; Kovacs, 2011). In the private sphere, psychological violence includes threatening conduct that lacks physical violence or verbal elements – for instance, actions that refer to former acts of violence, or purposeful ignorance and neglect of another person. In the case of such violence, the perpetrator also uses words/names and language/verbal connotations that may undermine and belittle another person. Emotional violence entails actions that affect the victim's self-esteem, confidence and their sense of self, such as humiliation, purposeful ignorance, neglection, disrespect and embarrassment (Ludsin & Vetten, 2005:18).

Victims of GBV may also experience *economic violence*. This includes the perpetrator's control of the victim's assets, access to finances and other economic resources (Slabbert & Green, 2013:240). According to Pandea *et al*. (2019:27), socio-economic conditions may contribute to the vulnerability of the victim to violence. Economic vulnerability has been recognised in many abusive relationships as a distinct phenomenon. Regardless of who has the higher economic status in the relationship,

threats of violence may still persist. Forms of socio-economic violence may include taking away the income of the victim, not allowing them to have a separate income (giving them “housewife” status, or making them work in a family business without a salary), or making the victim unfit for work through targeted physical abuse (CSVR, 2016:5).

Finally, the most common type of GBV is *sexual violence*, which involves rape, sexual harassment and other sexual advances that are forced on the victim (Mathews, 2010; UNHCR, 2008:201; Vetten, 2003). As more information has become available about the circumstances surrounding sexual violence, it has become clear that sexual violence, like other forms of violence, is an abuse of power. The causes of these forms of violence are multidimensional and may be shaped by various multifaceted forces that function at different levels (such as community, societal and individual) of an individual’s life (Sida, 2015:10). Forms of sexual violence may include engaging in non-consensual vaginal, anal or oral penetration with another person by the use of any body part or object; engaging in other non-consensual acts of a sexual nature with a person; or causing someone else to engage in non-consensual acts of a sexual nature with a third person. Some classifications also include human trafficking and slavery in the category of physical violence, because initial coercion is often experienced and the people involved often end up becoming victims of further violence because of their enslavement. According to police statistics, approximately 12 000 men are raped in England and Wales alone every year, but only around 15% of those who experience sexual violence choose to report to the police (Ministry of Justice, 2013). Having now discussed the forms of the GBV, I theorise its main causes.

3.2.2 Causes of GBV

Culture, according to CEDAW (2005), plays an important role in the creation and perpetuation of GBV. Traditional norms, standards and stereotypes regarding how women and men, respectively, ought to perform or act also contribute to the perpetuation of GBV in that roles assigned tend to constrain some while maximising opportunities for others (Mashiri & Mawire, 2013:12). My discussion in chapter 2 attests to this. Therefore, for GBV to be prevented, there should be an understanding of what causes the violent acts. Causes may be biological, psychological, or jealousy-related,

power and control, behaviour observation and imitation (social learning), and insufficient resources.

Another cause of GBV can be linked to the experience or observation of violence in the family during a person's childhood. Kalmus and Seltzer (1984) argue that people who have been exposed to violence in their childhood have a likelihood of experiencing violence later in their adult life or in their marriages. They argue that socialisation can be associated with observed or experienced violence and the response (i.e., marital aggression) thereto. In keeping with initial studies on GBV (Kalmus & Seltzer, 1984), more recent studies indicate that there is a relationship between children who have been exposed to GBV and those who go on to be perpetrators of violence in their own relationships or families (Nixon *et al.*, 2013; Pingley, 2017:11). According to Albert Bandura's social learning theory (as cited in Lyons & Berge, 2012), although not all children will become perpetrators of violence (Temple *et al.*, 2013), children who are exposed to parental violence are most likely to be victims of violence and then become perpetrators of violence towards others. Social learning theory was developed on the notion that behaviour is learnt through observation and imitation of modelled behaviour. According to Bandura (as cited in Lyons & Berge, 2012:2), learning may not necessarily occur because of first-hand experience but through harnessing the power of observation and imitation. Through the observation of others, people can develop ideas about how new behaviour is executed. This information is thus coded in the person's memory and may serve as a guide for immediate or future occasions or altercations. Thus, according to Payne and Gainey (2009), social learning theory argues that boys tend to "learn" how to be perpetrators or abusers, whereas girls "learn" about victimisation. Furthermore, GBV is argued to happen because of the jealousy of one or both partners in an intimate relationship. Violence occurs when one partner suspects the other of being unfaithful or planning to end the relationship (Thobejane, 2018:12). The partner who has been cheated on would act violently to punish or would use intimidation towards the one who has been unfaithful (Roach, 2011).

According to Adams (2008), GBV may also be ascribed to dependency of the victim on their partner for economic well-being. Dependency means that victims have/believe that they have less options and sufficient resources to assist in coping with or change

their partner's violent behaviour. The latter may include coercion and threats, intimidation, emotional abuse, economic abuse, and isolation. According to Adams (2008), this may be associated with the economic theory in which he alludes that violent spouses tend to have control over the other partner's access to and control of economic resources. Furthermore, economic violence may go to the magnitude of the victim being prevented to acquire resources, having a limited amount of resources at their disposal, and exploitation of their resources. The objective of inhibiting the victim from attaining resources is to suppress the victim's capability to be self-reliant, therefore compelling them to be dependent on the perpetrator for as long as they want to manipulate them economically and otherwise. Like Adams' (2008) assertion, Stylianou (2018:4) argues that economic violence occurs to threaten and compromise the victim's economic security and self-sufficiency.

Victims may experience three forms of economic violence. First, they may be subject to *economic control*, where they may be denied the power of making financial decisions (e.g., denied access to bank accounts and/or withholding and hiding jointly earned money) and also denied access to their finances (Plummer *et al.*, 2015; Stylianou, 2018). Second, victims may experience *employment sabotage* in which they are prevented from maintaining and obtaining employment through harassment at work and inflicting facial injuries to prevent them from going to work. Lastly, victims may be subjected to *economic exploitation*, where the perpetrator dictates how the victim's money should be spent (e.g., dictating how the victim should use their money or salary; using the victim's credit cards without their knowledge and permission) (Anderson *et al.*, 2003; Plummer *et al.*, 2015). For instance, in Thobejane and Luthada's (2019) South African research about the trend of domestic violence directed towards men, one participant reported how the perpetrator was too demanding and materialistic and would not take "no" for an answer and would demand some commodities that were beyond the victim's salary. The respondent stated:

> *She also dictates terms on how we should spend my salary. I am often without money during the course of the month because she shall have spent it on clothes and on entertainment.* (Thobejane & Luthada, 2019:11)

Additionally, GBV may occur due to the perpetrator's need to have power and control over the victim. Power and control may be obtained using various strategies, including

emotional blackmail, physical and verbal iteration, as well as sexual and financial means in an effort to enforce power and control over the victim (Bancroft, 2002). Regarding the vulnerability of men due to sexual victimisation, in Javaid's (2017) research on theorising vulnerability and male sexual victimisation, respondents believed overall that men's lifestyle made them more vulnerable to sexual violence, such as placing themselves in vulnerable situations with the use of alcohol or drugs. This suggests that alcohol and drugs may make it difficult for male rape victims to enact hegemonic masculine practices because these substances may impede their sense of power, control and domination, bringing about, therefore, a lack of control over their own body and mind. Consequently, this lack of power and control may facilitate disbelieving attitudes and biased assumptions and responses regarding gender roles and stereotypes, since men are always supposed to embody hegemonic masculinity (Javaid, 2017; Kimmel, 2005).

In keeping with the exploration of the lived experiences of South African male victims of GBV in marital and intimate relationships as overarching research objective, and having discussed the conceptualisation and causes of GBV, the next section investigates the possible challenges faced by male victims of GBV abroad, in Africa and South Africa, respectively.

3.3 POSSIBLE CHALLENGES FACED BY MALE VICTIMS OF GBV

In the past, domestic violence has largely been seen as a personal rather than a social problem (Centre for Law and Social Policy, 2006:2). According to Lowenstein (2005), patriarchal society has reinforced levels of inequality of women's points of view about social problems such as domestic violence. Earlier, police departments viewed these disturbances as family "squabbles" and not as violence against an individual. Therefore, these disturbances were not treated with the same seriousness as an assault on a total stranger. Today, domestic violence is viewed as posing more of a serious social problem and a crime. The debate is between those who perceive domestic violence as being mainly or only associated with battered women (Johnson, 2005) or battered men (Hines *et al*., 2007). This societal conflict about battered women and men has resulted in the argument that if men are victims of domestic violence, then it is due to the self-defence of women being abused (Hines *et al.*, 2007).

Hines *et al.* (2007) further note that intimate partner violence has been categorised into two distinctive typologies. First, *situational-couple violence* is conceptualised as rooted in the stresses of family life where the conflict situation may escalate to violence. This, for example, includes alcohol or substance abuse, anger management issues, and/or communication issues (Stith *et al.*, 2012:6). According to Johnson (2006:18), the main problem between the couple is a deficiency in communication skills, which is then complemented with verbal aggression, and as a result escalates into violence. Second, they identify *patriarchal or intimate terrorism* directed towards battered women, where there is an attempt to dominate one's partner and exert general control over the relationship involving the use of a wide range of power rooted in patriarchal traditions of dominance in relationships (Tiwari *et al.*, 2015:2). Because of the recent feminist movements (e.g., *#Metoo, #AmINext #EnoughIsEnough, #ManAreTrash*), women have been strongly recognised as victims of domestic violence. There is still discrimination towards men as victims in intimate partner violence cases. Shuler (2010:164) accordingly argues that male victimisation by their spouses or intimate partners has become a serious social issue that is ignored by society. Regrettably, policies and statistics addressing GBV tend to be limited and underreported when addressing male victims of intimate partner violence (Thobejane *et al.*, 2018:5).

Domestic violence directed towards men involves a range of intentional actions, such as sexual, psychological, emotional and verbal abuse. Other forms of man battering include slapping (Hines & Douglas, 2009:575); pouring hot water while the victim is asleep (Njagi, 2012) and on areas mostly hidden by clothes; chopping off men's genitals; verbal insults (Anyuor, 2012); insulting the partner in front of children (Luthada & Netshandama, 2019); scratching (Hines *et al.*, 2007); pouring petrol over men and setting them alight (Thobejane *et al*., 2018). In addition, whipping and throwing chairs, benches, stools and using utensils (Carmo *et al.*, 2011:357; Drijber *et al.*, 2013; Kolbe & Buttner, 2020:538) to attack a person (Gathogo, 2012; Kolbe & Buttner, 2020) are examples of GBV towards men.

GBV in the form of intimate partner violence has been a problematic issue in the US. Following the solemnity of the violence, feminist movements began to initiate GBV conversations and protests to the American justice system in the 1970s (Shuler, 2010). Most victims who reported the incidents of violence were women; however, men were

also found to have experienced intimate partner violence (Carney *et al*., 2007). According to Shuler (2010:164), 1.3 men per 1 000 in the US become victims of intimate partner violence compared to the 3.8 women each year. This is about 1 181 women and 329 men who are victimised by their partners each year in the US. The argument that men are also likely to be victims of GBV tends to contradict the feminist ideology of GBV being solely male perpetrator-female victim (Johnson, 2005:1127). As a result, men who come out to report the violence are subjected to potential scorn and are viewed as cowards (Shuler, 2010:165).

A particular US social and gender-based standard is that men are expected to be strong and dominating, not allowing women to dominate them – a thought clear in theoretical accounts of Connell (2005), Kimmel (2017) and Messerschmidt (2019). The latter writer, for example, speaks to the concept of "dominant masculinity". This refers to masculinity that is the most common, powerful and most widespread in certain settings (Messerschmidt, 2019). Dominant masculinity dominates other masculinities with an exercise of power and control over people and situations (Yang, 2020:319). As a result, men who are victimised by their partners find it hard to disclose that they experienced violence at the hands of their female partners (Barber, 2008; Shuler, 2010). The informal social control has shaped the thinking of American society about who abuses whom within society; therefore, informal social control is highly influential in how society reacts to various situations within the family and the community. Shuler (2010) argues that male victims of GBV may experience broken limbs, stab wounds, teeth marks, inappropriate comments, fear and intimidation, and emotional aggression (Barber, 2008).

Reflecting the above accounts and examples associated with GBV towards men, Du Plat-Jones (2006), in a study focused on domestic violence and the role of health professionals in the UK, found that male victims of domestic violence experienced stabbings, knocked-out teeth, injuries to the genitals, and verbal, emotional and psychological abuse. Black *et al.* (2011) reported, based on their study in the US, that one in four men reported being physically abused (this included slapping, pushing, and shoving) by a spouse and intimate partner in their lifetime, and one in seven men reported being relentlessly physically abused (being hit with a fist, hard object, kicked, slammed against something, choked, burned) by their partner at some point in their

lifetime (Black *et al.*, 2011). Four in 10 men have experienced at least one form of intimidation, including seclusion from loved ones (family and friends), manipulation, blackmail and threats. Furthermore, research found that one in 10 men in the US has experienced stalking by an intimate partner and reported the impact of their experiences of these violent behaviours on their relationship. These measures of impact include fear, safety concerns, post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms, and work absenteeism (Black *et al.*, 2011). Consequently, these victims end up not receiving professional assistance because of their inability to report due to fear of deviating from pre-existing gender roles and notions of masculinity associated with "real" men and the stigma surrounding male victims of GBV or sexual abuse (Barber, 2008; Shuler, 2010).

Hines *et al.*'s (2007) study on characteristics of callers to the domestic abuse helpline for men found that male victims experienced physical abuse from their female partners and a considerable minority dreaded their partners' violence and stalking. They also alluded to the fact that 90% of their participants (a study based on the characteristics of callers to the domestic abuse helpline for men) experienced controlling behaviours, and a number of men noted that they had frustrating experiences with the justice system. According to an Australian study by Tilbrook *et al.* (2010) on intimate partner abuse of men, participants reported being "smashed until covered in blood", being held by an earlobe and a portion of it sliced off, being hit by a pan and being thrown with large objects by their female partners. Furthermore, another Australian study conducted by Walker *et al.* (2019:4) on men's experiences of intimate partner violence had participants stating that their partner had threatened to kill them. For example, some participants noted: "My wife threatened to kill me and my family" and "She punched me in the face, kicked me and drove a car toward me" (as cited in Walker *et al.*, 2019:4). Owing to a lack of statistics that document male victims of GBV because of male reluctance to report, crime surveys and clinical samples may be less representative of the victimisation rate (Douglas & Hines, 2011; Drijber *et al.*, 2013).

In keeping with the preceding subsection on possible challenges faced by male victims of GBV abroad, what follows is a contextualisation of GBV in African and South African society, in general and respectively.

3.4 GBV IN AFRICAN AND SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY: A CONTEXTUALISATION

Given the context of the challenges and issues faced by male victims of GBV, this section is informed by a discussion of GBV in relation to its applicability to the African context and South African context and how masculinities contribute to the behaviours of men and women.

3.4.1 GBV in Africa

According to Garcia-Moreno *et al.* (2013), GBV is prevalent throughout sub-Saharan Africa. The overall prevalence in Africa was 36% in 2012, surpassing the global average of 30%. Forty-five per cent (45.6%) of women in Africa were subject to partner violence, and 11.9% experienced sexual assault compared to other women in the world. According to a review conducted by Akamike *et al.* (2019) on the predictors and facilitators of GBV in sub-Saharan Africa, the prevalence of GBV remains high, with some countries (including Ethiopia, Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda and South Africa) reporting a prevalence of more than 50% (Enaifoghe *et al.*, 2021; Muluneh *et al.*, 2020). Due to high prevalence of GBV, most studies in Africa focus on women as victims and men as perpetrators of violence.

(a) GBV and masculine typologies

As was clear in chapter 2's discussion, understanding the dynamics of GBV in an African context requires a theoretical understanding of African society as being deeply patriarchal. Men and women have distinct gender roles and expectations (Bloom, 2008; Enaifoghe, 2019; Mngomezulu, 2018). Common patriarchal notions of the ideal man include those ideals that a man should exude strength; protect and defend the honour of his family; defend his strong views; that he partakes in activities that are deemed masculine, such as sports and drinking; he is sexually virulent; and he is successful in everything that he attempts. Conversely, women are expected to be child-bearers, nurture their children and be sexually available for their partners (Mudau & Obadire, 2017:70). Patriarchy, in an African context, provides the framing of gender inequality, unequal power and clearly distinct roles for men and women (Enaifoghe *et al.*, 2021:122). Men construct and perform masculinity that is in accordance with their gender identities, values in relation to women and other men. The notion is that men

are expected to conform and act in a particular way that is in accordance with certain definitions, and those who diverge from these ideals, are viewed as less masculine. Said ideals include, among others, being the primary breadwinner or provider for the family (Dworkin *et al.*, 2012), expected to display physical strength or toughness, which includes using violence to control others (Graaff & Heinecken, 2017:2).

According to Connell and Messerschmidt (2005:834), although there are multiple masculinities where some masculinities are less violent than others, they all tend to draw on and benefit from the privileges that come with patriarchy. Masculinities that are less violent focus on the men's responsibilities that position them in a cooperative and supportive relation with women. In contrast, masculinities that are violent tend to be grounded in the dominance and control of women and threats that are used to maintain gender hierarchies and limit any transgressions. Within these different masculinities exist hegemonic masculinity that is considered to be the dominant, ideal and superior form of masculinity in a given society, with societal institutions (mass media, politics and corporate culture) being the reinforcers (Morrell, 1998, 2012). According to Hong (2000), hegemonic masculinity may also lead to, among others, homophobia and compulsory heterosexuality.

Another form of masculinity is hypermasculinity, wherein due to insecurities relating to gender identity, aggressive and violent behaviours are increased or portrayed with an objective of affirming or proving masculinity (Hong, 2000). Hypermasculinity holds the idea of manhood that accentuates the view of violence and aggression as legitimate ways of expression, assertion of power and conflict resolution. Men who subscribe to this form of masculinity are conditioned to never display fear or pain and should appear in charge of all situations (Ratele, 2008). These forms of masculinity can be seen in the country's public figures or leaders (such as Mr Julius Malema, a former African National Congress youth league president). According to Morrell *et al.* (2012:18), Malema conspicuously celebrates assertions of power and wealth, with acquisition predicated on entitlement, use of violence and brute strength rather than respect for the legitimate use of power (e.g., celebrating the attacks on White farmers).

Furthermore, the epitomes and notions of what it means to be a man may lead to negative consequence for men themselves or people around them. According to Morrell (1998), dominating women is what most masculinities have in common; this is

primarily associated with what is termed as toxic masculinity. Toxic masculinity is where all the norms of masculinity relating to violence, unemotionality and sexual aggression have harmful effects on both society and the individual (Ratele, 2008:22, 2013:145).

(b) Social factors that reinforce hypermasculinity

There are various factors that give rise to toxic masculinity, also considering the personality and character of the individual along hypermasculine lines. Hypermasculinity, according to Mosher and Sirkin (1984), have three key features: men view risk as stimulating and exciting; they view violence as acceptable and indicative of their male dominance; and they display callous sexual attitudes that result in a potential disdain for women's rights (Hamburger *et al*., 1996). These features, individually and in concurrence with each other, tend to increase the prospect that men will enact violence, and more precisely GBV, against both women and other men. For example, gender-inequitable principles are a strong indicator of violence. The more gender-inequitable a man's beliefs, the more likely he is to report having enacted some form of GBV (Barker *et al.*, 2011). Smeaton and Byrne (1987) accordingly postulate that men who conform to hypermasculine features recorded higher on actions of self-reported inclination to rape (Graaff & Heinecken, 2017:2).

According to Hong (2000), there are two ways in which hypermasculinity occurs. Firstly, it occurs when men are deprived of the access to patriarchal privileges because they do not ensemble the hegemonic ideas of masculinity. As a result, men will try to make an effort to affirm their manhood by means of conforming and adhering to stringent and extreme display of traditional masculinity. Secondly, hypermasculinity occurs through social affiliation or cohabitation. Men who affiliate with men who portray exaggerated orthodoxy to traditional male role norms tend to try and be tougher or manlier to compete with their peers (Morrell *et al.*, 2012:23). This is as a result of men being socialised (through amongst others, parents, media and religious institutions) into notion that they ought to be leaders in all spheres of life (The Daily Maverick, 2018) and should be strong and aggressive (Lindegger & Maxwell, 2007), which may also result in emotional absenteeism, lack of tolerance and strictness. In support of this argument, an article in *The Daily Maverick* (October, 2018) attests to this insofar as it notes that men who are prone to displays of toxic masculinity also tend to avoid conflict

resolution approaches that are perceived as feminine. Toughness, dominance and the willingness to opt for violence to resolve interpersonal conflicts are preferred over dialogue. Seeking help or advice for pain symptoms or mental distress is also viewed as a sign of weakness for “real” men. Consequently, men are extremely reluctant to seek medical attention or visit a counsellor. This means that boys and men tend to have very poor methods of relieving tension and intra-/interpersonal conflict without resorting to aggression.

Another factor that gives rise to toxic masculinity and excessive male violence, as outlined by Ratele (2008), is high unemployment and high levels of income inequality. According to Morrell *et al*. (2013), HMT helps us dissect the relationship between GBV and the weak positions that some men occupy in society due the unequal distribution of wealth and power. According to Ratele (2008), countries facing high levels of unemployment and lack of opportunities to accomplish the burdens of masculinity may lead to feelings of bitterness when men and women who do not conform to hegemonic masculinities assume leadership over men who conform to hegemonic masculinities. This may be attributed to the fact that economic status is commonly associated with dominant notions of masculinity, an argument to which Graaff and Heinecken (2017:4) attest. According to them, the legislative system of racial inequalities during the Apartheid era created unequal opportunities of attaining wealth and basic salaries, which consequently brought about a large income gap between White middle- and upper class, and the lower and working classes were people of colour. This deprivation caused by the Apartheid system, according to Hamber (2009:9), was the root of violence in the South African society and the recent downturn and growing levels of income inequality have thus been noted as possible reasons for the current levels of violence in the country.

Seedat *et al.* (2009:1015) concurs with this line of argumentation. They say that income disparity and low development are the strong positive predictors of violence, and South Africa had the worst income disparity and uppermost rate of homicide. The effect of this income inequality on men’s accomplishment of masculinities is often understood as an aspect that contributes to their enactment of violence. Jewkes *et al.* (2009:10) state that an incapacity to exhibit the social expectation of successful manhood may trigger a crisis of male identity, and rape and intimate partner violence are means of

resolving this crisis, because they act to reconfirm the nature of powerfulness otherwise denied (Graaff & Heinecken, 2017:4). Thus, being incapable of achieving masculinities through economic means may contribute to men using violence against others as an alternative technique of achieving these masculinities (Graaff & Heinecken, 2017:5).

Women's empowerment and liberation have led to feelings of alienation among men and lack of control in relationships (Ragnarsson *et al*., 2010). Therefore, the disempowerment of men together with societal changes have led to men seeking to retain and reclaim their dominant masculinities to assert their control and dominance over women. The patriarchal notions of masculinity and "what it means to be a man" have been considered to be the major forces of violent behaviours in men. This violent behaviour is used to display male power, control (dominance) and affirm masculinity. In this patriarchal system, women are socialised to be submissive to victimisation while men are dominators and abusers (Shefer *et al.*, 2015:96). According to Shefer *et al.* (2015), masculinities scholars argue that dominant forms of masculinity and male practice not only have negative impact on women and girls but also undermine boys' and men's health and well-being. Shefer *et al*. (2015) speak to the shifts in how masculinity and sexuality of young South African men is constructed, challenged and maintained. Findings indicated that their discourses were also enforced in large discursive contexts such as community familial expectations and norms. A participant in the study noted the following:

> *Once you are told that you are a man, there are expectations that from yourself as man and from your family and some of us think that having a baby without thinking through about this thing, just to prove to yourself that you are not shooting blanks [slang for male infertility].* (Shefer *et al*., 2015:100)

Another participant noted:

> *I can say that maybe one of the reasons why guys who are gay sometimes hide themselves 'coz they are ashamed and fear what the community and parents would say 'coz he does not meet the expectations of a man.* (Shefer *et al*., 2015:100)

Thus, men and young boys tend to engage in risky and dangerous activities as a way of affirming and maintaining their dominant masculinity as expected by the community and/or family and to show a successful performance of masculinity (Shefer *et al*., 2015:100).

However, there are studies that include both genders as either victims or perpetrators of GBV (e.g., Andersson *et al.*, 2007; Gass *et al.*, 2011; Jankey *et al*., 2011; Kaminer *et al.*, 2008). Further African studies (Barkhuizen, 2015; Gathogo, 2015; Kumar, 2012; Thobejane *et al.*, 2018) have shown that men also fall victim to GBV at the hands of their female partners. According to the *Post* newspaper (2014) in Zambia, a man reported being admitted to hospital after his wife beat and stabbed him with a kitchen knife following a marital dispute. Another headline of the newspaper in 2013 reported a woman abusing (beating) her husband because of the high rank she held as a police officer.

3.4.2 GBV in South Africa

South Africa, like other African countries, is also perceived as a patriarchal society, where the culture of masculine dominance is highly promoted and endorsed (Barkhuizen, 2015:294; Enaifoghe *et al.*, 2021; Gathogo, 2015; Gennrich, 2013; Kumar, 2012:291; Thobejane *et al*., 2018:5). Because of the patriarchal notions of masculinity and sex inequality, it is expected that men are likely not to be abused by women. Masculinity, according to Gennrich (2013:6), is generally defined as what it means to be a man. Connotations or adages such as “a man does not cry” and “a man is the provider and is in control” (Gathogo, 2015:3; Thobejane *et al.*, 2018:5) are used to describe an ideal or a strong man who, in this sense, is not susceptible to GBV or is not likely to experience domestic abuse.

According to Enaifoghe *et al*. (2021:127), South Africa is experiencing high rates of GBV, and this has become a matter of concern. This, according to Bloom (2008:14), is because of gender normative roles and expectations as well as unequal power relations between men and women in the context of a specific society. South Africa is reported to have the highest statistics of GBV in the world; the statistics also include rape and domestic violence (Human Rights Watch, 2020 as cited in Mail & Guardian, 2020). Police statistics reveals that between 2019 and 2020, the rate of reported sexual

offences in South Africa increased by an average of 146 incidences, of which 116 were related to rape (Mail & Guardian, 2020). Between 2019 and 2020, 53 293 sexual offences were reported (an average of 146 per day) from 25 420 between 2018 and 2019. Of these cases, the police reported 42 289 (an average of 116 each day) rape cases between 2019 and 2020 from 41 583 in 2018/2019 (Mail & Guardian, 2020; SAPS Crime Statistics).

The impact of COVID-19 in South Africa uncovered various pre-existing social structural issues, such as high rates of unemployment and violence against women. Since the announcement of national lockdown to control the spread of the virus on 23 March 2020 by President Cyril Ramaphosa, violence against women has increased tremendously across South Africa. Furthermore, the national GBV Command Centre alluded to the increase of numbers, arguing that the number of GBV-related calls received had tripled (Pikoli, 2020:1). The recent statistics relating to GBV show an increase of 2 320 complaints during the first week of the global lockdown. This number, according to the South African Minister of Police, Bheki Cele, shows a 37% higher rate than the weekly average of 87 290 domestic cases reported to the police in 2019 (Enaifoghe *et al.*, 2021:127).

In an article by Ellis (2020) that focused on GBV as South Africa's second pandemic, President Cyril Ramaphosa described the GBV plague and stated that one woman is killed every three hours. According to Ellis (2020), the COVID-19 pandemic and the national lockdown were also associated with the rise in GBV cases. Ellis (2020) argued that GBV has become the second pandemic raging in the country. The recent GBV statistics reported an increase of 2 320 complaints in the first weeks of the COVID-19 national lockdown. This is 37% higher than the average of 87 290 domestic violence cases, as reported by Minister Bheki Cele in 2019 (Pikoli, 2020). A case that serves as an emblem is the brutal murder of 28-year-old Tshegofatso Pule, who on 04 June went missing and was found four days later, on 08 June having been stabbed and hanged on a tree in Johannesburg while eight months pregnant. Another case reported by *News24* (2021) involved a 28-year-old Lambert's Bay mother who was stabbed to death on Mother's Day during a domestic dispute in the Western Cape area. According to Morrell *et al.* (2012) and News24 (2021), this is due to patriarchy and a cultural system of indoctrination in South Africa that has created gendered ideas of male power

and control where violence is constantly used to affirm masculinity, thereby subjecting women to abuse.

According to Machisa *et al.* (2011), South Africa reports a high rate of female victims of GBV, yet almost no data or statistics exist on men as victims of GBV. Some studies have shown that men can be victims GBV at the hands of women (Barkhuizen, 2015; Gathogo, 2015; Kgatle *et al*., 2021; Kumar, 2012; Mqakelana, 2015; Thobejane *et al*., 2018). Regardless of the latter studies, GBV against men are mainly ignored or not given the necessary attention (Barkhuizen, 2015:291). This is attributed to the fact that the topic has not been broadly explored and reported, and male victims are afforded little support from healthcare professionals and the justice system as it relates to GBV (Tsui *et al.*, 2010:770). This has numerous implications. First, the level at which men experience GBV at the hands of their partners (Kumar, 2012:293). Second, there is a lack of understanding of the phenomenon of GBV as it relates to male victims (Thobejane *et al.*, 2018:2). Finally, it exacerbates the lack of awareness regarding the lived reality of men experiencing GBV (Hlavka, 2017:483; Litman, 2003:772).

In a South African study undertaken by Thobejane *et al.* (2018) in Limpopo on the experiences of men as victims of domestic abuse, the men reported having suffered insults (i.e., verbal abuse), not being allowed to see their children after the couple had separated, and even reported being stalked by their partners. The reasons behind these acts of abuse, according to participants in the study, are related to their partners' insecurities regarding issues of infidelity, jealousy, the partner's level of education and their job/work status (Thobejane *et al.*, 2018:12). According to Afifi *et al.* (2009) and Coker *et al.* (2008), men who sustained physical injury and psychological abuse were more likely to resort to substance abuse and using these substances as therapeutic measures or methods. In so doing, they left their physical health indirectly compromised.

In keeping with the foregoing contextualisation of GBV abroad, in Africa and South Africa, the next section discusses the consequences of GBV for victims.

3.5 CONSEQUENCES OF GBV

Hines and Douglas (2009:579) claim that GBV may have devastating long-term consequences for victims in various ways. The effects of GBV may be categorised into physical, psychological and social effects, respectively. According to Hines and Douglas (2011), these effects can be dangerous for male victims as opposed to female victims. This is due to the lack of adequate support for men as there is for women who are victims of the same crime (Hines & Douglas, 2011). Physical effects, on the one hand, may include injuries, infirmities, problems related to the reproductive health of the victim, and death. Psychological consequences, on the other hand, may include fear, lack of trust for others, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, withdrawal, suicide ideation, and substance abuse (Safariolyaei & Amiri, 2017:44). Social effects of GBV may involve divorce, problems in relation to interaction with friends or family due to aggression (Mqakelana, 2015; Walker *et al.*, 2019:2) and poverty that is caused by the individual being economically unproductive.

As men are socialised to not be emotionally expressive (Morgan & Wells, 2016), they may feel discouraged to disclose their experiences, fearing that they may not be understood and believed (Tsui, 2014). Thus, perceptions of gender may play a major role in how society (including law officials, justice system, or bystanders) views and perceives victims of GBV (Corbally, 2015:3120; Walker *et al*., 2019:2) and in victims' decision to disclose and report the victimisation (Walker *et al*., 2019:2).

Wallace (2014) argues that male victims of GBV often find it challenging to seek help because of the notions of masculinity enforced by society. Research has shown that many cases of men as victims of violence remain invisible and underreported. Many factors may contribute to the victims' underreporting of abuse, including failure to recognise the victimisation as abuse; distrust of the justice system/law enforcement; fear of stigmatisation and fear of being labelled as useless (Mgolozeli & Duma, 2020:11); fear of being ridiculed and not being taken seriously by the police or being laughed at; preconceived prejudices that police only protect women; and protecting honoured reputation from the community due to police's lack of confidentiality. Javaid (2017) argues that those who do not conform to the dominant form of masculinity and gender roles ascribed to them tend to be at risk of experiencing secondary victimisation. This is because male victims of GBV may deviate from and contradict

the expectation of what it means to be a man, as the reporting may incorporate characteristics that relate to powerlessness, femininity and weakness, as the preceding discussion attests to. These are characteristics that characterise subordinate or marginalised masculinities (Connell, 2005; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

As regards the distrust of law enforcement/justice system, Barkhuizen (2015) and Javaid (2020:419) argue that the justice system plays a major role in the post-victimisation of men, which may affect the victims' decision to respond to the abuse. Therefore, it is significant to explore police officers' responses when the victim reports the crime – this may contribute to a better understanding the victim's feelings about the justice system (Barkhuizen, 2015). According to Javaid (2020:419), police officials may prove to be insensitive to male victims of abuse; thus, the justice system and officials require training (maybe a course or workshops) and sensitisation to emphasise with GBV against men and should also discuss physical, emotional and sexual abuse that could happen in those relationships (Woodyard, 2019). According to a study done by Dim and Lysova (2021:13) in Canada on male victims' experiences with perceptions of criminal justice response to intimate partner violence, participants reported negative treatment received from the police when seeking intervention. One participant reported:

> *I called the police after the incidence that she pushed me and hit me and then got mad and locked herself in the bedroom, and I called the police and complained about it, and they said, 'is anybody in immediate danger?' and I said No, and they said, 'well, there's really no reason for us to come out.' And that was the end of it and at that point I just said the police were useless*. (Dim & Lysova, 2021:13)

Another participant reported being attacked with objects and being physically assaulted by his female partner in the presence of police officials:

> *A lot of throwing things, she hit me a few times, she punched me in the face a couple of times, she punched me right in the ribs in front of two police officers, and on the way out they laughed and called me her punching bag. (Dim & Lysova, 2021:14)*

According to Barkhuizen (2015), male victims will be recognised and able to start the healing process once the criminal justice system takes male victimisation seriously. In a study done by Walker *et al.* (2019) on the help-seeking behaviours of male victims of IPV in Australia, a participant reported that they did not report their abusive experience because they "didn't think police would take it seriously that he was assaulted by a woman smaller than him"; another noted "the police do not take male victims of domestic violence and abuse seriously. I'd likely wind up being the one in trouble". Therefore, Barkhuizen (2015) argued that social beliefs may be associated with lack of acceptance of male abuse and victimisation.

In keeping with the focus on men's experiences of GBV in Africa and South Africa, the following subsection discusses men's reluctance to report acts of violence as well their help-seeking behaviours.

3.6 HELP-SEEKING BEHAVIOURS AND UNDERREPORTING OF MALE VICTIMS OF GBV

Owing to the stigma associated with male victimisation, Reid and Walker (2005) are of the opinion that male victims of GBV are reticent to report to law enforcement and society at large. The reluctance to report their experiences emerges from the dread of the public's response to their victimisation, as it may be seen as deviating and challenging hegemonic masculinity and the norms that emanate from it.

According to Tsui (2014) and Walker *et al.* (2019:2), the way male victims of GBV are perceived by others may affect their decision to report their experience and seek professional help. Reactions from others result from the societal norms about the likelihood of men being victims of violence perpetrated by women (Tsui *et al.*, 2012). For GBV against men to be recognised in society, reporting is important in order to have services available to help male rape victims, which, in turn, may get social recognition.

Tsui *et al.* (2010) undertook a national US-based online self-administered survey investigating whether, and how, abused men seek help. Results showed that abused men did not seek help because of feelings of shame about their inability to protect themselves and perceived threats to their masculinity. The men feared losing dignity

and respect, alongside a perception that seeking assistance for their victimisation was a sign of weakness, leading to feelings of fear and embarrassment (Tsui *et al*., 2010). According to Hines and Douglas (2010), male victims believed that support services could not help them. Drijber *et al.* (2013) further reported that male victims feared that their victimisation would not be taken seriously, that they would be ridiculed, humiliated, or that they would be accused of being a perpetrator if they sought help. Consequently, male victims were more likely to disclose their abuse to family or friends in their immediate surroundings whom they felt confident would maintain secrecy rather than accessing support services (Drijber *et al.*, 2013).

According to the Centre for African Justice, Peace and Human Rights (2018), GBV against men is on the rise and there are hardly any programmes that address the situation. The Government and non-profit organisations spend a lot of funds on campaigns against violence perpetrated against women and children. It is less likely that a certain percentage is distributed to fighting GBV against men.

South African initiatives to address GBV against men include:

- **Lifeline Organisation**

This organisation is focused on domestic violence in South Africa. It recognises male victims of domestic violence and/or GBV; however, it states that the occurrence of GBV against men is not known due to underreporting. It considers the South African justice system to be focused more on women and children, such that when a men report violence, it is likely that the men would be arrested instead. Thus, the victimisation is underreported (Center for African Justice, Peace and Human Rights, 2018).

- **Moshate Organisation**

This is a South African organisation founded by Mr Mashilo Mnisi based in Johannesburg. The organisation is focused on dealing with domestic violence committed against men and boys. Mr Mnisi considers the victimisation of men by women as “South Africa’s hidden crime”. Male victims of violence that uses Moshate’s services are men who are denied equal access to public services as well the right to equal and fair treatment by, among others, the justice system (police stations) and courts of law. These men are also unable or cannot fairly and easily open assault or abuse cases or protection orders against their female partners. The organisation calls

men to take a stand and to “not suffer in silence”. Furthermore, the organisation receives between 25 to 30 complaints of violence from men monthly, and these complaints are a challenge to deal with due to lack of resources (Center for African Justice, Peace and Human Rights, 2018).

- **Real Man Foundation**

Established in November 2020, *The Real Man Foundation* is non-profit organisation founded by Mr Itani Calvin Nengudza. The organisation is located in the northern part of South Africa (Limpopo). The organisation was established to investigate the root causes of violence and to encourage “real men” who will not engage in violence to serve as role models to both women and children. The organisation, according to Health-eNews (2021), has seen an influx of men breaking the gender stereotypes that “men cannot be abused”. According to Mr Nengudza, 75% of complaints brought forward are of men who seeking help against their abusive female partners. He further states that it is encouraging that men are becoming open to help-seeking, which may be considered as progress towards eradicating GBV from society (Health-eNews, 2021).

3.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter reviewed literature relevant to the GBV phenomenon. Starting with the conceptualisation/definition of GBV, the chapter focused on how gender has been viewed as a biased concept that has mostly focused on women as victims and men as perpetrators of GBV. The chapter discussed the causes of GBV, men’s experiences of GBV abroad and in Africa, respectively. This chapter also outlined the effects of GBV on men and discussed their help-seeking behaviour as well as the reasons for underreporting GBV.

Chapter 4 provides a detailed discussion of the research methodology employed in the present study.

CHAPTER 4
REASEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The selected method of inquiry for a study, be it quantitative or qualitative, provides the researcher with a particular metatheoretical and methodological foundation and approach to be used during a sociological investigation or exploration. A paradigm is the framework associated with a chosen research design, measurement, analysis and common personal contribution by scholars as it relates to their area of specialisation. It is focused on the issues pertaining to the nature of social reality and knowledge. The nature of reality, referred to as ontology, aims to explore or respond to questions of whether the social world can be viewed as a statistic or a socially constructed entity external to social actors (Bryman, 2016:544). The nature of knowledge, called epistemology, emphasises how social researchers approach knowledge.

Proponents of qualitative research argue that people play a significant role in constructing social reality and that research approaches should have the ability to capture this dynamic process. The ontological view of constructionism suggests that social units are not pre-determined; rather, individuals attach their lived and subjective meanings to their experiences of said realities – thus, their actions and interactions should be viewed as subjectively meaningful (Bryman, 2016:547). Furthermore, by using the epistemological method of interpretivism, scholars explore an individual's agentic construction of reality. They do this by interpreting the individual's actions and the way in which the world informs the individual's unique experiences and interpretations (Thomas, 2009:75).

This chapter focuses on the ontological and epistemological approaches as the bases for methods and techniques used in the current study. Owing to the empirical nature of this study – the use of a qualitative methodology – I foreground the use of particular sampling, data collection and analyses procedures. This is followed by a detailed demarcation of the biographical information of the research participants. To warrant research integrity and observance of good research practices, a discussion of the ethical considerations and steps to ensure trustworthiness concludes the chapter.

4.2 ONTOLOGICAL AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL APPROACHES

The choice of a particular research methodology is always informed by the metatheoretical underpinnings of a researcher's specific study. This is true for the present study. This subsection focuses on the ontological and epistemological bases of sociological research and how these inform the choice and use of qualitative methodologies. The present study's focus – that is, exploring the lived-experiences of men who had been victims of GBV – necessitated the use of social constructionism and interpretivism. Both relate to the main tenets of phenomenology, as both seek to "replace the objectivist ideal with a broad tradition of on-going criticism in which all productions of the human mind are concerned" (Hoffman, 1990:1; cf. Bryman, 2016:26). Both, therefore, critically interrogate the main tenets of HMT in a South African context, since they adopt a set of lenses that focus on an awareness of the way in which the world is viewed, experienced and dynamically (and socially) (re-)constructed by the male participants. The following subsection outlines the ontological basis of the research methodology adopted for the study.

4.2.1 Social constructionism, GBV and masculinities

Social constructionism is associated with the post-modern approach in qualitative research. The approach originated as an effort to understand the nature of reality (Burr, 2006:4). In accordance with social constructionist views, Korsgaard (2007:8) contends that reality is formed by how we perceive it. It is based on the idea that it is challenging for people to go beyond their "sensory perceptions" and may not exist separately from human thought and action. Proponents of social constructionism critique the idea that knowledge is directly based on sensory perceptions of reality. It is presumed that individuals construct and reconstruct their realities. According to Burr (2006), social constructionism contends that there is no such thing as an objective fact. Rather, knowledge results from observing or perceiving the world from a particularly unique standpoint. Berger and Luckmann (as cited in Andrews, 2012:14) additionally contend that society exists as an objective and subjective reality. This results from the interaction of individuals with the social world and the social world that reciprocally influences people. This means that any action that is repeated frequently then turns into a pattern, which can be enacted by people without much conscious effort, and this

may allow individuals to engage with and foster innovation rather than starting everything afresh.

The knowledge of society as a subjective reality is reached through primary and secondary socialisation. The former involves being afforded an identity and a place in society through familial influences. Burr (2006) argues that an individual's identity originates from the external social context and is not solely based on their intrapsychic scripting. It is through interaction with significant others (who enable the objective reality of society) that socialisation occurs and as a result, messages that are considered as meaningful are then internalised by the individual (Berger & Luckmann, 1991).

According to Korsgaard (2007:10), it is important that language is considered as a characteristic of social construction. He contends that language should not be viewed as merely a reflection of an independent reality, and it does not in its structure and content unveil the structure and content of the real social world. It is equally not an indicator of the subject who speaks the language (Korsgaard, 2007:10). This makes social constructionists critical of the orthodox interpretation of language as principally, if not completely, descriptive (Burr, 2015:223). Language is not a precise elucidation of either our thoughts or reality. Based on Burr's (2015:222) argument, speaking and writing are both actions; it is a process of doing and constructing something. Consequently, language and writing can produce knowledge and truth, which, accordingly, may influence how individuals act and perceive their social reality. Therefore, notions and thoughts are made possible by language. Language heralds concepts and offers a means of constructing the way the world is experienced. Supporters of social constructionism, therefore, base their arguments on, among others, on the principles of symbolic interactionism in that fundamental to this micro-sociological approach, the argument is proposed that individuals construct their own and others' identities (interaction between mind and self) through everyday encounters and social interactions by means of language/symbols (Blumer, 1969:2).

Symbolic interactionism, according to Dong (2008:14), is one of the key theoretical traditions in the school of sociology. This approach maintains that people act on the foundation of meanings achieved from social sources together with their experiences. These meanings are both learned from others and to some extent shaped or re-shaped

by the use of symbols. As individuals learn and use symbols and develop meanings for objects in their social contexts, they develop a mind that is both reflecting and reflexive. According to Turner (2004:345), the mind is not a structure but a process that emerges from human beings' efforts to adjust to their environment (Turner, 2004:345).

Irrespective of its said benefits, social constructionism is also critiqued. Its critics argue that it transgresses the realist views of reality by contesting knowledge based on an objectivist/sensory experience of reality in a homogeneous way. Moreover, it has been critiqued for its redemptive stance, which states that if things are the way they are rather than being natural, it should be possible to adjust them to how people would comparatively have them be (Boghossian, 2006:8-14). Further criticism levelled against social constructionism is that it is nominalist: it is focused on the labelling of individuals, organisations, conditions, or social forms (Chambers, 2002: 165). Therefore, it may be assumed that social constructionism ignores the "real" existence and importance of gender identity.

4.2.2 Interpretivism

The interpretivist approach has its origins in philosophy and human science, predominantly in history. According to Neuman (2011:103-104), the interpretive method is defined as follows:

> *…The systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through the direct detailed observation of people in natural settings in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social worlds.*

The method emphasises the way individuals tend to interpret their subjective reality and assign unique meanings to that reality. Individuals construct their worlds within the setting of their lives (Babbie & Mouton, 2008:28). Scholars who support these insights believe that understanding human experiences is as important as focusing on description, prediction and control – objectives positivists favour. The interpretivist approach is associated with Max Weber's reference to "*verstehen"* (De Vos *et al*., 2011:8; Gann, 2017:31). Theorists such as Dilthey (1833–1911) mentioned that social scientists who subscribe to said epistemological approach highlight empathetic

understanding of research participants' lived experiences (Neuman, 2011:103; Ritzer & Stepnisky, 2014:117). However, understanding in social science should be distinguished from its application in natural sciences. *Verstehen,* according to Weber, centres around an exploration of the wide-ranging experiences and unique interpretations and understandings social actors assign to social phenomena in their naturalistic environment. Weber maintained that social scientists should be focused on this interpretive understanding of people (Gann, 2017:31).

According to Neuman (2011:106), interpretivists maintain that human agency is important and see people as having the ability to make mindful decisions. Human agency is:

> *…an idea used in interpretive social science that we assume that the world of common-sense understanding is stable and real and continues from the past into the future without dramatic change; we do this from the practical need to accomplish everyday tasks*. (Neuman, 2011:106)

This means that it is crucial to consider the decision-making procedure of individuals, their subjective feelings and the way they understand events (Neuman, 2011:106).

Like constructionists, interpretivists emphasise the process by which meanings are formed, negotiated, upheld and improved (Schwandt, 2003). Supporters have the common objective of understanding the world of lived experience from the perspective of those who reside in it. Furthermore, contrasting positivists (who claim that common sense is mediocre to science), interpretivists maintain that common sense is central to guiding individuals in their day-to-day lives and can be used to describe and organise events (Neuman, 2011:106). According to Neuman (2011:106), this is due to the idea that neither common sense (subjective experience) nor science (objective interpretation) has all the answers; rather, interpretivists understand both objective interpretation and subjective experience as relevant and important. This can be associated with Alfred Schutz's work on intersubjectivity. Schutz (1966:82) maintained that intersubjectivity is essential to social actors' day-to-day lives. According to him, the intersubjective nature of the world must be acknowledged because we live in it as human beings surrounded by other human beings, unescapably connected to them

through mutual impact and work, understanding others and being understood by them (Schutz, 1962:10).

An interpretivist and social constructionist interpretation may afford the researcher a better opportunity to address matters concerning everyday actions, experiences and social structures as well as the values individuals assign to these phenomena (Collis & Hussey, 2009:56-57). This speaks directly to the objectives of the present study, because I addressed the experiences of male victims of GBV and how hegemonic masculinity impacted on their decisions to seek help. These methods are primarily focused on an understanding of the situation and the procedure whereby individuals impact and are impacted by the situation. This argument informed my decision of social constructionism as the philosophical underpinning of this study on men's experiences of GBV. I upheld an intersubjective and interactional position in the direction of the reality being explored. I did this by interacting with the research participants and highlighting and contrasting individual personal experiences of male victims of GBV. According to Pascale (2011:23), Greene (2010:68) and White and Epston (as cited in Speed, 1991:400), some meanings attributed to behaviour are controlled and ordered by whatever "dominating analogies or interpretive frameworks" are currently presented. In cooperation, these methods mostly contend that the nature (and structure) of our social realities are regularly created and recreated through interaction (Creswell, 2009:8). Within the framework of this study, participants were allowed to construct their own reality by relating information about their experiences of GBV.

According to Reeve and Hedberg (2003:32), the "interpretivist" approach underscores the need to contextualise the analysis. The interpretive approach is focused on understanding the world as is from people's subjective experiences. They use meaning-oriented (versus measurement-orientated) practices, such as interviewing, which rest on subjective rapport between the researcher and participant. Interpretive research does not predefine dependent and independent variables; however, it is observant to the complexity of human sense-making as the conditions rise (Greene, 2010:68; Kaplan & Maxwell, 1994). I interviewed participants to understand GBV from males' subjective experiences of GBV in domestic settings.

Moreover, I created a research climate that permitted subjective connection between the participants and I, and male victims of GBV were able to describe their inimitable

individual experiences in the South African context. The research environment provided an opportunity to explore and understand, through semi-structured interviews, the experiences of men who had been victims of GBV at the hand of their partners. Using this approach, I was expected to be an empathetic, intersubjective explorer (Carr & Kemmis, 1986:88; Dilley, 2000:135; Thanh & Thanh, 2015:26) who sought to understand the meanings the men assigned to their experience of GBV. As such, in this study, participants (not the researcher) shared their experiences, and the focus was on how they viewed their experiences and how they experienced day-to-day life (Neuman, 2011:101) rather than whether their responses correctly reflected a predetermined reality.

The rudimentary conventions of social constructionism and interpretivism shaped the ontological and epistemological foundation of this study. Though social constructionism was considered as suitable for this study, it should not be assumed that it is more superior compared to other metatheoretical approaches.

4.3 USING A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN

Qualitative researchers support the fundamental conventions that inform social constructionism and interpretivism (Babbie & Mouton, 2008:33; Beck & Stolterman, 2016). According to Auriacombe (2016:3), a research design consists of a clear statement of the research problem as well as tools for collecting, interpreting and presenting data that may provide solutions and answers to the research questions. In essence, a research design is “a roadmap of how the study will be conducted” (Auriacombe, 2016:3; Punch, 2013:114).

While researching the topic of GBV, I was confronted with sensitive topics and themes related to the participants’ first-hand accounts of their experiences. Of the utmost importance was to gain in-depth, “thick descriptions” (Geertz, 1973) of the participants’ subjective interpretations on the subject. Therefore, for this study, a qualitative research design was employed. Bazeley (2007:2) states that a qualitative research design is ideal in settings where a thorough understanding of experiences and evidence is required to determine the context-specific nature of the issues being researched. A qualitative approach, therefore, proved essential to collect data on the men’s experiences.

Several efforts have been made to demarcate qualitative research in social sciences. Nevertheless, Mason (2002:3) describes qualitative research as founded on a philosophical understanding that is largely interpretivist and is focused on how the social world is construed, understood, experienced, shaped, or established. Qualitative researchers aim to produce rounded and relative understandings of the foundation of rich (Wilson & MacLean, 2011:194), nuanced and comprehensive data (Mason, 2002:3). Greater importance is placed on "holistic" forms of analysis and elucidation than on researching surface patterns, trends and correlations. Therefore, qualitative research leans towards embracing various ideals of quality, known as validity, credibility, consistency, or dependability. In addition to particular standards that may be considered as shared across disciplines and paradigms, the "goodness" (Morrow, 2005) of the qualitative method is assessed based on the paradigmatic fundamentals of the research and the ethics of the discipline.

As this qualitative study was founded on the constructionist and interpretivist paradigm, it was imperative to observe the standards of quality and credibility that identify and uphold subjectivity (Morrow, 2005:253). Herewith a demarcation of how I upheld trustworthiness and the dependability of the findings of the present study.

4.3.1 Principles guiding the trustworthiness and dependability of qualitative research

According to Nowell *et al*. (2017:1), credibility, trustworthiness and dependability are imperative, and results may be considered reliable if they prove to be consistent with collected data through valid deductions from data illustrating dependability.

(a) Credibility

Credibility in qualitative research can be defined as the degree to which the data and data analysis are credible and trustworthy (Shenton, 2004:64). Credibility is similar to internal validity in quantitative research (i.e., how the research results are a true reflection of the researched reality of the participants). It is the audience's responsibility to assess the scope of its credibility based on their understanding of the study. Consequently, from an interpretive stance, understanding is co-created, and there is no objective reality to which the outcomes of the study can be compared. Therefore,

member checking of the results is imperative. Thus, the transcripts of the interviews were sent to the participants to check themselves. They could then identify any potential fallacies and communicate those to me (Anney, 2014:276). Lincoln and Guba (1985:314) and Shenton (2004:68) argue that member checking the findings is the most important process for establishing the credibility. For the purpose of this research, to retain as much of the subjective constructions of their truths as male victims of GBV as possible, the significance of referential adequacy was further observed through the audio-recordings of the interviews as well as the completed interview schedules with the consent of each interviewee.

(b) Transferability

According to Anney (2014:277), research results are transferable only if they are applicable to contexts other than that of the present study. I advanced the transferability of the findings by describing the research methods, settings and conventions essential to the research to be able to provide thick descriptions on GBV. In support of this, Korstjens and Moser (2018:122), Moon *et al.* (2016:3) and Seale (1999:45) claim transferability can be accomplished by providing a comprehensive, rich description of the setting under study to afford the reader with satisfactory data so that they can evaluate the applicability of the results in other settings they know (Anney, 2014:278; Bitsch, 2005:85). As will be clear in the chapters to follow, I provide rich, thick descriptions of the data to that the data can potentially be transferable to similar contexts in South Africa and abroad.

(c) Dependability

Dependability is akin to the notion of reliability – that is, observing the same results under similar settings (Riege, 2003:81). According to Merriam (1998:205), dependability is considered as the extent to which research results can be duplicated with similar subjects in similar situations. Merriam further maintains that dependability underscores the importance of the researcher describing and documenting the research procedures to allow someone from outside the research to follow, audit and criticise the research process. Consequently, the process through which outcomes are derived should as far as possible be clear and repeatable (Anney, 2014:278; Shenton, 2004:71). Care was taken to ensure that the research process was consistent,

traceable and evidently documented in a flexible way by providing detailed accounts of the research process. This was done by having the study supervisor conduct a critical reading of the study to examine the procedure used for data collection, data analysis, and whether the outcomes of the study could be supported by the data.

(d) Confirmability

Lastly, confirmability is grounded in the acknowledgment that research is at no time objective (Shenton, 2004:72). It speaks to the central issue that outcomes should represent the condition being studied rather than the views, philosophies and presumptions of the researcher (Gasson, 2004:93). Furthermore, confirmability is founded on the idea that the truthfulness of research outcomes is found in the data and that the researcher must efficiently link the data, analytic processes and findings in such a manner that the audience can support the relevance of the results. Some techniques used to accomplish the goal of dependability are also pertinent in confirmability – primarily accountability that is done through an audit trail; the management of subjectivity is essential (Anney, 2014:279). An audit procedure was applied by working forward and backward in the research process to certify that the interpretation of the data was sound and confirmed the findings. In this study, the findings were based on the interviews rather than the researcher's own personal predispositions.

A qualitative research design is, however, not without its own confines. The frequently cited points of criticism focus on the fact that qualitative research may be time-consuming and costly, and it is near to impossible to generalise the results to the whole population, given the smaller research population; the latter was, however, not the objective of the present study (Anderson, 2010:2; Luders, 2004:363; Rahman, 2017:105). Furthermore, it has been argued that qualitative studies may be incapable of addressing the relationship between variables with the level of precision that is essential to create social trends or to inform social policies. Additionally, as the methodological approach does not warrant objectivity, the quality of information is considered questionable, hence making qualitative research produce data that cannot be compared (Sarantakos, 2013:46).

The following subsection explains how I conducted sampling, data collection and analysis.

4.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In keeping with the earlier discussion on qualitative research design, this section contains three foci: the sampling procedures for a qualitative study; data collection methods; and data analysis processes.

4.4.1 Sampling procedures

A research population can be defined as a research unit and may comprise persons, entities or groups (Welman *et al*., 2011:52-53). According to Bryman (2016:407), sampling is a process through which the researcher selects their sample directly related to the research questions posed. Sampling can also be defined as a representative "taste" of a group (Berinstein, 2003:17); the sample should be representative in that each sampled unit should represent the characteristics of a known number of units in the population. The sampling process entails taking a representative selection of pertinent participants from the wider population (Babbie & Mouton, 2008:164) and using the information gathered as research data. For the present study, I opted to select a particular subset of participants who were representative of men who had been (or continued to be) victims of GBV. Participants in this study were selected if they met my pre-established criteria (Henry, 1990:16; Lune & Berg, 2017:39), in this case, exhaustive (or non-negotiable) inclusion criteria. These criteria were as follows:

- Participants self-identified as biological males.
- Participants had to self-identify as victims of GBV or intimate partner violence in domestic settings.
- They had to reside in any one of the nine provinces of South Africa at the time of the study.

The age, social class, nationality, gender identity, sexual orientation and race of the participants were not regarded as exhaustive inclusionary criteria in the selection

process. This was of particular importance to ensure that intersectionality was upheld during the interviews (Abrams e*t al.*, 2020:3). Other reasons that speak to this is the fact that based on the sensitivity of the research topic, these criteria were negotiable rather than fixed to allow those men who were *willing* to *voluntarily* participate in the study to share their narratives.

Furthermore, a **non-probability sampling approach** was adopted by applying **purposive** and **snowball sampling**. Non-probability sampling is a common method in qualitative research where researchers use judgment in the selection of a sample. The advantage of non-probability sampling is that it is an expedient way for researchers to gather a sample at little or no cost and for studies that do not necessitate generalisability of the population (O'Leary, 2014:189). I found the use of non-probability sampling effective in the present study, as the selected participants had defining characteristics that made them the carriers of the information needed (Maree, 2010:9). Furthermore, subjective judgments tend to play a specific role in non-probability sampling (Henry, 1990:16). Participants selected using the non-probability sampling technique were selected because they met the pre-established criteria. According to Sullivan and Losberg (2003:148), sampling male victims of violence tend to be challenging for researchers. This community can be considered a "hidden" and hard-to-reach group, because male victims of GBV are not always visible or obvious (Bryman, 2016:415). However, this challenge of identification, according to Abrams (2010:541), may be overcome by using a sampling technique that allows the researcher to gain entrance into the "hidden" and hard-to-reach social groups and using specific organisations to gain access to the participants. I did this by contacting organisations working with male victims of GBV. Organisation gatekeepers provided letters stating their willingness to assist in the recruitment of participants. Invitations were sent to the gatekeepers to forward to potential participants. Participants who were willing to participate in the research contacted me for further information and the scheduling of interviews.

I elucidate the use of **purposive** and **snowball sampling** next.

(a) Purposive sampling

According to Abrams (2010:538), **purposive sampling** is a technique where the researcher intentionally selects participants who will offer the best views on the phenomenon being explored (Sarantakos, 2013:164). According to Acharya *et al.* (2013:332), purposive sampling is also referred to as judgemental sampling or expert sampling. The central argument of purposive sampling is accruing a sample that can be considered as "representative" of the population being studied. The selection of a purposive sample is often proficient through the application of expert knowledge about the population to be able to select a sample in a non-random manner by placing the focus on aspects that indicate a cross-section of the population. However, purposive sampling has its limitations. The results from the data, for instance, may not necessarily be generalised outside of the sample (Acharya *et al.*, 2013:332). This was, however, not the objective of the present study. Given the subjectivity of the selection method, this technique is deemed suitable for the selection of small samples, often from a constrained or hard-to-reach population definition. The knowledge and experience of the researcher making the selections is a major facet in the "success" of the subsequent sample; however, it would be challenging to measure that characteristic of a sample (Bhattaglia, 2008:525).

For this study, I gained initial access by identifying and obtaining approval from organisations who worked with participants intended for the study. Examples of these included Sonke Gender Justice, Moshate, Matrix men, South African Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse (SAMSOSA), and Families South Africa, all of which are based in South Africa and address matters related to GBV and men. After I had obtained ethics approval from the Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (BaSSREC) (Addendum A), I sent a summary of the study to representatives of the noted organisations and requested that they consider sharing and forwarding it to potential participants who formed part of their social media networks. Those participants who were interested to participate in the study then voluntarily contacted me for more information.

In keeping with the focus of the study, the initial aim was to sample 15 men who were either married or in a cohabiting relationship at the time. If the target sample size of 15 participants was reached and there were still men who wished to participate, I would

have conducted further interviews until data saturation had been achieved or to determine whether further interviews were feasible. Of the above-mentioned organisations, Moshate assisted in the recruitment process. A one-page invitation letter with my (the researcher's) contacts details was sent out to the gatekeeper to forward to potential participants (Addendum E), who then expressed their willingness to participate by contacting me. Only 10 of the initial target of 15 participants, agreed to partake in the study.

After concluding the interviews, I requested the participant to share my contact information and details about the study with other persons who might be willing to participate in a semi-structured interview. Interested parties could contact me and request further information and/or arrange for an interview. This approach is called snowball sampling (Bryman, 2016).

(b) Snowball sampling

Snowball sampling entails sampling participants with particular qualities or characteristics that are thought to be important to the research. Snowball samples are predominantly used in studies that comprise potential minority groups (e.g., male victims of GBV), sensitive themes/issues, or populations that are considered difficult to reach (Lee, 1993; Naderifar *et al.*, 2017:2; Rumens, 2011:163). The basic approach of snowball sampling is identifying individuals via convenience sampling. These participants are used as a reference to other individuals who have the same features and characteristics they do. Snowball sampling may be considered a convenient way of pursuing the objectives of purposive sampling in conditions where there are no apparent sources for finding participants of the population required. It does, however, require that the participants locate individuals who have common characteristics that make them fit for inclusion in the study (Babbie & Mouton, 2008:167).

Furthermore, this technique is deemed appropriate for locating hidden or hard-to-reach populations where there is no possibility of knowing the size of the broader population, such as samples of male individuals who are victims of GBV (Babbie, 2016:188) and where the issue under exploration is of a sensitive nature (Lee, 1993; O'Leary, 2014:190). The procedure for snowball sampling in this study began with interviewing an initial set of research subjects who were informants of not only the research subject

but also of other potential participants who later participated in the research. Snowball sampling entails that the initial informant often helps in the recruitment of other informants to participate in the study (Given, 2008:816).

4.4.2 Biographical information of research participants

Table 4.1: Biographical information of participants

Pseudonym	Age	Race	Province	Relationship status
Coleman	40	White	Gauteng	Single
Corné	32	White	Western Cape	Divorced
Elias	46	African	Gauteng	Single
Gift	30	African	Limpopo	Single
Josia	48	White	Western Cape	In a relationship /Cohabiting
Khuliso	39	African	Limpopo	Single
Makweya	50	African	Gauteng	Married
Nick	34	White	Gauteng	Single
Rofhiwa	45	African	Limpopo	Single
Thulz	46	African	Gauteng	In a relationship

As noted in the preceding subsection, I found it difficult to recruit relevant participants. The recruitment proved to be a "methodological challenge due to the issue's [i.e., GBV toward men] sensitivity" (Nazareno *et al.*, 2022:3). Nazareno *et al.* (2022:3) speak to the challenge regarding the recruitment of "suitable participants" due to the sensitivity of research about GBV directed toward men – specifically those men living in patriarchal societies (Mphatheni & Mlamla, 2022:78). Scholars who studied gender- and sexual violence perpetrated against women the topic (Enaifoghe *et al.,* 2022) and men in South Africa (Marais, 2021; Mqakelana, 2015; Thobejane *et al.,* 2012; 2018), The Congo (Yagi *et al.,* 2022) and Jordan (Alsawalqa, 2021), among others, attest. Durham (2020) attributes the trend of under-reporting their experiences to male victims' fears about facing ostracism, homophobia, social prejudice, or feelings of guilt and shame. These are all factors that exacerbate the difficulty to recruit male

participants. Table 4.1 reflects the biographical information of the ten (10) participants. The average age of the participants was 41. The youngest participant was 30, and the oldest participant was 50. Regarding race, four men self-identified as White and six as African. All of the participants self-identified as heterosexual men. I acknowledge that the inclusion criteria provided the opportunity to recruit more men from South Africa's nine provinces. However, only five of the men, who hailed from Gauteng, two from the Western Cape, and three from the Limpopo province, provided their voluntary, explicit, and informed consent to partake in the study.

Added to the complexity, was my own positionality as a self-identified cisgendered and Black woman. I chose this topic because I believe that GBV is a human rights violation and crime that affects both men and women. My decision to undertake a study about this topic also centred on the limited number of studies about the topic. As such, the study sought to make recommendations about potential policies and strategies that aim to address the matter of GBV toward men. I entered the interviews with some trepidation. Two reasons refer in this regard. First, I was concerned about my own safety, since I would be travelling alone and spending time with men as part of fieldwork; I was concerned that my feminine appearance would position me at my own peril due to the socially constructed notion that men are perpetrators of violence. Second, I expected that the qualitative nature of my proposed study, would influence my existing personal preconceptions, assumptions and, yes, potential prejudices, about the topic. As means to address these concerns, I sought to (and was able to do so) see myself through the eyes of the Black and White male participants, i.e., how *they* would interpret being approached and interviewed by a woman who, depending on their cultural context, could be seen as inferior or subordinate (a notion that is mostly, by tradition, contested) because of my gender. Irrespective of my "outsider status", I retained my inter-subjective epistemological position as empathetic qualitative researcher (Magrath, 2017:18). In so doing, I was able to amicably engage with the participants to contribute to further understanding the men's experiences of GBV. At the time of the study, two men were in relationships, six were single, one was married, and one was divorced.

The data collection techniques are discussed next.

4.4.3 Data collection techniques

This subsection outlines the key techniques used throughout the data collection procedure. Semi-structured interviews with an interview schedule were conducted (Addendum D). These interviews reflected the deductive themes that were drawn from the literature.

According to Bryman (2016:466), the interview is the most-used technique in qualitative research. Babbie and Mouton (2008:289) maintain that the **semi-structured interview** takes the form of a dialogue wherein the researcher asks the participant questions to explore new information so as to obtain vivid and comprehensive narratives that are constructed from the personal experiences of the participant. This technique emphasises the preceding reference to the importance I ascribe to interviewees' perspectives and provided information on what the male participants regarded as important and significant.

The interview schedule was used, and questions were framed based on the existing literature on GBV in South Africa to, as far as possible, ensure comprehensive, informed interviews (Creswell, 1998:99; Dilley, 2000:131). Examples of themes that emerged from the data ranged from GBV conceptualisation and forms and causes of GBV to possible challenges faced by male victims of GBV and help-seeking behaviours and underreporting of male victims of GBV. This introduced both deductive and inductive aspects of the study. Inductive reasoning, as defined by Thomas (2006:238), refers to practices that use in-depth understandings of information to develop concepts and themes. Thomas (2006:238) claims that it is possible for qualitative researchers to engage in both inductive and deductive reasoning. According to Bengtsson (2016:10), as the researcher starts with information-gathering, they may be mindful of whatever develops from the data (i.e., an inductive approach). Bhattacherjee (2012:15) indicates that researchers need to be able to shift back and forth amid inductive and deductive reasoning. This may happen when there are add-ons or adjustments to a certain theory that is thought to be the core of scientific study. As noted, I used an interview schedule to conduct the interviews. Interviews were conducted in 2022 and English was used as the medium of communication.

In addition to the deductive approach, the researcher foregrounds the inductive contributions of their participants. In so doing, the researcher may choose to change the interview schedule to include novel themes highlighted by participants during the interviews. For this study, there were no modifications to the interview schedule. The use of a flexible qualitative research design underlines the importance of the subjective contributions of the participants (Bryman, 2016). For example, as the researcher probes the participants on new themes that may have emerged during the interview, some questions outlined in the interview schedule may not be asked, and the researcher may be in the position to ask relevant questions that may not have been included in the initial interview schedule. Therefore, as suggested by Bryman (2016:468), the interviewing process became flexible, and rich data were obtained according to what the participants deemed as important and relevant to understanding and explaining GBV.

Furthermore, in light of the COVID-19 outbreak, and in line with the NWU and South African Government's requirements to minimise contact between workers as well as between workers/researchers and the public to prevent transmission, I used telephone and video-conferencing tools (i.e., Skype, Zoom, Google Hangouts, WhatsApp, Vidyo) to collect data. According to Drabble *et al.* (2016:2) and Nehls *et al.* (2015:140), in-depth telephone interviews and video conferencing are considered as viable options for qualitative research. Advantages associated with these data collection tools include, among others, logistical convenience (Deakin & Wakefield 2014:7), access to larger samples and geographically dispersed participants (Nehls *et al*., 2015:146; Sullivan, 2012:57), reduced travel cost, interviewer and interviewee safety, and flexibility of appointment schedules (Nehls *et al*., 2015). As regards logistical conveniences and travel costs, Drabble *et al.* (2016:2) and Deakin and Wakefield (2014:7) claim that telephone and video-conferencing interviews are easily conducted from the comfort of the participant and interviewer's homes, hence eliminating the need for both parties to travel and the need to organise a venue that the participant or the interviewer might be unfamiliar with – thus, alleviating potential financial and logistics constraints and health concerns (Deakin & Wakefield 2014:7).

Additionally, video-conferencing tools allows the interviewer to communicate in "real time" with geographically dispersed participants via computer, tablet, or mobile device.

Some of the video tools, such as Zoom, provide additional advantages that increase their potential research efficacy (Archibald *et al.*, 2019:2). The main advantage of Zoom, for example, is its capacity to securely record and store sessions without third-party software (Archibald *et al.*, 2019:2). Furthermore, strengths associated with telephone and video-conferencing interviews include increased privacy and reduced interference for participants, and self-consciousness for the interviewer (Nehls *et al.*, 2015:146). According to Ellison *et al.* (2006:418), video conferencing and telephone interviews enable participants to better express aspects of their true selves that they want express but might feel unable to do so during in-person face-to-face interviews. Some researchers argue that, compared to face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews tend to be less indiscreet and confer power and control to participants when negotiating interviews to suit their schedule. Lo Iacono *et al.* (2016:8) claim that these data collection tools may not completely replace face-to-face in-depth interviews, but they are considered convenient alternatives and complementary tools for qualitative research.

However, the above-mentioned tools are not without some limitations. Concerns about the use of these tools included the possibly negative impact they could have on the richness and quality of the data collected compared to face-to-face interviews (Drabble *et al.*, 2016:2). Another concern levelled against telephone and video-conferencing interviews is the challenge in the ability to respond to visual cues, the difficulty in establishing trust, and the ability of the participant to feel comfortable with opening-up to the researcher (King & Horrocks, 2010:48; Lo Iacono *et al.*, 2016:9). Others argue that studies dealing with sensitive topics (as is the case with this study on GBV) might arguably be better undertaken in a personal face-to-face setting (Lo Iacono *et al.*, 2016:9). For this study, the participants were compensated by means of their desired network data bundles to use for communication through video conferencing for the duration of the interview. The allocation of the amount of data bundles was dependent on the device the participant used as communication medium.

Moreover, the benefits of the semi-structured interviews were the multifaceted matters that could be explored in more detail; potentially unclear responses could be elucidated; and based on the relationship I tried to establish with each participant, it became easier to gather more delicate information (Babbie & Mouton, 2008:309).

Semi-structured interviews also ensured a comfortable atmosphere in which data could be gathered; participants, in this case, may have felt calm having a dialogue with me about their lives (Boyce & Neale, 2006:3). Due to COVID-19, some participants opted for video interviews, while others opted to fill in the interview schedule because of time constraints on their side.

Nevertheless, semi-structured interviews as technique have limitations. Semi-structured or in-depth interviews may be biased (Boyce & Neale, 2006:3). I made an effort to design a data gathering tool that would ensure that interviews were conducted with the slightest amount of bias. Interviews may be time-consuming, as it may be regarded as a time-intensive activity to conduct interviews, transcribe the interviews and analyse the outcomes. Therefore, when I planned for data gathering, I was careful to include time for transcription and analysis of the exhaustive data. I practised proper interviewing (Hopf, 2004:208) as well as probing techniques to collect comprehensive and rich data from the participants. Lastly, during the interviews, I faced challenges of time constraints, as some participants had to take time off from work for an hour, which meant that I did not have enough time to probe more.

4.4.4 Data analysis

According to Bogdan and Biklen (2003), qualitative data analysis can be defined as "working with the data, organising them, breaking them into manageable units, coding them, synthesizing them, and searching for patterns". The main objective of qualitative data analysis is to determine patterns, concepts, themes and meanings. For this research, thematic and discourse analysis were employed to analyse the data. Further, thematic data analysis was used to analyse participants' narratives.

Babbie and Mouton (2008:490) define qualitative data analysis as all forms of analysis of data that have been collected using qualitative techniques despite the paradigm used in the study. Once data have been gathered, the information must be arranged for the researcher to analyse the main findings (Bhattacherjee, 2012:3-4; Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

In line with the aim of this study and methodology, **thematic analysis** was used to analyse the data through open and selective coding. The transcripts were coded, both

for existing themes (which have been theoretically discussed earlier) as well as for themes that emerged from the data (Bhattacherjee, 2012:3-4). The themes were as follows: **delineating GBV**; **factors that contribute to the vulnerability of South African men to GBV**; **challenges faced by male victims of GBV**; **consequences of GBV for the enactment of masculinity**; and **recommendations with regard to policy formulations to address GBV in South Africa**. I also explored whether the results supported former research and literature or whether it offered different accounts on the subject matter, courtesy of the participants.

According to Given's (2008:85) delineation of coding in qualitative research, coding is a method of producing ideas and concepts from raw data gathered from interview transcripts, field transcripts, archival materials, reports, newspaper articles, and art. The coding process represents the stages during which the researcher identifies, organises and structures the ideas, concepts and categories revealed in the transcripts. Coding further involves the identification of potentially thought-provoking events, features, expressions, behaviours, or phases of a process and labelling them. The ideas are then distinguished or combined so that they are reduced to a number of groups, associations and patterns to narrate a story or communicate inferences drawn from the data.

(a) Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis, as an independent qualitative descriptive method, is defined as "a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006:79; Nowell *et al*., 2017:1; also see Wilson & MacLean, 2011:551). With the focus on meaning across the dataset, thematic analysis tends to allow the researcher to view and make sense of collective meanings and experiences. Thematic analysis was used because it allows accessibility and flexibility (Wilson & MacLean, 2011:551). Furthermore, thematic analysis illustrates how the research has been conducted in a way that may otherwise seem vague, incomprehensible, theoretically thought-provoking, and complex. It provides a way to elucidate the procedures of coding and analyse qualitative data methodically, which may then be linked to comprehensive theoretical or conceptual matters.

After I collected the data, I familiarised myself with the data by understanding and revisiting the data and noted the primary ideas they held (Wilson & MacLean, 2011:552). I then started searching for diverse themes and subthemes, whereafter I categorised the themes (Javadi & Zarea, 2016:34; Wilson & MacLean, 2011:552). Moreover, I examined and enhanced the themes and explored the relationship between the dataset and the themes. Thus, for the purpose of this study, I worked with Braun and Clarkes' (2006) model of thematic analysis: the data were analysed using a step-by-step technique which began by examining the interviews conducted with all male victims for frequent patterns of meaning to describe and understand GBV. The following step involved a process whereby codes were formed to highlight possible patterns. In the next phase, a thematic map was created wherein themes were further distinguished as they related to the data (Bhana, 2012:312; Nowell *et al.*, 2017:10).

(b) Open and selective coding

Open coding is an introductory phase of creating order to and making sense of the data. An immense reading of the data is recommended to recognise as many concepts as conceivable without the researcher being concerned with the relationship between them. Alternatively, many researchers begin coding by looking at data from the perspective of the main goals and interests of the study being conducted; researchers, therefore, become mindful of fundamental themes and meanings that arise from the findings (Given, 2008:86). For example, there may be views that the coding procedure could be introduced without the effect of existing ideas and concepts. A dominant view, however, is that this is not likely, given researchers' knowledge of their discipline and the definite areas they are exploring. Researchers who support this view use concepts and categories that have been through sensitisation even though remaining attentive to other possible concepts, ideas and themes. As the researcher continues with the phase of open coding, slight changes emerge (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:500). Particular ideas may be revealed recurrently; however, other ideas may be regarded as less common or may be feasibly regarded as variations of an idea that has previously been documented. According to Given (2008:87), researchers recommend that open coding continues until nothing new arises – thus, some codes would become significantly prominent and relations between codes would start to form. It is in the progression of this analytic exercise that comprehensive categories and their properties or scopes are

revealed. For the purpose of this study, I sought for data that correlated with the definite goals and interest of the study; however, I kept an open mind to new information that might arise (Given, 2008:87).

There is no defining step that clearly indicates the shift from open coding to more focused coding. According to Given (2008:87), granting that there are shared guiding principles that demonstrate the development of the coding procedure – from finding new ideas to refining and integrating present categories – it should not be assumed that the procedure of coding is linear. If a new concept is revealed at an advanced phase of the coding process, original ideas may still develop, and the necessity for the researcher to extend their stance or open their mind to new possibilities may arise again. The data would then be reviewed cautiously and thoroughly with less specific ideas or categories in mind. This is done to determine where and how these ideas are clarified in the data or findings. The coding procedure otherwise has both inductive and deductive fundamentals (Babbie & Mouton, 2008:501).

Considering the multifaceted nature and complexity of GBV, it is a phenomenon that needs to be addressed from a multimethod perspective. Therefore, this study employed critical discourse analysis as a method of data analysis. According to Fairclough (1992:159, 2010) and Van Dijk (2006:252), discourse analysis is a multidisciplinary method that discovers and is used to understand pressing social issues to uncover ideologies, social power, hegemony and dominance. It is a method that seeks to analyse the significant and underlying causes and consequences of social issues; it seeks to understand the relationship between text, speech, society and culture and investigate how discursive practices, events and texts arise from and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power (Locke, 2004:1; McGregor, 2010:4). The use of discourse analysis in this study involved the examination of the social uses of language as well as exploring the ways in which the existence of specific institutions and roles of individuals are made possible by way of thinking and speaking.

The data were analysed using Fairclough's (1992:73) three-dimensional critical discourse framework: the level of text, the level of discursive practice, and the level of social practice. According to Hoppstadius (2020:93) and Rogers *et al.* (2005:371), this framework is inclusive and comprehensive and helps to describe relations between

texts, interactions and discursive practices; it further helps to interpret the configurations of discourse practices as well as to use these descriptions and interpretations to offer an explanation as to why and how social practices are constituted, changed and transformed the way they are.

The ethical considerations that were applicable to this study are discussed next.

4.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Researchers have an ethical obligation to research participants (or subjects) because they explore the social lives of these individuals. Ethical issues include informed consent, privacy and security (Gomm, 2008:377; Sarantakos, 2013:16). Ethics are considered the most important and fundamental aspect of decision-making in research (from when the problem is being formulated to the presentation of results), and they are also associated with the relationship between researchers and the research participants (Sarantakos, 2013:17). According to Silverman (2000:201), researchers should always keep in mind that while they are in the research process, they are also accessing the private space of their participants. Understandably, this may raise several ethical issues that should be addressed before, during and after the study has been conducted. Creswell (2003:107) claims that researchers must honour the rights, needs, values and requests of their research participants.

Regarding the ethical issues that were considered fundamental to this study, I adhered to the strict ethics code of conduct set by the NWU's Ethical Practices Protocol concerning the treatment of participants in the research procedure. The University's ethics code also highlights the following ethical considerations: **informed consent and voluntary participation** (participants must have complete information regarding the nature of the research); avoidance of **harm and risk** (thus, protecting participants) and warranting **honesty and trust, privacy, confidentiality and anonymity** (in this case, protecting the identity of male victims of GBV). An application for ethics approval was submitted to the Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (BaSSREC). The request to conduct research was approved, and an ethics number was assigned to the study (NWU-02052-20-A7).

Owing to the sensitivity of the subject under study, ethical issues applicable to conducting research with vulnerable people include whether the study poses a risk to participants and whether they may experience maltreatment during the research process (Babbie & Mouton, 2008:523; Lenton *et al.*, 2021:4; Newman *et al.*, 2021:7; Sieber, 1992; Wilson & MacLean, 2011:599). For this study, and considering the psychological effects that could have arisen, I ensured the safety of the participants by availing and/or organising counselling services with the organisations should the participant have needed it. Furthermore, considering the COVID-19 global pandemic, and in accordance with NWU regulations on COVID-19, both the research participants and I adhered to the following procedures in instances where the particular restriction level allowed face-to-face interaction between persons, and the participant expressed their preference for this data collection method: both wore face masks/shields during the face-to-face in-depth interviews (I provided these); a 1.5 m distance was observed between the participant and I; in agreement with the participant, I sanitised the research environment to safeguard both parties. The latter entailed that the research setting be cleaned and disinfected, and I provided enough hand sanitiser with at least 70% alcohol content for use during the interviews. Moreover, before the commencement of the interviews, the participant provided written consent (both in-person and electronically) that indicated their willingness to adhere to these strict procedures, and both parties completed and signed a designated COVID-19 subsection in the informed consent statement (Addendum C). As far as I am aware, no harm was inflicted on the participants.

As regards voluntary participation, participants were informed that the study was for academic purposes and that they were not forced to participate in the study (Bryman, 2016:129). Participants were made aware that interviews were voluntary. To justify that participation was voluntary (Nel *et al.*, 2007), the interview schedule was accompanied by a written informed consent statement (O'Leary, 2014). These documents provided an in-depth description of the nature and purpose of the study, and I also outlined the fundamental concepts, procedures and risks that accompanied the study (O'Leary, 2014). Matters involving informed consent were linked to the concern to evade possible risk to participants. Informed consent, courtesy of participants, relates to the substantial consent of persons who wish to participate as an exercise of their decision, free of any component of deception, dishonesty, pressure, or similar unfair inducement

or manipulation. These statements were signed by both the participant and me (the principal investigator). For this study, it was my responsibility as the researcher to inform participants about the purpose of the study and the role they may play during the data collection process.

Moreover, information relating to the protection of participants' interest and welfare also forms part of informed consent. Two aspects were considered of significance here: participants' confidentiality and privacy (Babbie & Mouton, 2008:523; Nel *et al.*, 2007; Sarantakos, 2013:16). According to Lune and Berg (2017:48), confidentiality describes the procedure of removing from the research records any element that might be traced back to the participants' identity. As regards interviews, confidentiality was ensured by having participants select a pseudonym (Ackerly & True, 2010:266; Lune & Berg, 2017) at the beginning of the interview. Thus, their actual names only appear in the informed consent statement and not in the interview schedule or in the final report. The information was not linked to the specific participant. The confidentiality and anonymity of participants were preserved by removing any recognisable characteristics before disseminating the information. Additionally, privacy was ensured by making participants aware that they were not forced to comment on delicate matters they considered as private. According to Wilson and MacLean (2011:600), privacy is imperative when researchers study issues concerning sexuality and gender violence where they may be required to inquire about sensitive matters relating to participants' private lives. It was important that responses to such questions remain confidential Regarding the men's emotional welfare, I availed the services of a registered clinical psychologist for the men to consult if they expressed the need to do so due to the feelings that may arise during their participation as part of the interview (Addendum F). None of the men indicated their need to consult with this person.

4.6 CONCLUSION

The chapter discussed the research methodology utilised in the study on GBV perpetrated against South African men by women. The chapter discussed the use of social constructionism as the ontological approach and interpretivism as the epistemological approach. This was followed by a discussion of the qualitative design, sampling techniques, data collection and analysis processes. The chapter was concluded by a discussion of the ethical considerations I had to be mindful of while

conducting the research. These ethical considerations met the ethical standards set by the NWU.

CHAPTER 5
SOUTH AFRICAN MEN AND THEIR EXPERIENCES OF GBV: FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Consider the following quote of one of the participants in this study on the social stratification of men and women regarding traditional African gender roles:

> *… being a man means that your family is safe in your hands, and you don't allow any harm to come to* ***them*** *and make sure that* ***they*** *are secured. … You always make sure that* ***they***[3] *are provided for when it comes to food. A man is someone who is able to wake up and go to work to provide*. (Makweya, 50, African)

The preceding quote reflects a traditional conceptualisation of masculine roles that South African men, specifically Black men, are expected to conform to and perform (Morrell, 1998). This quote informed many of the narratives about masculinity of the male participants – a finding that echoes older (Du Pisani, 2001; Morrell, 1998; Sonnekus, 2013) and relatively recent (Gqola, 2021; Graaff & Heineken, 2017) theorisation about the persistence of traditional, patriarchal and heteronormative masculinities in South Africa.

Next, I discuss the findings that emanated from the interviews with 10 South African men who had either fallen victim to GBV or continued to experience such abuse. The chapter comprises subsections that reflect the deductive topics used in the semi-structured interview schedule. These topics are based on those discussed in chapters 1 to 3. These include, first, an account of the primary socialisation of the participants. This subsection focuses on how the men were socialised according to specific gender role expectations and how the men's masculine performances and interpersonal relationships were influenced by such traditional prescriptions. The second subsection offers a contextually nuanced discussion of the victims' accounts of their experiences

[3] Emphasis added.

of GBV at the hands of their life- and/or romantic partners. Here, I relate their personal views as both agents and victims, recalling Francis' (2017) call to avoid a sole adoption of the agency/victimhood dualism. Furthermore, I consider the reasons why the participants' decided to disclose said abuse to others or refrained from doing so. Finally, I reflect on how the participants viewed help-seeking behaviours. In keeping with the metatheoretical bases of the study (i.e., social constructionism and interpretivism), I provide an in-depth discussion of these narratives of the eight men on their personal experiences of GBV at the hands of their partners.

5.2 BECOMING A SOUTH AFRICAN MAN: PRIMARY SOCIALISATION AS SOURCE OF AGENCY AND/OR CONFORMITY

The first subsection focuses on the participants' recollections about their primary gender-role socialisation.

5.2.1 Gender expectations in childhood and teenage years

Seven of the 10 participants (i.e., Eli, Gift, Josia, Khuli, Makweya, Thulz, and Rofhiwa) indicated that they were raised to adhere to **strict gender role expectations** – that is, boys and girls were expected to do their gender in a **cisgendered** way (i.e., their chores were divided according to their biological sex to reflect their socially constructed gender and sexual orientation). Makweya, a Johannesburg-based participant, said that he grew up with the mentality that through observation of his parents as well as tales narrated by his father, mothers and their daughters were expected to cut wood, cook and look after the children. Fathers and their sons, however, had to go hunting or enter the labour market and be the primary breadwinner or provider. He added that when he was growing up, he was also expected to "woo a woman", that is, be the person who approaches and initiates romantic relationships and sexual intercourse with the opposite sex (thus, women). He recalled being ridiculed and chastised by his friends when he did not do so correctly (e.g., approaching, complimenting and flirting with a girl/woman). Similarly, Rofhiwa commented on how such traditional expectations persist to this day. He noted that growing-up as a Venda boy, he was expected to wake up early mornings to help his father with herding the cattle. He did this while his sisters would stay at home and prepare food. He said:

> *… As a boy child, it was a 'must' that I wake up in the morning to herd the cows. That is how my parents raised us and that's how things are even now with boys in the family.* (Rofhiwa, 45, Limpopo)[4]

Gift mirrored Makweya's narrative that boys "would go hunting while the girls would stay at home, or they would go to the stream to fetch water. … Sometimes, they would just fill up their containers and call us to come fetch [these], since we were the strong ones". Furthermore, Thulz (46, African) alluded to the fact that when one is brought up in a traditional home, there are certain expectations relating to both the men and women. Reflecting on his personal experiences, he said the following:

> *I was expected to carry heavy objects; I was expected to not cry when I fell. When my father went to fish, I was expected to go with him to learn how to fish while my sisters stayed at home to clean and wash dishes and cook.* (Thulz, 46, African)

Although he was raised by a single mother as primary provider, Josia, a Cape Town-based participant, mentioned that "women were not considered to be independent to own things like [their own] businesses, … they were meant to [stay] at home while men were expected to work". Only three of the 10 participants, Corné (32, White), Coleman (40, White) and Nick (34, White) refuted adhering to strict gender roles. Corné, for example, noted that, while growing up, he was not expected to conform to or emulate "defined roles" or expectations. This implicit message was clear in the domestic task allocations: his "parents did equally as much", and they "used" as opposed to solely "doing" their gender through an egalitarian division of household responsibilities. According to Coleman, a 40-year-old heterosexual male hailing from Gauteng, gender roles and expectations were never discussed in the household. All members of his family, however, were given equal treatment. He further noted that there were no specific expectations from each individual in accordance with their gender, exclaiming that the girls and boys "could wash the dishes", "clean the house", and both parents took on the role of provider for the family. Therefore, there were no exemption from

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[4] Original Venda: "Sa nwana wa mutukana, zwovha zwo fanela uri ndi vuwe nga macheloni ndiye u lisa kholomo. Ndi nga ndila ye vhabebi vhashu vhari alusa ngayo, nazwino zwitshe zwoto ralo kha vhana vha vhatukana hayani"

chores based on gender stereotypical roles and expectations; his familial context was egalitarian in nature. Similarly, Nick, a 34-year-old Gauteng-based participant, echoed Corne and Coleman's assertions. He alluded to the idea that his parents shared the household responsibilities equally: both nurtured the children and did all of the household chores. This extended to how his parents reached a democratic parental consensus of sorts when allocating responsibilities to their children. He recalled that, when he was younger, regardless of his and his siblings' gender, they could perform any activity or chores as directed by their parents – these chores were not categorised according to the sex and gender of the child. Skills such as cooking, washing laundry and cleaning the home were considered as "basic chores" that each member of the household had to "learn or master". Thus, masculine or feminine or the traditional gender roles or expectations were nearly non-existent.

Additionally, Eli, a self-identified heterosexual man living in Gauteng, argued that boys were expected to be mischievous to "prove" their masculinity. He stated, "as boys, we would fight or involve ourselves in things that showed that we were men and that we were strong". The mantra of "boys don't cry", according to Eli, informed their mischievous "play". Interestingly, such mischievousness could only occur within heteronormative and patriarchal boundaries. This is because boys were not allowed to cry, even after losing a fight. He said, "when you are beaten, you are not supposed to cry because your friends and other boys will laugh at you". Such experiences of gender assessment also rang true for Khuliso, a Limpopo-based participant. He similarly recalled that, "after I fought with other boys, I [could] not cry because I [would] be called a girl". This is an example of how such traditional gender-role socialisation was conflated with the boy's biological sex.

5.2.2 Conformity to cisgendered sex/gender roles

In keeping with the preceding subsection, the participants were also asked to comment on traditional sex/gender roles for both men and women. Furthermore, I enquired about whether there were specific expectations or rules that they had to emulate and espouse while growing up.

Six participants (i.e., Eli, Gift, Josia, Khuliso, Makweya and Rofhiwa) argued that cooking was always considered to be a role of women, while men served as providers

in the household. Makweya indicated that, through observing his family's daily lives, he learned that male and female roles were clearly delineated and designated to each person: his sisters were "expected to fetch water and cook", while men in the house would go out for "fishing" to provide for the family. Makweya's observation and reflections speak to the influence of how traditional cultural practices and norms informed his primary gender-role socialisation. Eli's response resonated with this statement. He said, "as I was growing up, women belonged in the kitchen and men would go look for work to provide". Although such expectations were more stringent during that time in his life, he acknowledged that "things [had] changed". Raised by a single mother, Josia stated that "there are traditional things that a woman should be doing, such as cooking, cleaning and ironing [while] a man provides. But I also feel that both should help each other" (i.e., speaking to the previous references to proof of egalitarian views). He also conceded that room for such negotiation, however, "depends on the circumstance that one finds themselves in". This thought resonated with Corné. He, like Josia, argued that "I am strongly against defining gender roles. There should not be definitions for this. Young boys and girls are, many times, not allowed to be who they really are [because of] … man-made definitions." In Nick's account, growing up in a more democratic household provided him with the skills of performing any particular role, regardless of his gender or sex and therefore he did not conform to specific traditional sanctions. He called that, when growing up, he did not "feel" obliged to adhere to strict regulations or roles traditionally meant for men. At the time of the study, he believed that the basic skills he learned at an early age, such as "cleaning, cooking and doing laundry or changing tires of a car", were survival skills that all persons, irrespective of their gender, should be able to master. He further echoed Corne's assertion, noting that enforcing gender roles on the children deprives them of the opportunity to be themselves and forces them to grow up with a mindset of inequality, which may propound the beliefs that men are superior to women. Coleman mirrored this statement. He mentioned:

> *I do not ascribe to any gender ascriptions, and I believe no one should be forced to adhere, but rather at a young age children must be equipped with necessary skills that will help them manoeuvre through life. Rather than being equipped with skills and roles that are traditionally aligned with a specific gender … [These should be] skills for survival. For example, ironing,*

> *cooking, doing laundry or learning how to fix something when it is broken; these are skills that everyone, regardless of gender, needs and it cannot only be associated with the female gender".* (Coleman, 40, White)

Irrespective of such critique, others reflected on the indelible influences such patriarchal and heteronormative ideals had on them. According to Thulz, as a man, he was expected to perform physical work such as "fixing things in the yard". When growing up, he was never allowed "to express [his] emotions … you have to bottle it up". Furthermore, Eli, Rofhiwa and Khuliso claimed that it was a woman's responsibility to "raise the kids" and "nurture" them. Makweya further alluded to the fact that based on his personal observations, women seemed to be "inferior to men" – men, however, exuded physical strength to dominate women. He justified his statement by recalling how he would be reprimanded by his parents: "[M]y mother would yell, and my father would respond physically", that is, through corporal punishment.

Participants were further asked whether they performed masculinity to avoid exclusion from male friendships. Seven participants agreed to have conformed or performed some form of masculine behaviour while in the presence of their male friends to avoid being excluded. Conversely, three participants noted their non-conformity, regardless of their location. Participants' conformity related to "hyper-competitiveness", "suppression of emotions", "strength" and working towards "obtaining power and status", both financially and socially. Makweya noted that when his friends would tease him on being unable to ask a woman out, when seating or walking with his friends, whenever a woman passed by, he would go to her and attempt to ask for her number. This was done to show that his ability as a "man" to ask a woman out was in place. Some participants noted that when they experienced abuse (at the time of the study), they would act strong and suppress their emotions while they were with their male friends because they did not want to be viewed as weak and unable to control their households.

Against this background, I consider how the participants conceptualised **idealised masculinity** – that is, how *they* and *others* defined the typology of "**a man**".

5.2.3 The measure of a man

Here I asked the question: "What does it means to be a man?" Three participants (i.e., Eli, Gift and Makweya) cited the importance of **physical strength**, thus, to be a man means you must be "strong". Makweya, based in Gauteng, noted that, as a man, "you need to be strong, *number one*. You need to be strong, *like* strong in every sense. Like for the pain, you need to be strong. For the suffering, you need to be strong". Similarly, Gift alluded to the fact that "a man is supposed to be strong and display a character that he *is* a man". He explained this as follows:

> *For me to be considered [as being] a man, I need to have strength – not just physical strength, but also emotional strength. I am not supposed to cry or show my emotions, otherwise I will be regarded as a weak man and people will not take me seriously in the community.* (Gift, 30, African)

Eli shared a similar account. He stated that "being a man means that you should **not show your emotions**[5] through crying because it may degrade your status". **Cisgenderism** again emerged in Eli's reference to how people conflate sex, gender and sexual orientation. Men who are too emotional, risk being labelled as "**gay**,[6] so in order for other men and women to respect *you*, you need to act strong. Even when you are in pain, *do not*[7] show it".

Six of the participants (i.e., Gift, Eli, Khuliso, Makweya, Thulz and Rofhiwa) noted that ideal men should therefore protect and provide for their families. Thulz who, at the time of the study, resided in Gauteng, associated taking "**responsibility**"[8] with being an ideal man. He continued: "I think I will just put it in a simple way. A man is someone who, we can talk of responsibility, like protecting family through maintaining your family in terms of financial, physical and emotional support". Rofhiwa argued that "being a man means that your family is safe in your hands, and you don't allow any harm to come to them". Furthermore, Khuliso alluded to the fact that a man who is unable to provide for the family, could be called names such as "*Umahlalela*" (i.e., a person who

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5 Emphasis added.
6 Emphasis added.
7 Emphasis added.
8 Emphasis added.

just sits around). According to him, “being supported financially by a woman does not sit well with “[him] because [he] feel[s] [that], as a man, [he] need[s] to be the one who brings food to the table”. He further elaborated on this thought. Men, in his opinion, must go to the “mountains” to get circumcised, and if it is known that you have not been circumcised, you fall into the trap of being viewed as “gay”. This may risk you facing discrimination.[9]

Notwithstanding Josia’s support of Khuliso’s preceding view (i.e., a man “being the head of the family and making decisions with your partner”), Corné, a Cape Town-based participant, noted that being a man “is a matter of genitals and not concerned with societal claims of how a man should be or should not be”. His partly “soft biologically essentialist view” (Anderson & Magrath, 2019) explains how he did not understand how people’s social performances and presentations were (or should be) dependent on a person’s genitals. He believed that people were “forced” and "indoctrinated” into specific gendered performances, roles and expectations at a very young age. This, according to him, happened without them fully understanding what it means to be a man or a woman. He maintained that often masculinity is regarded as superior and those that enact masculine performances are seen as “gifted”. Men who present as effeminate, however, may be interpreted as someone who is “cursed”. Furthermore, he emphasised the need for people to be equal and allowed to be their “true selves” without “judgements”. Men (and women) should not be made to “feel bad” for being a man who displays a characteristic that emulate effeminacy or femininity. In his opinion:

> *I am a man in terms of [my] genitals, but I can be soft and emotional, too. I do cry when situations are hard to handle or when I feel pain. I do not see myself according to these man-made definitions of what it means to be a man and how I am required to act or present myself.* (Corné, 32, White)

Irrespective of his acknowledgement of existing cultural sanctions and definitions of what it meant to be a man, Coleman noted that he did not subscribe to any such

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9 “Traditional male circumcision is a custom whereby boys transition to manhood is marked not only by circumcision but also a training period that involves teaching young men the culturally acceptable ways of doing masculinity” (Mshweshwe, 2020:3).

traditional views that could disadvantage him in the long run. He questioned the implications of such stoicism: “What if I then adhere to the traditional way of being a man, such as being emotionless, then something happens to me that requires me to express my emotions?” He continued:

> *It means that, instead of talking about it, I would have to keep it inside, because if I should express myself [in this way], then I am at a disadvantage, since I would be categorised as weak and not man enough.* (Coleman, 40, White)

He emphasised the idea that people should be considered as humans with various talents and skills that do not require strict categorisation in accordance with their gender. Furthermore, he posed the following question: “Assuming that, as a man, I study to be a chef or a cook, does that mean I am not going to be recognised as man enough because I am doing a job that has been traditionally associated with women?” His assertions support Nick’s (34, White) narrative relating to his failure to understand how it came to be that men and women should be categorised according to their gender. He was of the view that women and men should not be categorised, as such demarcations only limit their potential through the exacerbation of gender inequality. Limitations he referred to include a man’s “inability to express [his] emotion” and his “inability to seek help” due to stereotypes associated with being masculine. He even likened these stringent gender roles to being “enslaved”, “victimised” and “subordinated” due to men’s inability to adhere to an orthodox, archaic and traditional way of being a man.

In addition to exploring the participants’ narratives on what it meant to be a man, the next subsection focuses on how the participants described how their **relationships** with their significant others influenced their masculinity and interactions with loved ones.

5.2.4 Gender traditionality and (re)constructing relationships

The findings discussed in this subsection emanate from the narratives of the participants’ responses to the question “Has your relationship been influenced by particular traditions in your culture and in what ways?”

Describing his previous relationship with his partner, Corné recalled that his relationship had a "rocky" start. He ascribed this to "major mental health issues relating to trauma" that emanated from the initial abuse of his (now divorced) female partner during her childhood. In his description, Corné (noted that his partner's childhood traumas related to harsh treatment and maltreatment (e.g., slapping, hitting and being kicked by her parents) when she was growing up. Suffering these challenges at the hands of her parents, his partner experienced depression and anger problems, which ultimately emerged in their intimate relationship. He proclaimed that the abuse he experienced was mainly **physical.** According to him, he was now "paying the price for the [her] childhood struggles and traumas". The abuse, he asserted, began with small arguments about "finances" and "household necessities". He stated:

> *We would be discussing one thing and if I suggested something [a solution], and she is not familiar [or in favour of that], thus did not agree, she would shout. … From shouting [at] me and my son, her threats manifested into actual beatings and would [she] also threaten[ed] to take my children away.* (Corné, 30, White)

Providing what was arguably "organised consent" (cf. Atkinson & De Palma, 2009) by describing his relationship as "normal", Thulz mentioned that he was employed while his girlfriend was a "stay-home mum looking after their child, because the child had brain damage". He further stated that they would have some "misunderstandings like in any normal [heterosexual] relationship". A "normal" relationship, according to him, is:

> *… a relationship where we can enter the yard when we want to see everybody in the family, know each other, even our extended families, you know? Sometimes I'd go visit her uncles in QwaQwa and she would come and see my extended family, that's a normal relationship [i.e.,] not hiding anything.* (Thulz, 46, African)

Josia, hailing from Cape Town, likened his cohabiting relationship of 12 years at the time to living in "hell". He exclaimed:

> *It's a relationship I desperately want to get out of. … She's physically abusive and provokes me to any extent. I'm a person that can control my*

anger. She provokes me to an extent that I struggle to control my anger. So, it is not a relationship I'd want to be in, I want to get out of it as soon as possible, but due to the court system, which tends to take more time to deal with such situations, it is difficult. (Josia, 48, White)

In addition to lengthy legal processes, he recalled the earnest way in which the SAPS dealt with his abusing partner's fallacious allegations **against him**. He said:

… whatever a woman or a female report to the police, is taken as 'gold'. We, as males, have to ... defend ourselves even. If I'm bruised, I struggle to open a case. But she first went to the police to open a case on a Saturday morning in August. That Monday it was a public holiday. I woke up that morning. The police came to arrest me, only for me to find that her face was bruised. I'm right-handed so that bruise should've been on her left side of her face. But it was on the right side of her face. So, this meant that she bruised herself and blamed me for it. [She], therefore. Put … herself in that position [of] power whereby I have to beg her not to go to court. (Josia, 48, White)

He further emphasised the need to "get out" of the relationship due to him feeling "unsafe" through his exposure to such "danger".

Corné mirrored Josia's view. He stated that his relationship was influenced by the expectation that women tend to sometimes get away with almost anything because of their gender. He said:

Yes, everyone told her [his ex-partner] that because of her gender, no one can take the children away from her, which completely disregards the best interest of the child, the safety of the child and those around her. The police also would not help me and my son, which left me all by myself trying to defend myself and my child. My ex said she will wait until I do something wrong to phone the police and have me arrested. She also said that she will never be arrested. (Corné, 32, White)

Addressing my questions, Makweya described two of his previous relationships. He argued that these relationships were problematic due to differences in his **level of**

education and that of his female partner. A **lack of communication** and **lifestyle differences** also impacted on his experiences. He emphasised that the differences associated with their level of education resulted in misunderstandings in their relationship. He noted:

> *… as a partner who has gone to varsity [i.e., university], as far as [completing my] Master's degree, my partner, who had only matric [highest secondary or high school qualification], could not get me [understand me] when I tried to explain and reason with her about certain things. …Whatever we were trying to find [a] solution for, could not be resolved because she would end up yelling and shouting.* (Makweya, 50, African)

Regarding **lifestyle differences**, Makweya recalled his partner's love for leading a lavish lifestyle, thus constantly comparing herself to what other women had. This exacerbated her **jealousy** of those and other women – a factor that led to her abusing him. He remembered:

> *One time I was coming back from work. As I entered the complex gate of where we were staying, I happened to be walking in at the same time with another woman who was staying at the complex as well. But I did not know her [the woman]. My partner saw us entering together. Due to her jealousy and insecurities, she assumed and concluded that I was with [this woman] and she started accusing me of cheating on her.*

Describing his relationship, Coleman (40, White) noted that it was a "50/50" type of a relationship, wherein both parties had consented to contributing equally towards the success of the relationship (i.e., both parties agreed to "equal provision" in the family). His narrative, thus, refutes the influence of tradition in his relationship. He described his relationship to have been "excellent at first". However, later it "turned sour" when he was "wrongly accused of infidelity" and his partner wanting to "control his finances", irrespective of their initial decision to contribute and share it equally.

According to Nick, a 34-year-old White Gauteng-based male, his relationships did not have any rules and regulations or expectations relating to how one ought to behave or perform in the household. He typified his relationship with his partner as being "free spirited and unconventional". He asserted that his relationship was not influenced by

tradition because they considered themselves to be unorthodox and nonconformists. He stated:

> *… we did not conform to any traditional roles or expectations. Our relationship was not defined or characterised by traditional ideologies and no specific roles were assigned in the house. We both cooked or did the dishes or cleaned. We were both independent and did our best to provide for ourselves and family.*

In his narration, he noted that their problems began with his female partner's excessive consumption of alcohol which, at some point, could not be controlled, thus resulting in his victimisation.

Five participants (i.e., Coleman, Josia, Makweya, Nick and Gift) mentioned that tradition had no influence on their relationships. Josia stated that his beliefs continued to permit him much more freedom to do a lot of things as part of his relationship. As an illustration, he told me about the fact that he and his current girlfriend, an African woman, although both acknowledging the man as the head of the family and the decision-maker, **negotiated** the possibilities of "changing the dynamics" in their relationship. Both were permitted to have input and contribute to decision-making. He believed that if he had not strayed from traditional, ruling and hegemonic conceptions of masculinity, he would **not have become a victim of GBV**. Makweya described himself as **liberal**, because some things were not allowed in his culture (i.e., Pedi). Traditionally, said culture, according to him, disallowed marrying outside one's own tribe because the relationships tend to end up in "tragedy". Using the latter term, he likened such relationships to that of *Romeo and Juliet*, because he married someone outside of his tribe, resulting in him being physically abused (e.g., thrown with a glass bottle that landed him in ICU). At the time of the study, he and this female partner were divorced.

In addition, four participants (i.e., Thulz, Rofhiwa, Khuliso and Eli) stated that their relationships were influenced by tradition to some extent. Rofhiwa and Eli noted that culture would have an influence in certain parts of the relationship. Their examples related to my previous reference to men's "**liberal**" gender attitudes, thus favouring egalitarian approaches to domesticity – making their female partners "leaders of the

house". Thulz believed "generally[,] many cultures take a man as a head of the family. I can't say maybe in terms of a specific culture, but in general, you will need an understanding that *a man is a man in a family*".[10] He continued:

> *So, your responsibilities [as a man], whether you're Zulu, Xhosa or Hindu or Christian, your responsibility will always stay the same. Yes, in my culture, a man is a head of the family. A man must provide, he must protect. … and as I have said, ensure that, taking into consideration all the cultures, that the status quo remains as it is.* (Thulz, 46, African)

These were the participants' narratives on primary socialisation as a source of agency and conformity as part of their relationships. The next subsection speaks to the men's **practical conceptualisations** and **experiences of GBV** at the hands of their partners.

5.3 GBV AS INHIBITOR OF MEN'S AGENCY: THE MEN SPEAK

This subsection focuses on the narratives of participants relating to their **experiences of GBV at the hands of their current and previous female partners**. At the time of the study, four of men categorised themselves as being single; one man was still in an abusive relationship; one was divorced from an abusive partner; one was married, albeit not to the previous abusive partner; and three participants were "in a relationship", also not with their former abusive partners. First, I explain how the participants **conceptualised** GBV. Furthermore, I discuss the **causes** they attributed to GBV. Finally, I reflect on the participants' recollection of **experiencing GBV**.

5.3.1 Conceptualising the causation of GBV in South Africa

GBV, according to Corné, is "when one gender commits violence towards another [person]. It deprioritises normal violence, thus making it easier for **criminals**[11] to abuse others". Thulz related GBV to the **law** – identifying GBV allows the law to "assist women and children not to be abused". He continued, "actually", references to GBV sensitise law enforcement services "to protect anyone from *any form*[12] of abuse". Before

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10 Emphasis added.
11 Emphasis added.
12 Emphasis added.

suffering GBV, Josia, like many others, “always assumed that GBV is to verbally and physically assault the woman”. However:

> *… now it has become a situation where women also physically abuse a man. So, the understanding I have of GBV is that it may either be a man assaulting or being physically abused by a woman, or both can be physically abusive. As much as man can be physically abusive, so too a woman can be physically abusive.* (Josia, 48, White)

Echoing Josia’s initial views about GBV, Makweya stated that GBV “is a violence taking place within the household or in close proximity of the household”. He believed that much of South African Government documents “that speaks to GBV … define [it] as only confined to women” – a view to which four participants (i.e., Eli, Gift, Rofhiwa and Khuliso) attested. Such violence, they argued, includes “beating”, “slapping”, “insults”, “not being able to see your kids” and “emotional blackmail or manipulation”. According to Coleman (40, White), GBV can be defined as violence committed against a person because of their gender. He further noted that, although statistics mostly “display […] it as a violence against women”, this violence is inclusive of both men and women. While emphasising his non-conformist and unconventional stance to gender, Nick described GBV as any violation of human rights or any factor that limits one from being an independent thinking. He further related those factors to “traditional norms” and any form of expectation that “favours one gender” while “limiting the other”. In the case of men, he believes that it is *these* norms that prohibit men who are victims of GBV to come out to others about being victims and report it to the necessary authorities.

Regarding the **causes of GBV**, participants mentioned that the possible causes include the perpetrators’ own experience of “gender discrimination from a young age”, them suffering from a “mental illness”, them being “bipolar”, their emotional immaturity, substance and alcohol abuse, the abuser’s “insecurities”, their inability to fulfil their prescribed gender roles, and infidelity on the part of both the abuser and victim. Citing the words of former South African President Jacob Zuma, Josia said:

> *… Zuma said a very interesting thing, i.e., ‘angifun ntombazane ingithande ngifuna ntombazane ingihloniphe’ [I don’t want a woman/girl to love me, I want a woman/girl to respect me]. I think respect goes a long way and love*

can prevent a lot of abuse in the relationship. I think, in my situation, … I'm not with a normal person psychologically. She's not normal, she wants to show that she's in control of everything and I must be the one that must be abused in the situation.

In addition to this, he believed that **drinking**, thus **substance abuse**, also played an important role. "Personally, I don't drink, so my partner likes drinking and that causes a lot of problems in our relationship" (Josia). His partner's drinking made her "turn violent with me especially when she is drunk. When I tell her to listen, I'm the wrong one, she's right". In addition to her drinking, he suspected:

… she lives in a fairy tale world or Tinker Bell world. She talks about things that don't exist, e.g., she'd say the property belongs to her as she thinks she owns the house. But I think, psychologically, she's got a problem.

Based on these challenges, he did not want to marry her, and said in this regard:

I don't want to share love with her, and I say to myself if she is doing these things to me now, when we don't have a child. Can you imagine what she is going to do to me when I have a child?

Furthermore, like Josia's account, Nick noted the negative effects of inducing and becoming addicted to alcohol. He recalled how his partner started victimising him when she consumed alcohol more regularly. He argued that although they both would drink alcohol "once in a blue moon", he never imagined his partner becoming addicted, behaving strangely and becoming violent because, as he noted, "throughout their life together, [she] never showed signs of [being] a heavy drinker or an alcoholic". Although he intended to find out the reason behind the partner's heavy drinking and assist her through seeking professional help, she would go to counselling and attend only one session. Following on this, she would return her "old ways" of being violent under the influence of alcohol and start "yelling", "throwing bottles and glasses" and even "pushing him" without being provoked.

Regarding substance abuse, participants noted that abusers tend to lack "a sense of reasoning capacity", which leads to the perpetrators' difficulty to "control their anger" and consequently acting out violently. Participants such as Makweya noted that

perpetrators of violence tend to be possessive and have the urge to control and have "everything" settled their own way. Some participants mentioned that these actions of perpetrators may be due to their "fear of abandonment". Furthermore, they noted that the perpetrators mimicked behaviours (such as being "extremely moody", "aggressive", "arrogant" and "depressed") relating to mental illness. Other reasons participants noted regarding the above causes include "violence emerging when the victim became economically unstable", and also "violence starting when one partner assumed that the other partner was being unfaithful and cheating".

Coleman's account echoed that of Makweya's assertions regarding the female perpetrator's own "insecurities" and "possessiveness". He recalled that his partner began inciting violence towards him when she assumed that he was cheating on her with a colleague, which later only exacerbated her existing jealousy and "paranoia". This resulted in her becoming more violent and emotionally and psychologically abusive. She would constantly "stalk" him, "follow and track" him when he was traveling for work and even browse his phone for any evidence of infidelity without his consent. This, in his view, made him feel like he was "being policed", and it made him feel "uneasy", "uncomfortable" and "not trusted". In his attempt to find solutions to the arguments and accusations, his partner noted "she was afraid of losing their relationship that they worked hard for. She was not about to lose her partner to another woman who has no idea of their struggles".

5.3.2 Context and GBV: What the abused men say

This subsection discusses participants' **experiences of GBV** and the **nature of violence**, depending on the specific context. Four participants (i.e., Corné, Josia, Makweya and Thulz) reported being **physically** abused. It is worth quoting Josia's recollection of experiencing GBV at length:

> *What she [his partner] would do to me is punch me or beat me, … especially when I tell her something she doesn't like to hear. … One time when she beat me, I just went to the hospital and asked them to record my injuries on my body. I didn't take it any further. I just left it [at] that, because of what she does. Last year, [for example], she opened a case against me and planted a gun on me. That case is still pending. So, what she basically does is to*

> *either physically injure herself and then go to the police and open a case against me.* (Josia, 48, White)

His first experience of GBV was six years prior to his participation in the interview. His initial reaction he noted was “denial”. He did not consider it as abuse because he viewed it as “just an anger reaction” at *that* moment. Later, however, it became more frequent. He alluded that, although the violence became extreme, his reaction would be based on anger. However, he did not reciprocate similar abusive behaviours due to fear of being arrested and “being blamed” for the violence.

Similarly, Corné stated that “my son and I have been beaten physically”. Thulz mentioned that, in his experience, his former girlfriend would get drunk and start attacking him. His first experience of GBV was eight years prior to our interview. Initially, like Josia, he did not view it as abuse because he believed that it was a once-off incident that resulted from his partner’s frustration. He did not consider the possibility that she could be violent until it became more habitual. After the first incident, he experienced “shock” because it was “unexpected” and did not believe that his partner could be violent. He remembered that she would “spend a weekend with me or with my family so when she got there [visiting his family who lived elsewhere], I found that she was drunk and then that was when she started attacking me”. He recalled:

> *… when I requested to see [my] child, that is when there was a fight and she started it. Like I said, she was drunk and started to fight in front of the people and the child, and I couldn’t fight her. She was expecting that I will react and fight her back. She expected that, as a man, I was going to beat her up and then she was going to go the police and tell them that I was attacking her. So, I did not do that, I did not fight her, and I just left the house.*

Likewise, Makweya told me how his previous partner threw sharpened glass bottles at him “and then she hit [my head] and cut me. Once she saw blood, she stopped and then I had to go to hospital ICU. She, on her part, ran away”. In addition to this experience, he recalled receiving a phone call from his younger brother saying that his wife “destroyed [his] wardrobe, … like all my suits, my ties, my underwear, everything, even my shoes. Everything was destroyed and cut, and I only had clothes that I was

wearing at work". She did this, according to him, after reading WhatsApp messages on his phone coming from a gay trainee, who formed part of the training he held outside South Africa, who, after the training, sent Makweya (a 50-year-old heterosexual male) a message. Said message read, "Hello darling, we had a nice training". This message, in his opinion, was an expression of appreciation of the successful training session – not a form of flirtation. He, like Thulz, was "shocked" by his partner's violent reaction. As with the previous examples, the state of his injury did not result in him considering to reciprocate violent reactions because he did not want to "cause harm to the woman". Makweya also considered **sexual deprivation** as form of GBV. He noted that when he fell ill, his wife deprived him of having sexual intercourse. He stated:

> *… when I was sick, she will say she will not sleep with me up until I'm cured from whatever is killing me. I asked her, 'What if it takes five years?' She responded, 'Yes'. It counts as abuse, because you feel obscured.*

Like Makweya, Nick also narrated his experiences to have been somewhat physical in respect of the behaviour enacted by the partner when under the influence of alcohol. He said that his partner would "throw glass bottles and glass cups" and "push him or slap him". Fortunately, according to him, he was able to avoid being hit by these objects and, thus, did not sustain any physical injuries. He further argued that at the time of the first GBV incident, he did not take it "serious" and paid less attention to it because he thought his partner was "just out of control" at that moment and would probably not repeat it. However, his view changed when similar incidents became more "regular and constant". He then came to realise his "rights were violated" and he was being "subjected" to GBV.

Seven participants (i.e., Makweya, Coleman, Thulz, Khuliso, Gift, Nick and Eli) further reported being **emotionally** abused by their partners. Makweya and Gift noted that their wives and girlfriends would "blackmail them" into agreeing to whatever they wanted. Eli reported that his girlfriend would tell him that if "he does not give her money, she [would] leave" him. He further said that since he had lost his job, his girlfriend started threatening him that she would leave the relationship if he could not "provide" for her like "other men" who make provisions for their female partners. This echoes the former sentiments of the African man as primary provider. According to him, the violence started when he had lost his job, which led to his "change in socio-economic"

status and, therefore, he had no “influence” anymore. Similarly, Khuliso argued that emotional abuse begins when one person in the relationship refuses to be reprimanded for the enacted behaviour that hurts another person in the relationship. He reported that after he reprimanded his partner because of the negative behaviour, she denied it altogether, disassociated herself from committing such acts against him and opted to blame him for not being “enough of a man”. Such emasculation made him “feel guilty” for raising his concerns with her. Furthermore, Thulz stated that the reason his partner emotionally “tortured” him related to her need for control over him and making him “fear losing the child”. Although Thulz was no longer in a relationship with the abusive partner, he continued to face emotional abuse due to her attempts of disallowing him visitation with his child. At the time of the interview, he could not even recall when last he saw his child.

Such emotional abuse spilled over into **verbal** abuse for some of the participants. Josia claimed that his partner “provoked me by saying, ‘Yeah, your daughter, she’s on drugs. Your daughter must go get a job. Your daughter must do this-and-that”. This would exacerbate argumentation insofar as he sought to always defend his daughter: “She’s not well and she’s not on any drugs. She doesn’t drink. She doesn’t smoke. She is like me. Then I’d say things and *boom*, she beats me”. Makweya, too, like Nick, noted that his wife would “yell” during arguments and he “count[ed] that as abuse” and a definite “no-no” in any relationship”. Similarly, Khuliso noted being verbally abused due to his inability to constantly provide his partner with money. He stated the she would revert to “name-calling”, which ranged from “if you love me, you would give me what I want” and “you [are] not like other men who provide for their girlfriends” to “you cannot take care of a woman”, “you have other women you give money to”, and “you give money to side-chicks”.

Next, I consider the consequences of these varied experiences of different GBV typologies.

5.4 GBV AND ITS CONSEQUENCES FOR MEN

I asked participants to comment on how GBV informed their everyday lives. All 10 participants noted how GBV affected them negatively and the consequences of such abuse on their emotional states.

Nick (34, White) indicated that after he had exhausted all attempts at assisting his partner and, in his opinion, failing to do so, he felt that his relationship was "beyond repair" and there was "nothing" he could do for the relationship to recover. For example, he noted that "there is nothing I did not do to try and fix my partner's drinking, it just kept getting worse and I thought perhaps it was just time to call it off". Nick's reason for ending the relationship was based on the constant abuse and how the abuse and the partner's behaviour was becoming detrimental to his mental, emotional, and psychological health.

Likewise, Corné (32, White) stated that he had to "block everyone that does not care", meaning he had to let go, create boundaries and also cut communication with people who could not offer him the support he required to be able to deal with his circumstances. He further noted that he had to let go of its effects to allow him more "peace of mind". He opts to focus on being the "best father he can be" to his son. While Josia (48, White) was still in a relationship with his abusive partner, he stated that he was still suffering from the abuse. Although he wanted to get out of said relationship, the court system processes were slow. Consider his thoughtful reflection on how he attempted to deal with GBV at the hands of his partner:

> *So, the thing is that I have learned, [is] how [difficult it is] to prove [GBV], I tried to record [it] with a camera, with a cell phone camera what she says. I don't, [however], have hidden cameras in the house where one can record what she does and doesn't do. This has taught me that's what I should be doing, [i.e.,] getting a hidden camera somewhere in the house so that it at least records. With the last case, the attorney asked me, 'No, what proof have you got of what she's doing?' … I didn't have any proof, except for the time when I went to the hospital when I got beaten and then she threatened me. I got my own daughter and she's got her own son who was staying with us for many years. … For many years she started saying she is going to tell the police that I have been abusive to her son sexually to scare me and then she ends up manipulating me with the court system. And now her son is no longer staying with us, he's staying with my girlfriend's father, so at least that's a bit of a help.* (Josia, 48, White)

Thulz (46, African) mentioned that when they were attending his uncle's funeral, his partner started attacking him and had called his sisters and cousins, however he did not respond to the attack. Eli, Gift, Rofhiwa and Khuliso stated that although they tried to mend things through communication, their relationships were never the same after the GBV – they had to **leave the relationship**.

Participants reported differential experiences because of GBV. The next subsections discuss these narratives.

5.4.1 The men's differential experiences of GBV

GBV resulted in the men reporting suicidal tendencies, physical injuries and experiencing emotional trauma. These were some of the negative consequences that permeated their educational, work and social lives. All participants reported being negatively affected by the violence towards them. They commented on how GBV made them "unable to cope at work", they experienced a "loss of sense of self", "lower levels of productivity at school and work", "lost educational opportunities", "immediate injuries and physical scars", their "employer's financial loss due to [their] lost educational opportunities", feeling "confused", "belittled", "disgraced" and "disrespected". Josia stated that the violence affected the way in which he communicated with his daughter, as these conversations had to remain secretive because of his girlfriend's possessiveness and jealousy. He further highlighted that "financially maintaining" his daughter had to remain a secret because, should the girlfriend have found out, it could be "hell" for him. He articulated his feelings towards his girlfriend as follows:

> *I grew up [loving] my mother [who] was even helping the anti-apartheid movement. … Imagine growing up in that environment because I can speak Zulu well. To now starting to hate black women. Not hating black people, but [rather] black women especially, because of what she's [girlfriend] doing to me. … In the beginning we would interact well …. Now it's hurting.* (Josia, 48, White)

Corné stated that his experiences helped him "become a social justice warrior to advocate for **everyone**[13], instead of just one gender". Makweya alluded that the abuse affected him in his education. He noted:

> *I was registered for an [academic] course. I paid R17 000 for two weeks only for that course, but it was payment from my company. I needed that course. For the first three to four days, I didn't hear a thing because that was the time when my clothes were ripped. I could not make sense of these things, it was like it was heavy, I was feeling heavy, and my world was crumbling, and I could not do anything. could not think properly … [and] you are always displaced. It affected me a lot and then I failed the course. I did not pass that course as a result. My company could not blame me for that because they knew what I was going through.* (Makweya, 50, African)

Furthermore, Thulz mentioned that in the beginning, the abuse affected him negatively. However, he had changed his lifestyle and he was "enjoying being alone". He considered himself to be an "outgoing person" and had learned to adjust and remain positive on his own.

In addition to how the participants were affected by the violence, they further noted their **initial feeling and emotions** following the incidences. Participants felt "guilt", "self-blame", "feeling angry" and had an urge to "reciprocate the violence with violence". Josia, for example, said that "if I had not allowed things to be the way they were in the starting of the relationship, I would not have experienced the abuse", meaning that he allowed his partner to have input and contribute to decision-making, thus becoming more open to inclusivity and equality in the household. Further emotions included "shame", "an urge to protect the kids", "humiliation", an "inability to concentrate", a "lack of confidence in oneself" and feeling "degraded and disrespected". Khuliso and Rofhiwa mentioned that they felt that their "dignities as men" were being "tampered" with because, had they reported the GBV to friends or the local justice system, they would not receive "full respect" and "honour" from either group. Nick said that he felt "distressed and humiliated" because although he

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[13] Emphasis added.

acknowledged that anyone could be a victim of GBV, he did not envision that he would be one of those people. He also noted a “sense of disbelief” and “awkwardness” as his partner was the “last person” he expected violence from because throughout the course of their relationship, she did not show any signs of such violence. Coleman, on the other hand, thought he was being “treated unfairly” and with his beliefs in the importance of trust in the relationship, he felt the trust between himself and his partner had diminished over time, resulting in him ending the relationship because it made him feel “less trusted and less loyal” and “enslaved” by his partner.

5.4.2 GBV and men’s emotions

This subsection highlights participants’ **feelings about GBV**. Participants noted that violence has “no space in their world” (Corné), some had support groups and were part of multiple domestic violence groups. Corné claimed that gender discrimination is the “root of divorces”, “prolonged” custody battles, “overall unhappiness” and “jealousy”. For other participants, like Josia, such violence made him feel more “helpless”, since he was not able to “do anything to stop it”. According to Makweya, the violence always leaves physical and emotional scars that “remain with you”, often long after the violence has passed. He provided an insightful reflection about the consequences of GBV and how it requires a male victim, like him, to intensely reflect on what a future romantic relationship would look like. He said:

> *[GBV] always leaves a scar, not only emotional scars, but even physical scars. [Both] will always remain with you. You keep on asking yourself, ‘What happened?’ You ask yourself, ‘What if…?’ But it happened. It’s here with you and the experience you went through [will linger] in your life. …The only thing is to not to go back to what you went through. Look at it in better and positive ways. Find better ways of dealing with these things and it will help you to be meticulous. To be cautious when you’re looking for your next love.* (Makweya, 50, African)

For Thulz, the violence mostly affected his relationship with his child:

> *I am now close to 8 months without seeing my child. I don’t know where the child stays. … It’s not going to end, it’s not an ending, it exists and day-by-*

day it becomes worse. But it only depends on me and how I receive it. If I receive [interpret] it negatively, it's going to destroy me. But so far, I'm dealing with it.

Pertaining to the participants' relationships with their partners at the time of the interview, some of the men were quite forthcoming about their experiences. Nine participants stated that they were no longer married/cohabiting or in a relationship with the partner who had inflicted harm on them. One participant noted that they were in process of leaving the relationship. Corné noted that the was not with his partner because "he had to save himself". Similarly, Thulz believed that he could not "stay where I see that I'm not appreciated nor loved". Other men, including Josia, noted the following relating to the current status of his relationship with his abuser:

I'm waiting for the court to evict her. I'm currently staying because [she] is also threaten[ing] my daughter via voice notes. … I mean I've got my own house; my daughter should be able to visits me whenever she wants and stay for as long as she wants but I fear for her safety that's why she cannot come and stay where I am.

Furthermore, participants commented on how the victimisation or abuse affected how they related to other men as well as how it affected their **self-image**, **self-esteem** and **self-efficacy**. Some participants indicated that their victimisation led to the development of low self-esteem (e.g., Nepon *et al.*, 2020). Two participants (Corné and Josia) reported instances of rejection and disrespect from their friends. This also contributed to how they compared themselves (and their masculinity) to other men. Their view of themselves were associated with their low self-esteem. Josia noted:

… at some point in my life I felt like a failure for not being able to keep my relationship stable and I still feel like a failure compared to my friend or even family because even now I do not know how to solve or even get out of the abusive relationship, and it is draining me. I have lost touch with some of my friends because I am constantly sad, and I feel like my social life is also ruined.

He further noted that inadequate social support from the justice system contributed to him enduring the abusive relationship.

Nick said that suffering from verbal abuse resulted in his **social isolation** because he was constantly thinking about how his relationship was slowly ending and there was nothing more he could do to aid it or "fix it". Coleman alluded that his experience of victimisation made it difficult for him to maintain his "confident and optimistic" self-image and disrupted his autonomy because of "overwhelming" feelings of "inferiority". Therefore, he noted that to "break out" of this vicious circle of constant victimisation, he resorted to ending the relationship. Owing to constant abuse, most participants reported being socially withdrawn – an experience that impaired their well-being. Thulz, for example, reported attempting suicide because of the abuse. Based on some of the participants' narratives, the **lack of support and stigmatisation from friends and social institutions** became another "wound". Some participants reported that they felt "ignored", not only by friends and family but also by the systems that were supposed to aid or intervene in the matters.

After leaving their relationships, nine participants alluded to having trouble "**trusting other people**" and being increasingly "nervous" when they had to approach a potential romantic partner. For these participants, it was difficult to form and maintain new relationships. Gift noted:

> *… it is now very difficult to find a partner or to even keep the partner because, I am always thinking of whether they are similar to the previous partner in terms of abuse, so basically due to the abuse I cannot trust easily and I am very guarded.*

Elias attested to this. Coleman, Corné, Josia and Thulz commented on how their abusive relationships made them feel more **alienated**, **paranoid**, **detached from friends and family** and **invisible on social networking sites**. Their reasons ranged from often being afraid to leave the house because of the concern of later being accused of infidelity, which also made it difficult for Coleman to socialise with friends. As a result, Coleman claimed that he tried to withdraw entirely from social life in an attempt to reduce the occurrence of the abuse and false accusations; his strategy, however, did not work. Thulz also noted how it would get uncomfortable and he would be afraid when he and his partner were in the crowd because his partner could be unpredictable. In keeping with these accounts, for a period of time, some participants (i.e., Corné and Josia) limited their social activities and withdrew from social networking

sites because of feelings of embarrassment and to protect their extended family or children from the abuser, and this resulted in alienation.

5.5 DISCLOSING GBV TO OTHERS

Building on the preceding subsection's concluding thoughts, next, I provide a discussion of the participants' choice to disclose or not disclose their victimhood to others. I also focus on their unique experiences, motivations and reasons for their disclosure or foreclosure.

5.5.1 Informal and/or formal disclosure: men's motivations

With regard to disclosure, participants were asked to explain why they opted to informally (e.g., friends or family members) and/or formally (e.g., psychologists, social workers, and/or the police) disclose their victimisation to said persons. The participants cited both avenues as answer to the question.

Nine of the participants confided in their families, friends and psychologists. Corné and Makweya disclosed to both friends and their family members and reported their abuse to the police and psychologists. Coleman, Eli, Gift, Josia, Khuliso, Nick and Rofhiwa only reported their abuse to psychologists, social workers, and the police. To some participants, families and friends proved to be supportive, while others experienced negative responses from their kin. Some participants, such as Gift and Khuliso, noted that they felt "uncomfortable disclosing their experiences at first" because they viewed issues regarding violence in the household as "private matters". Thulz reported that his disclosure was to a Facebook group who aids fathers through assistance from social workers. When participants were asked the question of whether they related their GBV experience to their **female friends** or **male friends**, eight participants noted that could not relate to either of the genders, while one related it to his female friend, and one related it to his male friend. Those who could not relate information about GBV to any of the genders noted that they did not have female friends; however, they could not relate information to their male friends for various reasons. These are presented below.

Nick and Coleman, for example, cited the rigidity of their friends as regards traditional gendered expectations. They said the following:

> *…I could not relate info about GBV to my male friends because they are rigid and I feel that they would not understand my situation because, whenever we are together, they make jokes about being a 'sissy' if you allow a woman to beat you, so I did not want to be categorised as a sissy or as gay.* (Nick, 34, White)

> *My friends are very traditional and do not believe in the fact that a man can be abused by women. Even when we are just chilling, they make remarks that they are the head of their house and cannot be controlled or beaten by women. So, if I were to tell my story then I would look like I am being controlled by my partner. … I will look like I am not man enough. So, the best thing I could do for myself is to just conceal the matter to avoid being seen as weak. So, when I am with my friends, I act strong and in control*. (Coleman, 40, White)

Other participants who noted that they did not relate to either gender cited the fear of being effeminised or homosexualised due to their supposed weakness. Eli and Khuliso expressed such homohysteric sentiments as follows:

> *…I am just scared to be stereotyped or categorised as gay [or] as a man who is not strong. In the generation we live in, people joke just about anything, so I wouldn't want my pain to be used as a joke, because it hurts.* (Khuliso, 39, African)

> *I don't want my experiences to be on a public platform to avoid name calling and future insults. [This is] because people always remember your shortfalls and use them to later degrade you. For example, I might have a misunderstanding with a friend (male or female). They [then] decide to say something like, 'What can <u>you</u> tell us? Your wife always beats you and you are weak'*. (Eli, 46, African)

Some noted that they could not relate the information because of their beliefs in privacy. One participant noted, "I think the issues are personal and should be kept that way. I cannot just air my problems to the public" (Rofhiwa, 45, African).

One participant (Makweya), who acknowledged that he shared information about his experiences as victim of GBV to his male friends, did so because they were police officers. He felt the need to express his “vulnerability” to them because they worked for the justice system and they would help him without judgement. He reported that his friends were supportive of him and because they could sense that he was uncomfortable, he had to share and disclose to them.

Josia noted that he related the information about GBV to his female friend. He attributed this to the following reason:

> *…remember with males I have to act in a certain way with them so that they may not think I am a weak man. Therefore, with a female friend, I could be [share] my emotions not worrying about how she would react because women are considered to be [more] emotional. Therefore, I assumed that she would understand me, unlike men who are supposed to be emotionless and … would just ridicule or mock me because it is considered to not be in our nature to show emotions.* (Josia, 48, White)

Regarding confiding in professionals, 10 participants noted that it did not matter whether the social worker or psychologist was a male or female. They attributed their views to the fact that these professionals must always have a “neutral” stance when dealing with victimisation. Thus, they believed that psychologists and/or social workers were “just doing their jobs” and that they were less “biased”.

Participants had different **reasons for disclosure or foreclosure**. Reasons associated with the disclosure included “the need to protect the kids”, “to prevent future mental difficulties”, their “friends had witnessed the violence, so [he] felt obligated to disclose it”, “coping with the situation”, gaining “help and compassion”, procuring “advice on how to deal with the situation”, “to be in control of the situation”, and to “share my story”. Josia, for example, disclosed his experience because it helped him “to deal with it [the abuse] because it [was] starting to affect [him] psychologically and the friends advise[d] [him] on how to cope in this situation”. He conceded that “everyone of us has got a breaking point. My fear is that I don’t want to reach that point with her, where I do something that I will regret”. For Makweya, it was:

because you need help and … compassion. So, the immediate people who are there are family because they can give me advice or maybe just to [calm] you. I told my friends because I knew they would be willing to help me or intervene.

Nick said that his disclosure to the psychologist manifested at a point when he was attempting to assist his partner; he disclosed his experience to illustrate to his partner the negative effects of violence and so that he could find the right solution-based strategies to try and "fix" their misunderstanding and alcohol abuse.

There were general accounts of participants who opted for **non-disclosure** to their friends and family. Reasons ranged from the "fear of the unknown reactions", "fear of their experiences being used against them at a later stage in life", "the need to keep personal issues as private" and the "fear of secondary victimisation[14]". Some noted the following barriers posed by disclosure: their "lack of trust", their "fear of being viewed as gay by friends or the community", and the fear that their victimisation might be considered "non-existent", considering the myth that they are men and cannot be abused by women.

Having provided a discussion on participants' formal and informal disclosure experiences, it is imperative to discuss their views on the reactions of others after their disclosure.

5.5.2 The generalised others' reactions to men facing GBV

After participants disclosed their experiences, they narrated how their support systems responded, both verbally and non-verbally. Participants reported both **positive** and **negative reactions**. Some of the **positive reactions** included the constructive "advice", "tangible and physical support" and "psychological support". The latter was the most cited reaction of participants. **Negative reactions** ranged from "caring less"

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[14] Secondary victimisation may be defined as follows: The "processes, actions and omissions which either intentionally or unintentionally gives rise to the revictimization of an individual who has already experienced or been through a traumatic event as a victim through disbelief of the individual's account, victim blaming, insufficient support services assisting the victim on the following levels: interpersonal, institutional and broad social" (South African Service Charter for Victims of Crimes, 2006:2).

about the victim's predicament, "disbelief" and "blaming the victim" to "being told that the services provided only cater for women", not men and as a result, experiencing the "police [as being] dismissive". Owing to these dismissive behaviours, some participants refrained from utilising potential support structures or services. This left them feeling "helpless", "isolated" and having "nowhere to go to for further support". Those who noted positive reactions stated that their friends and families' "shock and anger" towards the perpetrator strengthened their bonds with their significant others. According to Makweya, his friends did offer to help because they were officers of the law. Josia noted that his friends were not shocked because they were observant of what he was going through. His psychologist, likewise, provided him with a "homely environment" to express and share his experiences. Coleman, Eli, Gift, Khuliso, Nick and Rofhiwa mirrored this sentiment. Having reported their challenges to psychologists, the latter were able to guide them through their adversity to their awareness of the effects such violence has on a person, irrespective of their gender. The participants who reported to psychologists noted that the psychologists were not shocked because of their awareness of the effects violence has on a person.

5.6 HELP-SEEKING BEHAVIOURS

The focus of this section is on the participants' behaviours regarding seeking help from professionals. Professional services may include the police, social workers, psychologists, helplines, and support groups. Participants were asked **whether** they had sought help from professional services, their **motivations or reasons** for doing so, and the **consequences** of doing this.

All participants reported that they had at some stage in their lives attempted to seek professional help. Two participants were helped by social workers, and eight participants were assisted by psychologists and support groups. Participants gave various reasons for their help-seeking. Some expressed their need for "help", the fact that the "violence was starting to affect them psychologically", and that some of them needed someone to help them deal with their predicament. As alluded to before, since Thulz had not been allowed to see his child, he decided to confide in a psychologist for mediation to get access to his child. This support extended to recommendations from social workers to draw up a parental plan to negotiate meetings with his estranged partner and child. His estranged partner, however, refused to attend such meetings.

Additionally, two of the 10 men tried calling helplines in need of assistance. Corné reported that the persons manning the helplines were not "helpful" – they referred him to the police. As a result, he had no initial support system. Makweya argued that he also tried to call such helplines to report issues relating to his experience. However, most of the staff members worked with issues faced by *women* and *not male victims of abuse*; they, therefore, did not assist him. Conversely, seven participants noted that their support systems at that stage included Facebook organisations, a support unit at their police station, men-centred GBV organisations, and their children. These organisations or people provided the participants with advice and served as environments where they could share their problems without judgement.

Regarding reporting GBV to the police service, Corné noted that although he expected that the police would be able to "handle the situation", the officers to whom he reported the incident "did not give a hell". Although Josia wanted "the truth to come out", he, Gift, Rofhiwa and Khuliso did not report their abuse to the police due to their "fear of secondary victimisation", believing that the police "[would] not listen" but "arrest the man instead of the woman". According to Josia, the police officers were not "understanding". This was because a case that was opened against him by his girlfriend. Although the police were willing to help him, they could not do so because of the pending case against him. Makweya also stated that the police were willing to assist him and arrest his girlfriend for the harm inflicted on him. However, he retracted the case because he later felt pity that his girlfriend would get arrested, ruining their lives as a result. Therefore, he opted to let go of the relationship instead.

Thulz recalled that the experience was not that good. He stated:

> *… normally they will tell you that there is nothing that they can do, you must go back home and solve your problem and then, 'Wena (you), as a man, you will have to see how you are going to resolve this'. You get turned away at the police station. They can't assist you and then you have to come and face that person who just abused you.*

As Corné said, the police did not "really care".

All 10 participants noted that men and women tended to be treated differently when it came to reporting issues relating to GBV. Josia argued:

> *… definitely, 110%, because when I went to court, she'd open a case, she'd blackmail me, and she didn't appear in court. She would want to withdraw the charges, but the prosecutor thought that I as forcing her to withdraw the charges.*

Makweya alluded to the fact that "the system itself entirely" fails men who are abused. He continued:

> *It got to a point where everybody was in the whole chain and made to believe that men are perpetrators and women are the victims. So, obviously, when a man comes to report they see a perpetrator playing the victim – not the man as the victim. So, … that's why [when we are] talking about the GBV act, … it is only [about] looking at women, not men.* (Makweya, 50, African).

Referring to the police, he stated:

> *… anyone can be abused but the way the police are handling it makes it difficult for men to report it because of their induction and the teaching. They are … educated to only*[15] *assist women, because women are the victims. They don't respond to men or help men because they are informed that they should act based on the information they got in the statistics* (Makweya, 50, African).

Furthermore, Coleman noted the idea that it was because of gender norms and patriarchy that men and women tended to be treated differently. As a result, these expectations created an illusion that men could never be victims of violence because of the notions relating to how "strong" they ought to be and how "superior" they are compared to women. When men are faced with such challenges, they do not necessarily get the help they require because of these heteronormative and patriarchal ideas of how they *ought* to behave and act. According to Coleman, patriarchy reinforces inequality that disadvantages *both* men *and* women. He said:

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[15] Emphasis added.

> *…as long as there are no disruptions to these patriarchal philosophies and ideologies, inequality will continue to roam around and there will never be peace and freedom to be true selves.* (Coleman, 40, White)

Finally, I reflect on advice offered by the participants to male victims of GBV.

5.7 SUPPORT MALE VICTIMS OF GBV: FINAL REFLECTIONS FROM THE MEN

Participants concluded our discussion with recommendations to support male victims of GBV. They noted the importance of **increasing public awareness of GBV against men**. This, all the participants noted, is imperative to bring about change in the broader public's perceptions about GBV. Khuliso, for example, believed the public seemed to be in the "dark" about the existence of GBV against men. Therefore, he postulated, the public needed to be sensitised and provided with information on how to deal with, approach and provide help to victims. A second recommendation focused on the "**sensitisation**" of and "**improvement of training**" for service providers, for example, SAPS, psychologists, social workers and counsellors. This, according to participants, would assist service providers to remain informed about the possibilities of GBV against men and how to avoid imposing **secondary victimisation**. It was further noted that GBV must be seen from a **scientific and not a moral lens** to equip services providers with the required training to deal with GBV matters in a professional manner. To this point, Thulz commented on the importance of specific organisations and social institutions that must play a part – the most important of these being the "very vital role … the South African Council of Churches, … [and] bishops" have to play "to address issues relating to men experiencing GBV".

Makweya, a 50-year-old male, reported that he once called a helpline that "referred" him to the police, because the helpline only provided GBV assistance to women. He argued that it is imperative to **dispel gendered (read heteronormative, heterosexist and homophobic) myths** that mainly (or, sometimes even *only*) men are the sole perpetrators of such violence (cf. SACAP, 2020; International Committee of the Red Cross, 2022). A gender-neutral and inclusive conceptualisation and approach to matters regarding GBV is non-negotiable. One should only consider the fact that current Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters, 32 of 2007) Amendment

Bill (Amendment Act, 2021), which was amended by South African president Cyril Ramaphosa in February 2022 defines “rape” in a **gender-neutral** way – this necessitating a focus on both men and women as potential victims of this “second pandemic” (Ellis, 2020). Furthermore, participants suggested **funding for programmes** that prioritise the plight of male victims of GBV. Participants alluded to the existence of numerous state-funded organisations for female victims of GBV; however, such organisations are less inclined to provided similar resources for men. One participant noted an incidence where an organisation he worked for used to be funded by a governmental organisation. The funding was, however, seized because the organisation was focused on catering for the needs of male victims of GBV rather than women. Josia noted, in this regard, that

> *[t]he only thing is that as much as the government gives money to NGOs that help women that are abused by men, there should be a lot more of those for men in different provinces. [At present], there’s only one in Johannesburg. In fact, only one in Gauteng.*

His thought best concludes the challenges male victims of GBV face in South Africa.

5.8 CONCLUSION

The chapter provided an in-depth account of the information male victims of GBV related as part of the study. Their narratives were collected during in-depth interviews. This chapter focused on the topics that emerged from my deductive readings about the topic, as discussed in chapters 2 and 3. As should be evident, however, multiple inductive themes also emerged. These are discussed in chapter 6.

The first subsection focused on primary socialisation as a source of participants’ agency or conformity. The participants affirmed the presence of strict gender role expectations when growing up. Most of the participants commented on the differentiation between male and female domestic tasks and expectations – for example, cooking as a role that has always been allocated and designated to women, while men were considered to be the breadwinners or providers for the family. Participants also reflected on the influence that patriarchal and heteronormative notions had on them relating to the performance of certain activities as men.

Furthermore, they conceptualised idealised masculinity where they defined “a man”. The concept of “a man” was defined, among others, in relation to physical strength, their ability to provide, and to serve as the head of the family.

The second subsection discussed participants’ narratives relating to their own experiences of GBV at the hands of their partners. Participants provided varied definitions of GBV. Some defined GBV as violence committed by one gender against another, whereas others focused on it as the violence that takes place in the household. Further discussions focused on the possible causes of GBV against men. Some of the causes of GBV, as noted by participants, included substance abuse, insecurities of their perpetrators, and the inability of men to fulfil prescribed gender roles. Additionally, participants’ personal experiences of GBV and the nature of the violence were outlined. Participants reported experiencing physical, sexual, emotional, and verbal abuse. Some participants experienced, among others, punching, sexual deprivation and blackmail.

The third subsection provided an account of participants’ narratives on the consequences of GBV for men. Participants alluded to being negatively affected by their partners’ violence. The violence resulted in the victims having suicidal thoughts, experiencing emotional trauma, and had a negative impact on their educational, corporate and social spheres. Participants’ feelings of guilt, anger and shame urged them to retaliate and protect their children.

The fourth subsection focused on the participants’ formal and informal disclosure processes. They opted to disclose their abuse along formal lines (i.e., confiding in psychologists, social workers and, to a lesser extent, the police). Informal support manifested in the form of their family members and friends. Reasons for doing so ranged from their inability to cope with the repercussions of GBV, preventing future mental problems and a need for compassion. Participants also commented on experiencing both negative and positive reactions following their disclosures to male and female friends. Positive reactions included feeling empowered through such disclosures and receiving tangible and practical guidelines, while negative reactions included others’ disbelief, victim shaming and dismissiveness.

In conclusion, the participants reflected on help-seeking behaviours. The subsection discussed participants' attempts to seek help from professional services and informal sources. The section further outlined how, at the time of the interview, they were either still involved in or ended their relationships with their abusive partners. Lastly, I reflected on the participants' recommendations and suggestions for change regarding programmes that (should) cater for male victims of GBV. These suggestions included, among others, an increase in public awareness, sensitisation and improvement of training services and an increase in funding for programmes or initiatives targeted at male victims of GBV.

Next, I critically engage the inductive themes in chapter 6 to address my general and specific research questions.

CHAPTER 6
SOUTH AFRICAN MEN AND THEIR EXPERIENCES OF GBV: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an analysis of the data that were generated through individual interviews. Through said analysis, I seek to answer the research questions and address the research objectives stated in chapter 1. These include, among others, exploring the lived experiences of South African men who were or had been victims of gender-based violence in marital or intimate relationships. Furthermore, I make recommendations on policy formulation to address GBV in South African society.

- As an inductive contribution, I propose the use of a conceptual model: **The (De)conceptualisation and (Re)conceptualisation Model of GBV and Masculinities** (**DeRe-GBVMs**). Although I provide a detailed and demarcated discussion of said model in this chapter, it is worth noting three of its main tenets at the outset:

- First, references to a **(de)conceptualisation** of the association between GBV and men are required to problematise the monolithic approach of positing men as mainly being the (likely) **perpetrator** of GBV against women and other men. In so doing, I make recommendations to **(re)conceptualise** said association by emphasising the reciprocal interplay between context-specificity, the men's intrapsychic scripting and their interpersonal interactions with their generalised and significant others to arrive at a social constructionist understanding of **GBV <u>and</u> masculinities**. This relates to the second tenet of the model.

- Second, I refer to GBV **<u>and</u>** masculinities versus GBV **<u>against</u>** masculinities. The reason for this is twofold. To begin with, this again foregrounds the importance of the interplay between gender (and sexual) agency and gender (and sexual) structural scenarios (cf. Jackson & Scott, 2010). Through this, I postulate that sociological and masculinities research about GBV should avoid an "either/or" approach to studying men. I would advise a focus on how various cultural scenarios posit men as agents who, based on their context, may become

susceptible to GBV at the hands of their partner(s). My proposed model is an introductory step to providing an overarching framework that encompasses men's abilities to enact their agency amid potential internal, interpersonal and structural challenges and constraints they may face due to GBV. As will become clear, I, therefore, opted against a binary-based approach that posits men as either being gender agents **OR** victims of GBV. I would, however, be remiss if I do not acknowledge that current theorisation and statistics show that heterosexual men *do* abuse women, children and other men. However, I recommend that scholars also consider theorising the relationship between GBV and masculinities, that is, investigating the sources of them falling victim to such violence; how they are potentially able to engage with protective factors[16] to challenge GBV against themselves and other persons (irrespective of the latter's gender identity or sexual orientation); how current global and local social movements encourage and inhibit a holistic approach to men's experiences of GBV in relation to women; and how South African policymakers, NGOs and academics could (and should) engage with local and national challenges faced by *all* men.

- It is important to note my reference to the plurality of masculini**ties** versus masculinit**y**. This allows one to theorise GBV along intersectional lines – that is, to focus on how men's race, gender identity, sexual orientation and age, among others, inform their subjective experiences of GBV. As will become clear from the discussion that follows, I recommend engaging with relatively recent theorisation about the changing social dynamics among men and debates about men in South Africa and abroad (i.e., IMT) (Anderson, 2009) and other meso- and micro-level studies on GBV (Buiten & Naidoo, 2020; Dlamini, 2021; Ratele, 2022).

Drawing on the findings in chapter 5 and the work of relatively recent scholarship, I argue in favour of acknowledging the reciprocation of men's agency amid structural constraints as regard their GBV experiences and status.

To engage with this debate, I first provide a critical analysis of the **participants' conceptualisation of GBV**. Following that discussion, I consider the main **social**

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[16] Defined as "quality of a person or context or their interaction that predicts better outcomes, particularly in situations of risk or adversity" (Oldfield *et al.*, 2016:833).

dimensions that inform the experiences of men to access their masculine agency and/or suffer the consequences of structural constraints – that is, (de)conceptualising and (re)conceptualising **the measure(s) of men** (versus, the measure of a man). Here, the first subsection focuses on the **primary and secondary gender-role socialisation** as sources of agency or conformity, which incorporates themes associated with "doing" and "using" gender as it relates to performing and/or negotiating the meaning of "men" and masculinities in familial, household or external social institutions (e.g., health and policing). This is done to critically engage with the influence of these roles on the male victims' relationships with their female partners and male peers. The second subsection intersects with the first. Here I discuss the inductive themes associated with **GBV and horizontal or vertical homosociality** (i.e., the men's partiality to relate their experiences to other men or women and their choices to express their **emotionality** without fear of judgement); how national and international **social movements** encourage or inhibit constructive debates about gender equality across the gender-divide; and how contemporary "lived" masculinities concur with each other or differ among men of different **racial groups**.

6.2 UNPACKING THE (DE)CONCEPTUALISATION AND (RE)CONCEPTUALISATION MODEL OF GBV AND MASCULINITIES (DeRe-GBVMs)

This chapter provides a critical elucidation of the voices of the 10 male victims of GBV. Numerous studies have been conducted on GBV, both abroad and in South Africa. The foci of these studies range from mainly researching the victimisation of women and men as perpetrators to how this is reinforced through heteronormativity, heterosexism and patriarchy (cf. CSVR, 2016; Mesatywa, 2014; Ponton, 2002). Thobejane (2014), for example, focused on re-envisioning the fight against patriarchy. He argues for a stronger Feminist movement to redress women's oppression in patriarchal gender relations in South Africa. His study rightfully and laudably encourages similar studies (Ratele, 2022:110) and practical initiatives (Graaff & Heineken, 2017) to challenge the traditionally toxic masculinisation fabric that dominate private and public discourse about men (Ratele, 2022). However, GBV, as it relates to men as victims and how patriarchal notions of masculinity may be producing "cocooned men" (Clarfelt, 2014:2; George, 2002:118) – that is, the invisibility of male

victims of GBV and potentially hindering men from disclosing their vulnerability to GBV – relegates (albeit possibly unintentionally) the association of men and the effects of GBV on them to the periphery of academic and lay discourse (Van Niekerk *et al*., 2015). Studies that closely relate to this topic have mainly focused on GBV experienced by young boys (Clarfelt, 2014; Thobejane, 2014, 2018) and police reaction to male victims of domestic violence (Barkhuizen, 2015). Drawing on Boyle's (2019) conceptualisation of GBV as existing at the micro-, meso- and macro levels, Buiten and Naidoo (2020:64) assert that scholars should endeavour to "see connections between different forms of violence without dismantling distinctions: it is an umbrella term that signals how gender traverses across a range of violence(s) – sexual harassment, domestic abuse, homophobic violence and rape of men during wartime", while *simultaneously* continuing to recognise the context-specificity that distinguishes these forms of violence. In so doing, they are of the opinion that scholars need to "chart these connections in specific terms" to base the understandings of GBV and refine conceptualisations of what makes violence gender based. Therefore, engaging critically with how violence works would offer a broader representation of GBV – one that is inclusive of women, men and non-binary people, thus displaying a continuum of identities, interactions and structures.

Echoing the above sentiment, I seek to provide a critique of a binary-based approach that positions men as being either victims *or* agents *or* (typically) the perpetrators of GBV. I endeavour to address the reasons for the marginalisation of South African men as victims of GBV. According to Bhana (2012:310), there is a developing body of South African work that attempts to explain the systematising forms of thinking and notions through which heterosexuality becomes hegemonic (Butler *et al*., 2003; Francis, 2017; Francis & Msibi, 2011; Msibi, 2012). Theorists working in this field of sexuality and education attempt to uncover these dominant discourses to be more inclusive of all gender and sexual actors (Allen, 2010; Francis & Msibi, 2011; Msibi, 2012). As I argued in chapters 2 and 3, scholars also claim that heterosexuality is based on power. Its hegemonic privilege, they note, is marked by and reinforced through various social institutions. Msibi (2018), for example, tries to deconstruct the rigid adoption of an either/or and "us-versus-them" approach. He recommends adopting a holistic approach to the "human [not solely gendered] subject" – that is to say, the social (and gender and sexual) selves derived from the various social, cultural and economic

forces that create the fallacious idea of the self as being solely a “self-governing” (i.e., individualising and constructing a subject who learns to govern their behaviour liberally and autonomously) self and provide the broad material for the conscious and unconscious portrayal of that self. In this view, agency itself is a social construction amid multiple forces that both call the social actor into existence and shape the resistance of that social actor against these same forces. Francis (2017), Plummer (1998, 2015) and Smuts (2021) attest to this. Francis (2017:100), for example, highlights the importance of “understanding … the whole subject”. Thus, one needs to describe the men’s “life worlds [as he did with LGBT learners in his study] as the sum of many parts”, including intersections between their age, race, gender identity and sexual orientation.

The current study reflected how the normalisation of institutionalised heteronormativity exacerbated some of the men’s needs to aspire and conform to, or perform, hegemonic (Connell, 2005), complicit (Bridges, 2014), violent (Morrell *et al.*, 2012), toxic (Ratele, 2008; 2013) and ruling masculinity (Ratele, 2008; 2014) to avoid overt discrimination (McCormack, 2011), feminisation (Anderson & Filder, 2018) and homosexualisation (Anderson, 2013; Bhana & Mayeza, 2016). In doing their gender in such a stringent way, these men are disadvantaged insofar as they are unable to redress their experiences of GBV. Moving away from positioning men as being at a deficit based on their gender identity towards acknowledging their individualised and reflexive gender and sexual potential (cf. Plummer, 2015) encourages scholars to (re)consider the potential of individual agency amid structural restraints (Francis, 2017). According to Francis (2017), this image of agency and victimhood is clear in the South African context. He argues that when researchers tend to focus mainly or solely on the negative experiences of gender and sexual actors (e.g., men experiencing GBV), it becomes second nature to only typify them as a helpless, powerless and as a victimised group in society (cf. Buiten & Naidoo, 2020). He further contends that such an approach, as it relates to the present study, “removes agency” from men who experience GBV. Contrasting agency and victimisation in men reduces the research to binary-based, distinct and visible compartments. Practically, human experience is hardly so clear-cut. Notwithstanding its potential usefulness, the victim/agency dualism can be detrimental. This is not to assume that research on positioning abused men as victims or agents is erroneous nor that it indicates that abused men are not agents or

experience victimisation. Instead, the argument rests on the assumption that by positioning abused men entirely as **either** a victim or an agent serves no productive purpose. He cites four reasons for this:

- It results in creating a "**cul-de-sac**" or a dead-end to, as is the case of the present study, men **and** GBV (Francis, 2017:91).

- It reduces an understanding of the reasons why heteronormativity, heterosexism and patriarchal masculinity are maintained to an **individual level**, therefore, failing to take account of the systemic nature of such subordination and marginalisation (Connell, 2005; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Francis' argument intersects with Buiten and Naidoo's (2020:63) contemplation of Bennett's (2000) view that GBV "is violence in which being gendered as a 'man' or a 'woman' is significant to the presence and shape of the violence – who is hurt, by whom, how, and importantly why". Although GBV may be "diverse", these assaults are similar in terms of how they "fuel … gender relations. Noting this takes us beyond an analysis that says women are vulnerable to men. It suggests that both women and men are vulnerable to the way dominant norms of gender relations, within their contexts, are working" (Bennett, 2000:2).

- Furthermore, such a distinction disregards the **multiplicity of (masculine) identities** held by abused men (cf. Ratele, 2022). Ratele (2022:183) argues that instead of viewing all men occupying one configuration of masculinity, deconstructing the binary helps to understand that there are various changing models of masculinity that are not fixed. This notion then provides us with the idea about masculinity as contestable.

- Finally, it compromises a focus on how men could **use their gender** to access their **emotionality** and **homosocial intimacy** to critically and productively navigate their challenges associated with GBV (cf. Anderson, 2009; Anderson, 2014; Buiten & Naidoo, 2020).

Therefore, I propose the use of **The (De)conceptualisation and (Re)conceptualisation Model of GBV and Masculinities** (**DeRe-GBVMs**) (refer to figure 6.1) as the overarching matrix that incorporates the main tenets of discussing **men**, **masculinities and GBV**. Drawing on the findings in chapter 5 and the work of

relatively recent scholarship, I argue in favour of acknowledging the reciprocation of men's agency amid structural constraints as regards their GBV experiences and status

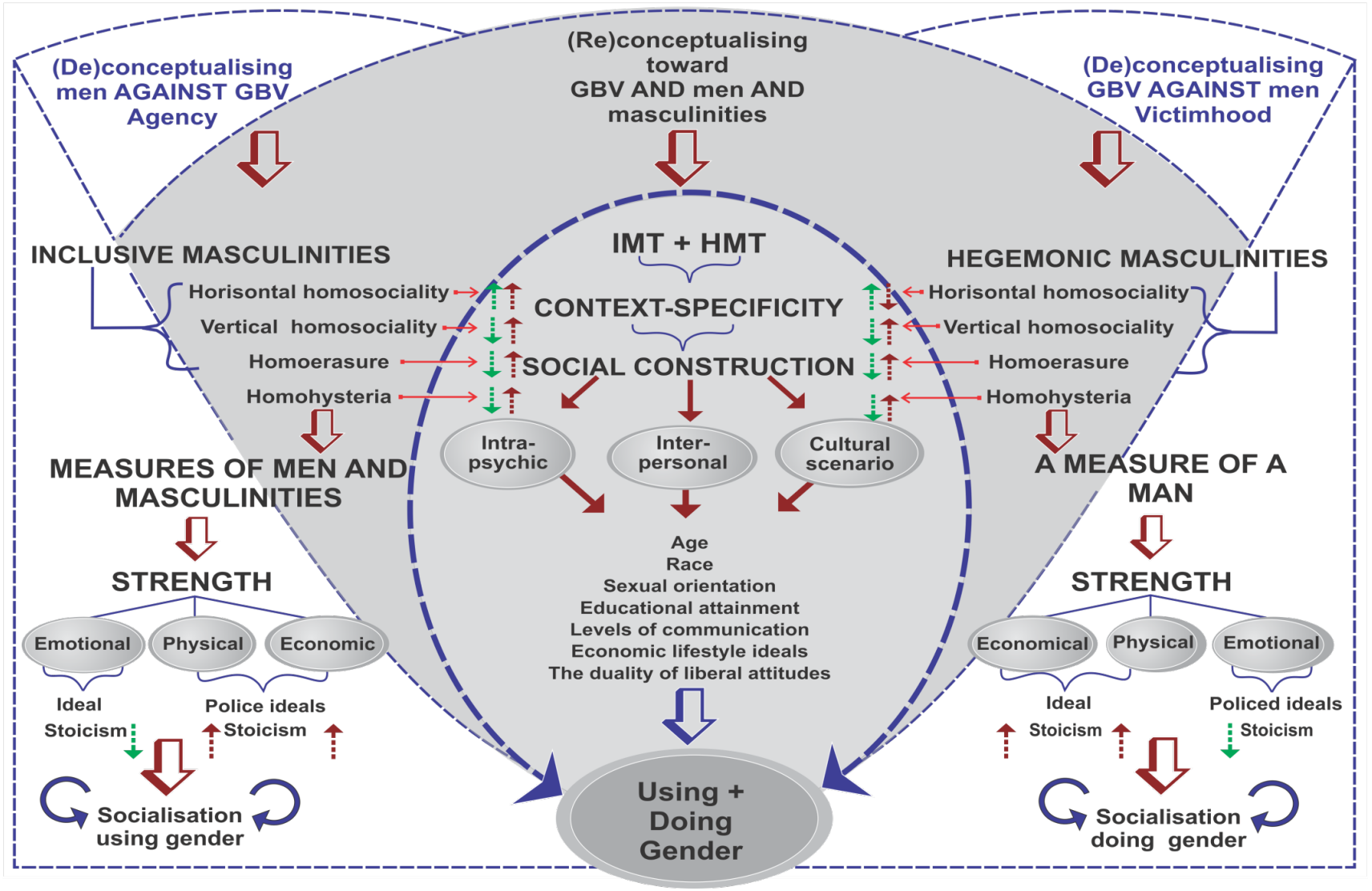

Figure 6.1: The (De)conceptualisation and (Re)conceptualisation Model of GBV and Masculinities (DeRe-GBVMs)

6.3 (DE)CONCEPTUALISING GBV: TOWARDS A RELATIONALLY AGENTIC-STRUCTURAL SOUTH AFRICAN DEFINITION

This section comprises a discussion of the different themes that participants expressed in defining GBV. Furthermore, I integrate **t**heir views on the sources and consequences of GBV. These themes are partly based on the deductive topics that populated the interview schedule I used during my fieldwork.

The first subtheme centres around the participants' link between male **GBV** and **gender atypicality**. Participants described GBV as a form of violence that one person, irrespective of their gender identity, commits against another person. This definition challenges stereotypical gendered associations with men *typically* being the perpetrator of said violence against women and children – it speaks to how violence affects any person, regardless of their gender or sexual orientation. This description echoes the contributions of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (2005) of United Nations based in Switzerland and the US. The committee defines GBV as "an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will, and that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between males and females". Similarly, this definition extends to South African legislation which disregards gender-specificity in its conceptualisation of GBV. The Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Amendment Act 32 of 2007 (SOA) (RSA, 2007) combines all sexual crimes under one law. The Act defines sexual crimes "gender-neutral to apply to both men and women" (Sonke Gender Justice, 2021).

Gender-specific definitions, however, continued to downplay the prioritisation of GBV the participants experienced, which consequently made it relatively easier for the perpetrators (some of these abusers were likened to being "criminals") to commit these crimes without necessarily being caught or persecuted (Barkhuizen, 2015; Dim & Lysova, 2021:13). GBV, according to the findings, may take the form of "verbal" and "physical" assaults directed towards women. According to Dzinavane (2016) and Kumar (2012:291), this is because women are, based on, among others, biologically deterministic views, regarded as physically weak and inferior in relation to their male counterparts with purportedly limited power and resources. Although some of the participants commented on these generalised views about GBV, all the men remained deeply aware of how persisting emphasis on patriarchy and heteronormativity in South Africa (Buiten & Naidoo,

2020) results in a lack of fully understanding how GBV forms part of the everyday experiences of men as well. As a result, participants noted that they either entered into a state of *denial* about themselves (as men) being the victims of GBV, they fully *refrained from reporting their abuse* or had to intensely reflect about the *consequences* of reporting their cases due to the fear of "being arrested or blamed" for the violence (cf. Drijber *et al*., 2013).

Furthermore, participants reported that GBV can be caused by the man's "**inability to fulfil prescribed gender roles**". Black participants noted that the inability of unemployed men to provide for their families resulted in their victimisation by their female partners (cf. Adams, 2008). Experiencing such economic instability, particularly before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, exacerbated some of the men's reliance on their female partners who, in some cases, later stopped providing them access to certain resources and even to their children. Doing one's gender correctly, therefore, perpetuates the unreasonable standards and stereotypes that men are unable to achieve – a factor that encourages GBV (Mashiri & Mawire, 2013). Ratele (2008) and Thobejane *et al.* (2018:12), among others, associate GBV with mainly developing countries that face relatively higher levels of unemployment and a lack of opportunities for men to accomplish (or reach) the apex of hegemonic masculine ideals, resulting in increased animosity among the genders (Graaff & Heinecken, 2017; Walker *et al*., 2019:2). Graaff and Heineken (2017:4) speak to how a man's economic status may be associated with his ability to exude dominant masculinity.

The study reported different experiences as they relate to **racial differences**. Self-identified African participants leaned towards a propensity for hegemonic, traditional or orthodox notions of masculinity – that is, they were socialised to exude more of a cisgendered stance. In so doing, they negotiated performing complicit masculinity insofar as adopting performances that still distanced them from their female partners as well as from other men whom they identified as less masculine. Conversely, the White participants reflected inclusive masculine tenets, for example, equal and shared household responsibilities, cooking, exuding expressive characteristics and displaying their emotions.

These points notwithstanding, the participants also described GVB as a form of violence that can be perpetrated by either gender. In fact, it was their contention that deeply entrenched gendered systems affect women *and* men either positively or negatively. One needs to only consider how the participants recalled how their female partners abused them **physically** (i.e., being slapped, cut, beaten and thrown with physical objects) (Carmo *et al*., 2011; Drijber *et al*., 2013; Hines & Douglas, 2009; Kolbe & Buttner, 2020; Safariolyaei & Amiri, 2017; Sigsworth 2009; Tshwaranang Legal Centre, 2012; Thobejane *et al*., 2018), **verbally** (i.e., "insults") (Stith *et al*., 2012) and **emotionally** (e.g., keeping their children from them and reverting to "emotional blackmail or manipulation") (Roach, 2011; Thobejane, 2018). Pertaining to *emotional abuse*, participants emphasised the use of blackmail and isolation (Dokkedahl *et al*., 2019:2; Kovacs, 2011) to make them feel that they were "not man enough" (Ludsin & Vetten, 2005:18). Ludsin and Vetten (2005) contend that such abuse is meant to achieve **psychological abuse** in a "pure" form. This means that the abuser seeks to negatively impact the dignity and integrity of victims; affect their self-esteem and confidence; and even results in the victim questioning their own a sense of self. Enaifoghe (2019) states that women tend to use physical violence to demonstrate their power and control over their victim. Similarly, Hines *et al.* (2007) and Roach (2011), respectively, associate male GBV victimisation with women's attempts at self-defence against their male partner or their paranoia about their husband's infidelity, whether it is warranted or not.

These conceptualisations and interpretations are considered to differ with regard to the forms of violence being addressed in accordance with the needs and interests of the humanitarian or social action (Read-Hamilton, 2014). The **inherent complexity of GBV** mirrors the contributions of Buiten and Naidoo's (2020:63) research about the topic. Notwithstanding the fact that women are disproportionally affected by GBV in relation to men, they define GBV as "violence that is fuelled by a combination of gender identities, interactions and structures". Viewing it from this perspective allows scholars and lay persons alike to consider "what makes violence gender-based at a range of levels: micro, meso and macro. It enables us to move beyond an understanding of it as [only] male violence against women" (Buiten & Naidoo, 2020:63). Therefore, men do not necessarily exist outside of and above gendered structures or gendered politics, but within and as a part of the circulation of gendered ideals in a specific culture (Lorentzen, 2011:111;

Ratele, 2014:31). This statement echoes the work of Thobejane (2018:1) on the changing nature of the conceptualisation of GBV. He argues that men often do not speak out about their experiences of violence due to the potential stigma that others may attach to them if they are overtly identified as victims of such violence. The preceding views align with the findings of the present study, which refutes claims that identify women as being the *only victims* of GBV (Johnson, 2005:1127). This speaks to the inherent complexity of defining GBV (Read-Hamilton, 2014:5), both in terms of its *manifestations* and *causes*.

Participants believed GBV resulted from their abusers' **emulating past abusive behaviours**. They cited the "mental illness" of perpetrators (Calvete, 2008), the latter being "bipolar" (Dowd *et al.*, 2005; Swan *et al.*, 2008) or suffering from "psychological problems" (Yu *et al*., 2019) and perpetuating the cycle of violence that they (i.e., the perpetrators) were subjected to as children (Kalmus & Seltzer, 1984). The studies of Nixon *et al*. (2013) and Pingley (2017) on the impact of witnessing domestic violence inflicted on children indicated that children who have been exposed to GBV in their childhood were more likely to be perpetrators of violence in their relationships and/or marriages – a finding to which Bandura's (cited in Lyons & Berge, 2012) use of the social learning theory attests. Therefore, children and younger adults tend to learn and internalise the examples of behaviour from observation and sometimes tend to later emulate this in their own personal and intimate relationships. In addition, the participants also referred to how substance abuse by their female partners resulted in violent behaviour. Although studies have documented how men's alcohol abuse make them more prone to commit violent acts against women (Javaid, 2017, 2005), there is little to no research that addresses the topic in relation to female perpetrators of GBV (Iverson *et al*., 2013; Sontate *et al*., 2021:2).

6.4 (DE)CONCEPTUALISING PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOCIALISATION: THE POTENTIAL TO UNLEARN GBV BEHAVIOURS

This subsection comprises two parts that are associated with the empirical focus on primary and secondary socialisation as sources of men's agency or conformity to GBV victimhood. First, I provide a discussion of the themes associated with gendered expectations. Here, I consider how the men conformed to predetermined gender roles.

These discussions contribute to my second focal point – that is, how the participants conceptualised the term “man”.

(a) Unlearning what you have learned: Negotiating cisgenderism and egalitarianism

At the risk of writing in an additive manner, it is worth distinguishing between two positions that typify the participants’ recollections of their primary gender-role socialisation. On the one hand, seven of the participants recalled having to conform to **stringent cisgendered socialisation practices** when growing up; on the other hand, three of the men **refuted** adhering to such strict gender roles. According to Mfecane (2008), these gender presentations of masculinity are reasoned to be informed and bound by specific cultural expectations. Considering the South African context of the present study, relatively recent theorisation about gender-role socialisation notes that some types of social norms, beliefs and practices still exist in South Africa (Fakunmoju & Rasool, 2018) – individuals are well-versed in their conduct, norms and customs that are associated with their assigned sex or gender, which is usually taught or observed during early childhood development. These individuals, within a given cultural setting, are then taught how to perform socially in line with their designated gender that is given to them from birth. South Africa is considered by many as being a patriarchal nation, and the attitudes of many South Africans regarding gender are intensely entrenched in the discourse of the gender split, which serves to reinforce the idea of difference, thus perpetuating unequal gender relations (Akala & Divala, 2016). Regarding the views of participants, their accounts of strict gender role expectations included their reference to being socialised under a cisgender ideology (Schilt & Westbrook, 2009) to neatly link and package their biological sex and socially constructed gender and sexual orientation.

Those participants that spoke of **cisgenderism** were expected to enact gender stereotypical roles that reflected their cultural teachings (Netshitangani, 2018; Tucker & Govender 2017). Examples ranged from distinctions between girls having to cook and socialise the children (Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 2003), while boys and young men had to prove their masculinity through “woo[ing] a woman”, “herding cattle”, “hunting” and roughhousing with his male peers (Kachel *et al*., 2016; Mshweshwe, 2020). The heterosexual normative ideologies and socialisation associated with femininity and

masculinity played a role in the performances and enactment of these roles. It is worth repeating a quote of one of the participants in this regard: “when one is brought up in a traditional home, there are certain expectations relating to both the men and women” (cf. Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 2003). The latter author associates these practices with the social positioning of men and women in accordance with biological factors. Graaff and Heineken (2017), Heilman and Barker (2018) and Schilt and Westbrook (2009), among others, concur. Contrary to these responses, the remaining three participants refuted adhering to strict gender roles. Participants reported being raised by parents who favoured gender egalitarianism (Enderstein & Boonzaier, 2013; Ratele *et al*., 2012). Recalling the contributions of Adeagbo (2015) and Johnson (2009) about “undoing”, “using” and negotiating gender, the participants noted that they continued to emulate their parents’ example of dividing household responsibilities equally – for example, encouraging both men and women to “nurture the children”, “wash the dishes or cook”, and to be the “providers” for the family and marriage. According to Oun (2013), countries that endorse policies on women rights and gender equality tend to promote egalitarian division of labour in heterosexual households. Furthermore, environment has been considered to have an impact on one’s attitudes towards traditional gender roles. This implies that an individual who is born into an egalitarian household may perform roles that contradict traditional or orthodox roles (Cunningham 2001). Thus, men with less traditional gender role attitudes tend to engage in shared housework and chores that may be considered female-typical (Pitt & Borland 2008). This supports Butler’s (2004) argument on the fact that if gender can be done, it can also be undone. This means that it is possible “to undo restrictively normative conceptions of sexual and gendered life” (Butler 2004:1). This permits people to be active in challenging traditional and orthodox gender standards through attaining understanding that an individual can conduct themselves differently. Undoing gender, according to Butler (2004), is therefore tied to deliberate comprehension of gender performativity. She also acknowledges that it may be challenging for individuals to stray from the ideology that has permitted them to become what (and *who*) they are performing. They are, however, also able to use tools or approaches from the ideology to challenge it. It is thus imperative to acknowledge that undoing gender may not necessarily fully destabilise existing gendered norms; “undoing” gender can produce a tension between social standards and individual agency, permitting

individuals to obtain an understanding of gender performativity, thus becoming active in challenging gender standards.

(b) The measures of men versus the measure of a man: problematising agency amid toxic male structures

Participants repeatedly commented on the conformity to and performance of specific gender roles. This was especially evident when they reflected on *who* or *what* "a man" is. Some of the men associated with definite roles and precepts that were traditionally and socially connected with what Connell (2005) refers to as **hegemonic masculinity** and Warner (1991) describes as **heteronormativity**. Both concepts (or processes) epitomise a supposed valorised and stoic ideology of how and what men should be – thus, what it means to be a "real man" (Anderson, 2014; Connell, 1987; Gennrich, 2013; Kupers, 2005; Langa & Eagle, 2007; Morrell *et al*., 2012). These valorised tenets ranged from a man's ability to financially "provide" and take "responsibility" for their significant others (Du Pisani, 2001; Dworkin *et al.,* 2012; Gathogo, 2015; Morrell, 1998; Sonnekus, 2013). Such a man, for example, "brings food to the table" (cf. Joseph & Lindegger, 2007). Echoing the work of Mshweshwe (2020) and Tonsin and Tonsin (2019) on understanding domestic violence as influenced by masculinity, tradition and culture and understanding the role of patriarchal ideology in intimated partner violence among women, respectively, the findings showed how culture and tradition also tend to legitimise patriarchal and hegemonic masculinity – that is, maintain male dominance through encouraging hegemonic masculinity as "a configuration of gender practices which guarantees the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (Mshweshwe, 2020). According to Moore and Govender (2013:626), traditionally, men have been tasked with economic provision in African and Afrikaner cultures (Morrell, 1998; Sonnekus, 2013). Participants noted heteronormative examples, such as "man as the head of the family" or "man must provide and protect", to illustrate said presence of traditionality in relationships (Schneider *et al.*, 2016).

In addition to economic provision, the importance of exerting "**physical strength**" (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Gennrich, 2013; Graaff & Heinecken, 2017:2) and observing **stoicism** (Adams & Govender, 2008; Morgan & Wells, 2016) also taught these men that they had to refrain from ever being overtly "feminised" (The Daily Maverick,

2018) or “homosexualised” (McCormack, 2011) by others. Mudau and Obadire (2017:70) echo these sentiments. They emphasise that the ideal man is expected to exude characteristics such as strength and fighting abilities to safeguard their wives and children. Strength also extended to the men’s ability to adequately manage their **emotionality**. Men, as the participants noted, are “not supposed to cry or show … emotions”. If they do, they “*will* be regarded as…weak”. According to Enaifoghe *et al.* (2021), Mshweshwe (2020) and Ratele (2010), South African men are taught and expected to refrain from public displays of fear and weakness. More recently, De Boise and Hearn (2017) and Ratele (2022) have argued that men might endure physical suffering but not really understand why they feel that way. They might experience temporary or enduring unhappiness but remain unaware that the state may be attributed to their psychological history. Furthermore, Ratele (2022) claims that it can prove challenging for men to completely acknowledge or admit their emotional distress and pain because they might lack the “tools” to “fix” the vulnerability except by turning away from it or combating it. A state of vulnerability is an emotional state that most men tend to escape, and men who avoid vulnerability desire to be viewed as “immovable rocks”. Consequently, they want to be considered as “towers of strength”, although it might also include those individuals who do not want their pain, joys and inner self to be recognised, which implies that they support orthodox or traditional versions of hard masculinity. According to De Boise and Hearn (2017), men’s struggles are not necessarily related to their inability to develop emotions. It rather speaks to some men’s inability to comprehend, convey and communicate their emotions. Therefore, the discrepancy between “actual” emotion and display came to be understood as a distinguishing feature of some men’s gender performance, arising directly from the social privilege associated with stoicism. In keeping with these perspectives, adherence to “epitomes” of masculinity, or gender patterns, also has an influence on men’s ability to articulate emotions, as they infer irrationality, their reliance on others and, therefore, their “weakness” (De Boise & Hearn, 2017).

This recalls Anderson’s (2009) reference to **homohysteria**. The concept relates to mostly heterosexual men’s fears to be labelled as gay. Although some participants of the present study disavowed heteronormativity, patriarchy and homophobia, they remained intensely aware of the consequences that they could face if they failed to correctly do or perform

their gender as per hegemonic expectations (cf. Anderson & McCormack, 2018; McCormack & Anderson, 2014). Allen (2004), Kimmel (2005) and Schippers (2007) attest to this. They note that depending on the context, if men project behaviours or attitudes that challenge "compulsory heterosexuality" (Rich, 1980), they risk subordination or marginalisation (cf. Connell, 2005). These standards are employed to preserve the dominance of heterosexuality by confining homosexuality to a valorised apex of desirability that has become taken for granted (i.e., it goes unchallenged) (Corber & Valocchi, 2003).

These participants, therefore, exude **vertical homosociality** – that is, male friendship and "male bonding" that explains "how men, through their friendships and intimate collaborations with other men, maintain and defend the gender order and patriarchy" (also see Hammarén & Johansson, 2014:1). When in the company of their male peers, some participants sought to display the tenets of orthodox masculinity to avoid discriminatory or prejudicial treatment. This was due to the relationships men had with their peers and the opinions of their friends and others within their standardising group. Their performances ranged from "hyper-competitiveness" (Morrell *et al.*, 2012:23) and a "suppression of [their] emotions" (Anderson, 2013:5; McCormack, 2011) to "obtaining power and status". They thus emulated complicit and hypermasculine behaviours to retain their social status, reverence and respect (The Daily Maverick, 2018; Morrell *et al*., 2012). Men have been known to avoid intimacy in their acquaintances – this is mostly motivated by affection being associated with a feminine characteristic, and any affectionate behaviour between men was believed to be homoerotic (Floyd, 2000). This raises the issue of how men can concurrently conform to men and women's viewpoints towards traditional masculinity when these attitudes are perceived to be contradictory – a clear finding of the current study. Another prospect is that men try to find the equilibrium between what they consider to be expected of them by other men and by women. Therefore, men's performances will be a negotiation between what they view to be normative in diverse socialisation settings. Alternatively, men may opt to adjust their behaviour to the norm they view as appropriate in each setting or context (Kallgren *et al*., 2000). For instance, men may enact orthodox masculinity when they are exclusively with other men (e.g., in all-male settings) and enact progressive or inclusive masculinities when they are with women (e.g., at home or with their female partners).

Participants indicated that men (including themselves) adopt(ed) vertical homosociality through “mischievous” behaviours. Doing their gender in this way allows men to roughhouse with their male peers (especially when they were growing up) through play. In this regard, some participants noted that, “as boys, we would fight or involve ourselves in things that showed that we were men and that we were strong”. The mantra of “boy don’t cry” informed their mischievous “play”. Such mischievousness solely occurred within heteronormative and patriarchal boundaries. This is due to the idea that boys were not allowed to cry – even after losing a fight. Nichols (2018) argues that such masculinities are not necessarily normative or tied to a specific “type” of masculinity. He uses the term “mischievous” to echo the agency men have in the construction of and doing gender, thus conveying the ways that men are mischievously and consciously negotiating their ideas of masculinity. Although the word “mischievous” may imply certain nuances associated with silliness and play, he uses the term to portray ways in which men understand themselves as playfully negotiating their gendered identities, encompassing the agency displayed within the course of their identity construction. Preserving notions of masculinity as socially constructed and enacted, proponents of mischievous masculinity view men as reflexive and self-aware agents (Nichols, 2018). Such masculine performances provide a deeper and contextually nuanced understanding of the construction of masculinity. Arguably, mischievousness presents men with a dualism of sorts. On the one hand, they continue to enact complicit masculinity (i.e., do not conform to all the attributes of orthodox masculinity). Yet, they are not active in challenging this system of masculinity, and their lack of questioning of the gender structures they are faced with in society makes them beneficiaries of the system (Connell, 2005). Conversely, it allows them to subtly (or even unknowingly) investigate inclusive masculine practices. I discuss this next.

6.5 (RE)CONCEPTUALISING GBV: INCLUDING *MEN TOO*

Some participants leaned towards a partly softer biologically essentialist perspective about men and women’s gender roles. In so doing, they (implicitly) challenged the unquestioned dominance of hegemonic ideologies. In this regard, they reflected on the tenets of **inclusive masculinities**.

6.5.1 Inclusive masculinity theory and GBV: Encouraging emotionality through horizontal homosociality

Some of the participants distinguished their agentic presentations of their gender and sexual identities from their biological genitalia (Anderson & Magrath, 2019; Green, 2005). In his study about trans men, Green (2005:295) comments on this disassociation between the biological and social features of men and masculinities. He argues that "maleness and masculinity [are] not the same thing and […] masculinity does not depend on having a male body or having a penis". Similarly, the participants contended that such a disassociation allowed them to express their "true selves". This recalls Plummer's (2015) distinction between individualised and reflexive sexualities. Plummer refers to how contemporary and individualised subjectivities encourage individualised genders and sexualities where people's choices extend to *how* they will live their personal lives, *who* they will live with, and the *kind of love* they pursue (Plummer, 2015:66). This, according to Plummer, may weaken "traditional/orthodox approaches" and produces so-called "flourishing sexualities"; thus, sexualities that are more sacral, individualised, reflexive and "informalised" gender and sexualised presentations. These express an "endless hunger for instant change…and self-reinvention" in the larger cultural context (Plummer 2015:172). The participants displayed highly critical reflections about the supposed *natural* and *taken-for-granted* positions of patriarchy and heteronormativity. Butler (1991:23) provides a similar reflection:

> *That heterosexuality is always in the act of elaborating itself is evidence that it is perpetually at risk, that is, it 'knows' its own possibility of being undone*.

It is worth recalling one of the quotes in this regard. It reads as follows: "I am a man in terms of [my] genitals, but I can be *soft* and *emotional*, too. *I do cry* when *situations are hard to handle* or *when I feel pain*. I *do not* see myself according to these *man-made definitions* of what it means to be a man and how I am required to act or present myself"[17] (cf. Messner, 2011). As discussed in chapters 1 and 2, inclusive masculinities speak to heterosexual and gay men's partiality for physical and emotional tactility with other men (Anderson, 2009, 2014). In terms of the present study, such tactility on an **emotional**

[17] Emphasis added throughout.

level is of particular interest, considering whether and how men's levels of homohysteria may encourage or impede them to establish **horizontal homosociality** (also see Anderson & Filder, 2018; Drummond *et al*., 2015; Hammarén & Johansson, 2014). First, I discuss how the theme of **emotionality** characterised the participants' narratives.

(a) Men, GBV and emotionality: moving from covert to overt sensitisation

All participants reported being negatively affected by the violence directed towards them. They cited its negative consequences. These ranged from experiencing "suicidal tendencies" (Safariolyaei & Amiri, 2017) and post-abuse "emotional trauma" (Hines & Douglas, 2011; Walker *et al*., 2019:2) that resulted from sustaining "physical injuries and scars". The dangers of such abuse underline the work of Hines and Douglas (2011). These effects led to some participants' "inability to cope adequately at work", their "loss … [of] a sense of self", "lower levels of productivity" and "less access and contact to children" (Walker *et al*., 2019). This is due to the lack of adequate support the men received (Hines & Douglas, 2011). This, according to Shefer *et al*. (2015), means that dominant forms of masculinity and male practice do not only impact negatively on women and girls but also undermine boys' and men's emotional and mental health and well-being.

Morgan and Wells (2016) argue that most men are socialised to be emotionally constrained or less expressive; they are discouraged to disclose their victimisation openly due to fears that they might be misunderstood or questioned (Ratele, 2022). Such fear, according to Ratele (2010:21), further pressurises men to conform to and enact a cisgendered masculinity. As regards the present study, Black men were socialised to exude a "no fear" stance (Ratele, 2010:21). This is primarily associated with what is termed as toxic masculinity. Toxic masculinity encompasses those norms of masculinity relating to violence and stoicism, which, as Ratele (2008, 2013, 2022) found, is to the detriment of the individual *and* society. This is because men who display toxic masculinity often display characteristics and performances relating to violence and discrimination to avoid any acts that may be ambiguously perceived as feminine (Ratele, 2022). For instance, since being gay is stereotypically associated with femininity, this fear may often be conveyed through homophobia. Men who are afraid of being seen as gay tend to overcompensate to prove that they are "straight" (heterosexual) by becoming bold and

hostile. They are also likely to participate in conflicts associated with status and dominance compared to women and avoid resolving disputes because of their supposed association with emphasised femininity (Connell, 1987).

The men's emotionality about GBV was tangible during the interviews. They reported emotions such as "guilt", "self-blame", "anger", "urges to reciprocate violence with violence", "humiliation" and "shame" (Gomez, 2007) – qualities that are contrary to the highly esteemed hegemonic ones (Connell, 2005). Additionally, the experiences of the participants in this study highlight changes in how men process and display their varied levels of emotionality in contestation with disavowing themselves from such expressions. This recalls the work of Ammann and Staudacher (2021), Mfecane (2018) and Ratele (2022), among others. They explain that there is a multiplicity of masculinities, noting that masculinities are not necessarily static but rather manifest as a myriad of gender arrangements of practice that emanate, context permitting, from specific interpersonal and cultural scenarios. Therefore, all societies comprise multiple (dominant) masculinities (Anderson, 2009). The only difference between these societies is the extent to which such displays are socially and culturally permitted. The delineations of these masculinities may change over time and may be affected by changes in other parts of the society. These changes may even, consequently, affect the society itself. Therefore, civil society and social institutions have a major role to play, building **stronger advocacy** for and **awareness** of **GBV <u>and</u> men**.

To this point, it is worth reiterating the role of social institutions in this regard. Participants noted that "as much as the government gives money to NGOs that help women that are abused by men, *there should be a lot more of those for men in different provinces. [At present], there's only one in Johannesburg. In fact, only one in Gauteng*"[18]. Associated with the need to openly express emotionality is the initial choice to even **disclose** their experiences **at all**. All participants noted that they had disclosed their abuse to individual persons or institutions. They opted for disclosing to informal and/or formal structures (e.g., social workers, psychologists, support groups and helplines). Corbally (2015) and Walker *et al.* (2019) attribute said routes of disclosure to the idea that gender may play a key role

[18] Emphasis added.

in how members of society (e.g., police officers, the judicial or bystanders) perceive men who are subjected to GBV. Reactions to the disclosures of my participants varied from positive to negative responses. Although some recalled receiving "tangible" support from mainly psychologists and counsellors, positive emotional experiences were, however, stifled by the negative reactions outweighing their positive counterparts.

Participants noted that others projected attitudes of "carelessness", "disbelief", "victim-blaming" and "dismissiveness" – a finding that is well-documented by other scholars (see Barkhuizen, 2015; Enaifoghe *et al*., 2021; Gathogo, 2015; Gennrich, 2013; Kumar, 2012; Monakali & Francis, 2022; Thobejane *et al*., 2018; Wallace, 2014). These scholars attribute such attitudes to the hypermasculinisation of men in South Africa. Fears of secondary victimisation was evident: the participants were fearful that police officers would not deal with their report confidentially. They would rather, based on their subjective prejudices, subject the male victim to ridicule, mockery and negative labelling (cf. Mgolozeli & Duma, 2020; Woodyard, 2019). Woodyard (2019) confirms the narratives of participants who believe that the police does not "respond to men or help men because they are informed that they should act based on the information they got in the statistics" (cf. Javaid, 2020). Men who report their abuse, risk being categorised as subordinate and marginalised men (Connell, 2005; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

Men's overt emotional responses to GBV would be facilitated only if service providers and members of the broader public display more inclusivity towards the men. One significant measure entails the use of more inclusive language, thus, dispelling the myth that GBV only relates to women (Lysova & Dim 2020; Moore, 2021). Furthermore, participants recommended collaboration between women and men's organisations to create a platform where inclusive programmes could encourage men and women to work towards providing tangible recommendations as resolutions to South Africa's "second pandemic" (Ellis, 2020). Examples in South Africa include *People Opposing Women Abuse* (POWA), *Sonke Gender Justice*, *Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme*, *The Moshate Organisation*, *Real Man Foundation* and *South African Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse* (SAMSOSA). Additionally, the participants recommended increased public awareness campaigns for the nature and consequences of GBV and the association between GBV and men (i.e., "sensitisation") (Woodyard, 2019), "improved training" for services providers (Javaid, 2020), dispelling gendered myths (SACAP, 2020; International

Committee of the Red Cross, 2022) and more "funding" (Centre for African Justice, Peace and Human Rights, 2018) for programmes that prioritise the plight of *all* victims of GBV.

The support initiatives need to include getting all services providers, together sensitising and appealing to the private sector regarding approaches or methods of identifying and responding to GBV, addressing gender disparities, creating partnerships with the media and faith-based leaders to challenge gender stereotypes and toxic masculinities. These recommendations highlight Francis (2017) and Msibi's (2015) references to Kevin Kumashiro's (2002) call for education for "others" (thus, attempts to improve the lived experiences of male victims of GBV through overt support and affirmation) and education about "others" (providing knowledge to the justice system and the society at large about GBV as it relates to men).

Next, based on the findings, I reflect on whether and how the participants considered adopting **horizontal homosociality** through disclosures to men and women.

(b) Horizontal homosociality

Recalling earlier references to homohysteria, the participants noted that they sometimes refrained from public displays of emotionality and disclosure about their abuse because of their fear of being "perceived as gay" (cf. Mgolozeli & Duma, 2020). These narratives notwithstanding, some of the men expressed their partiality for relating their emotionality to their male and female peers. Participants' accounts were essentially expressive, with partial discussion of their emotional response to their experiences, feasibly indicating men's complexity regarding conversations that relate to their emotional and personal encounters (Morgan & Wells, 2016). For example, some participants expressed a preference to talk about their encounters with female peers because they viewed these women as being more empathic, compassionate and accepting of their accounts of victimisation (Burrell & Westmarland, 2019) and also less likely to sanction a masculine philosophy that accentuates male strength and self-determination (Hogan *et al*., 2022). One of the participants noted:

> *…remember with males I have to act in a certain way with them so that they may not think I am a weak man. Therefore, with a female friend, I could [share] my emotions not worrying about how she would react because women are*

considered to be [more] emotional. Therefore, I assumed that she would understand me, unlike men who are supposed to be emotionless and…would just ridicule or mock me because it is considered to not be in our nature to show emotions.

Participants who related their emotionality to their male peers did that due to their need to "express vulnerability" and to experience togetherness in a form of "support" with exclusion of judgement. This finding supports Thurnell-Read's (2012) research among younger American men in a fraternity setting. As opposed to simply observing displays of hegemonic masculinities, he "confirmed a picture of male participants actively working to maintain and develop their friendship bonds. These groups of men were striving for group cohesion, togetherness, and intimacy, rather than interpersonal competition and the creation of male hierarchies" (as quoted in Hammarén & Johansson, 2014:3). His participants, akin to those men in the present study, provide proof of "traces of changes and redefinitions of masculinity" along "more sensitive [,] … intimate" and inclusive lines.

6.5.2 Advocating for #MenToo <u>in addition to</u> #MeToo: Social movements, GBV and South African men

Discrimination towards men as victims of GBV persists. Shuler (2010) argues that male victimisation by their partners is becoming a serious social issue that continues to be downplayed by some persons and institutions – a finding to which the current study attests. Policies and statistics addressing GBV tend to be limited and underreported when addressing male victims of GBV (Thobejane *et al.*, 2018). Therefore, perceptions of gender play a key role in how institutions (e.g., judicial and policing) view and perceive such male victimisation (Barkhuizen, 2015; Corbally, 2015; Walker *et al.*, 2019). Likewise, Javaid (2017) argues that those who do not conform to the dominant form of masculinity and gender roles ascribed to them tend to be at risk of experiencing secondary victimisation. This is because male victims of GBV may deviate and contradict the expectation of what it means to be a man, as the disclosure and reporting may incorporate characteristics that relate to powerlessness, femininity and weakness. These are characteristics that characterise subordinate or marginalised masculinities (Connell, 2005; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

The #TimesUp and #MeToo movements are recent examples of such a social change. Interestingly, the participants commented on the dualistic influence of increased **liberal attitudes** regarding gender. On the one hand, they favoured such examples of negotiating or using one's gender; on the other hand, they expressed concern over how such wokeness impacted on their subjective experiences of GBV. Regarding the former, men tend to position themselves in contrast to the misogynistic and ruling presentations associated with particular male cultures and using egalitarian narratives as identity work to posit themselves as progressive and compassionate men. This indicates the move to a more inclusive masculinity that permits behaviours that may be considered as more "feminine" or "gay" (Anderson 2009; Messerschmidt, 2010). Men are considered to have been increasingly exposed to egalitarian ideals, particularly as they seek to form relationships with women whose goal for relationships is also to share work and family responsibilities with their partners (Gerson, 2010). As a result, the men tended to provide narratives of progressive and egalitarian masculinities. Some of the participants expressed their common goals with some strands of Feminism – that is, discarding the idea that women should stay at home and men should be the sole breadwinners. The participants similarly critiqued the conventional view of having to appear domineering, emotionally absent and philandering.

Although some of the men in this study indicated their egalitarian narratives and dissociated themselves from the view of the stereotypical man, gender disparities did emerge in the relationships. Given that this may have conflicted with the understanding of themselves as liberal men, they had to engage approaches which could reconcile their behaviours with their individualities. Consequently, for instance, some participants highlighted their need to provide for their families. This idea may be dependent on ideas of gender disparities, but in a way that permits men to keep on viewing themselves as being "good guys". Regarding the latter, there proves to be a notion that more democratic relations between men and women could lead to the forfeiture of certain privileges associated with the idea of a patriarchal culture in which men ought to control economic, legal and political establishments and women are expected to take primary responsibility for the household and nurture children. This division of responsibilities bestowed men with a structural power that provided them with the basis of becoming the superior group

and placed the family at a position that fosters the reproduction of patriarchal ideals of male dominance and female subservience.

With the aim of challenging and dismantling oppressive patriarchal institutions and forms of masculinity that preserve the occurrence of sexual harassment by men and calling for social change and equality between men and women (Choo *et al*., 2019), movements such as #MeToo emerged to empower women survivors of sexual victimisation. The #MeToo movement was initiated by an American Feminist, Tarana Burke, in 2006, with the aim of empowering young Black women who survived sexual victimisation to cooperatively identify, foreclose, seek justice and make their experiences known to the public (Civitello, 2017). It gained much more attention in 2017. The relatively well-known actress Alyssa Milano and other public figures used social media (mainly Twitter) to invite survivors of sexual victimisation in 2017 to join the movement. This resulted in an increase in similar public allegations of sexual misconduct against influential men to surface (Parker, 2017). The movement was also aimed at exposing authoritative relations relating to the sexual exploitation of women by elites promising career prospects through sexual activities, which may not have been constrained to heterosexual encounters (Graham & Bowness, 2021).

Irrespective of its lauded contributions, the #MeToo movements have also led to divided views among scholars and lay persons alike – some argue in favour of and others arguing against it (Muzyamba, 2022). The former group emphasises its importance, as it provides an innocuous environment within a potential larger toxic and misogynistic context for survivors to articulate and challenge sexual violence. It is further commended for its ability to raise an awareness about sexual violence, which was mainly concealed. In so doing, such movements advocate for the creation and enforcement of policies to redress sexual harassment (Holroyd-Leduc & Straus, 2018; Muzyamba, 2022). Due to the #MeToo movement, men are considered to have become “woke” or have been “awoken” to critically reflect about their heteronormative and patriarchal privileges that contribute to women’s subordination and abuse; they come to see themselves as being part of the problem. According to Nilsson and Lundgren (2021), men have become aware of how they benefit from the existing structures that preserve their gendered behaviours. This means that men, in essence, are becoming (or should become) more conscious of their sexist behaviours because of the existence of the #MeToo movement.

Conversely, others are critical of how the #MeToo movement has been used by some in a one-dimensional and neo-colonial manner to posit men as the sole perpetrators of GBV (Ajayi, 2018). Thus, the movement's application of a "one-size-fits-all" approach w be unable to accomplish its intended objectives in Western and non-Western countries if one is unable to consider the specific cultural nuances of each case (Akinbobola, 2019). Furthermore, the movement tends to solely reproduce the "women-as-victims" versus men-as-perpetrators narrative (Graham & Bowness, 2021). Critics have also said that the use of women as weapons in the production of hostile environments for men (Burnett, 2018), thus reproducing a "culture of fear", emphasises threats to men while overestimating dangers faced by women. Additionally, such social transformations may lead to men interpreting such movements through a zero-sum perspective – that is, men may interpret any such transformation regarding equality as posing a threat to their agency (Rivera-Rodriguez *et al*., 2022). This, therefore, places men at an unfair disadvantage because of their gender. This may result in men experiencing "reverse sexism" – that is, promoting Feminist ideals that posit *only* men as abusers – a finding that recalls the narratives of some of the participants of the present study. Therefore, as a response, a counter movement arose to the #MeToo movement. In 2018, a *Children's Rights Initiative for Shared Parenting* (CRISP) NGO, based in Bangladesh, initiated the #MenToo movement with the aim of protecting men from injustices they suffer at the hands of women. The #MenToo movement argues that women tend to misuse the law to charge men of blackmailing and extortion and that policies and laws relating to violence tend to be mostly gender-biased and men are constantly considered as perpetrators of violence. Similarly, the American-based *A Voice for Men* (AVfM) movement argues that the #MeToo movement may possibly destroy men's lives. The movement has been considered "Wehrmacht" (translated from German as meaning "defence power") in which women establish the domain where they become superior to men (Dickel & Evolvi, 2022:11). These discourses, according to Dickel and Evolvi (2022:11), aim to provide a balanced account of women *and* men being the possible victims of other men *and* women.

6.6 CONCLUSION

Describing gender and sexuality along binary lines (e.g., feminine/masculine; agent/victim), one tends to create and maintain rigid conceptualisations and

categorisations of certain identities as advantaged as opposed to the detriment of others. Contrary to such an approach, Francis (2017) critiques such binary logics and the heteronormative and patriarchal ideologies and structures that sustain them. Drawing on his work along with that of Buiten and Naidoo (2020), Dlamini (2021) and Ratele (2022), among others, I propose, as an inductive contribution to research about men and GBV, the use of The (De)conceptualisation and (Re)conceptualisation Model of GBV and Masculinities (DeRe-GBVMs).

Its main tenets foreground a critical (de)conceptualisation of a monolithic association between GBV and men. I do so to encourage scholars and lay persons alike to (re)conceptualise this association by emphasising the reciprocal interplay between context-specificity, the men's intrapsychic scripting, and their interpersonal interactions with their generalised and significant others. This encourages a social constructionist understanding of GBV and masculinities versus GBV against masculinities. The reasoning for this is twofold. First, this allows one to not view debates about GBV as being plotted against all men (including those who have been subjected to such abuse). Furthermore, I postulate that sociological and masculinities research on GBV should avoid an "either/or" approach to studying men. I would advise a focus on how various cultural scenarios posit men as agents who, based on their context, may become susceptible to GBV at the hands of their partner(s). I do, however, acknowledge that women *are* affected disproportionally by GBV compared to men. However, I recommend that scholars also consider theorising the relationship between GBV and masculinities – that is, investigating the sources of them falling victim to such violence; how they are potentially able to engage with protective factors[19] to challenge GBV against themselves and other persons (irrespective of the latter's gender identity or sexual orientation); how current global and local social movements encourage and inhibit a holistic approach to men's experiences of GBV in relation to women; and how South African policymakers, NGOs and academics could (and should) engage with local and national challenges faced by all men, hence the reference to the plurality of masculinities versus masculinity.

[19] Defined as the "quality of a person or context or their interaction that predicts better outcomes, particularly in situations of risk or adversity" (Oldfield *et al.*, 2016:833).

Therefore, I recommend a focus on the social construction(s) of masculine experiences in relation to GBV.

As the findings and the preceding discussion show, social variables such as the participants' primary and secondary socialisation, race, and achieved cultural statuses play meaningful roles in how they conceptualise, experience and address GBV (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Demetriou, 2001; Haywood & Mac an Ghaill, 2003; Mshweshwe, 2020). To this point, I discussed the measures of being men as opposed to a singular conceptualisation of the measure of being a man. Here, some participants noted how a man can be measured by strength, both emotionally and physically. Strict gender role expectations influenced how some men opt to define and perform their masculinity, whereas others (specifically along racial lines) sought to undo proscriptive and hegemonic masculine roles.

In keeping with the primary focus of the study, this chapter also discussed the role played by social institutions to either enable or inhibit the agency of male victims' of GBV. In this regard, I engaged with Anderson's (2009) IMT as potential theoretical lens to encourage men's overt expressions of emotionality to address their struggles and resilience amid the negative consequences they related about their disclosures to public and private social institutions. Although participants reported feelings of "guilt", "self-blame" and "anger", among others, and their reflections about transgressing vertical homosociality in favour of horizontal homosociality provides a glimmer of hope to redress solely subscribing to pathological views about men and GBV.

Next, chapter 7 concludes with a demarcation of the present study's research objectives. Here, I indicate how I answered each of the theoretical, methodological and empirical research questions posed in chapter 1.

CHAPTER 7
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter 1, I foregrounded the need to provide an inductive and theoretical framework for men as "silent sufferers" of GBV based on their experiences of such abuse at the hands of their female partners. In keeping with this aim, I sought to answer the general research question that read as follows: "**What are the lived experiences of South African men who are or have been the victims of gender-based violence (GBV) in marital or intimate relationships**?"

To answer said research question, I opted to use an interpretivist epistemological and social constructionist ontological approach to investigate the social phenomenon. I did this to emphasise the need to sociologically study the significance of GBV against South African men. As bookend to chapter 1, in the current chapter, I indicate how I addressed the respective general and specific research questions. This is followed by recommendations for future research and practical initiatives and programmes to address issues concerning GBV against men in South Africa.

7.2 CONCLUDING REMARKS: ACHIEVEMENT OF THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The general research objective read as follows: "**To explore the lived experiences of South African men who are or have been the victims of gender-based violence (GBV) in marital or intimate relationships**". To achieve this objective, I differentiate between the theoretical and methodological research objectives, on the one hand, and the empirical research objectives, on the other hand.

7.2.1 Addressing the theoretical and methodological research objectives

The first three research objectives centred on conducting a thorough literature review, providing a detailed discussion of the theoretical tenets of HMT and IMT and identifying the most suitable methodological approach to investigate the lived experiences of South African men who have been subjected to GBV. Regarding the **first of these objectives**

– namely, **to identify and contextualise the contributions of the broader academic theories and literature on gender-based violence against men as it relates to patriarchy and masculinity, including hegemonic masculinities as the central theoretical argument** – I provided detailed discussions of both the theoretical tenets of HMT and IMT and existing South African and international research on GBV in chapters 2 and 3, respectively. The discussion in chapter 2 highlighted debates on how GBV may be a consequence of patriarchy, heteronormativity and the idealisation of hegemonic masculinity. Therefore, understanding GBV in contemporary South Africa requires a theoretical consideration of South Africa as a patriarchal and hegemonic society. South Africa, although having advanced in terms of legislation and broader social support for gender equality, is still characterised by heteronormative gender and sexual arrangements that valorise the supremacy of violent, ruling and patriarchal exertions of masculinity. Consequently, men who do not conform to such norms tend to be subjected to subordination, marginalisation and exclusion by their families, friends and society in general. I illustrated this point with a discussion and application of Connell's (2005) HMT. I differentiated between hegemonic, complicit, subordinate and marginalised masculinity to substantiate my argument. Furthermore, I introduced the reader to masculine typologies that are unique to South African society (i.e., Black, White and ruling masculinities). Moreover, in keeping with empirical evidence of the changing social dynamics among men and women alike, I deemed it important to discuss the work of the proponents of IMT. Anderson (2009, 2014), as its first proponent, critiques and interrogates the main tenets of HMT. Although he acknowledges that HMT was particularly relevant during the 1980s and 1990s (i.e., the "apex" of homophobia), he contends that IMT can be used to explain the changing relationships and displays of emotionality among men *and* men and women. I applied both theories to the findings of the present study.

Furthermore, chapter 3 provided a comprehensive discussion of **existing literature** on the experiences of men who are victims of GBV. The first part of the chapter focused on the conceptualisation of GBV, both in South Africa and abroad. The chapter further focused on how gender, in relation to GBV, has been regarded as a biased concept that has mostly centred on women as victims and men as perpetrators of GBV. The chapter also consisted of a discussion on the causes of GBV, men's experiences of GBV, and the

effects of GBV on men, their help-seeking behaviours, as well as their reasons for underreporting GBV.

The **second specific objective** focused on the discussion of the **methodological approaches** used for the study, informed by a qualitative research design (see chapter 4). The chapter highlighted the research methodology used in the present study on GBV perpetrated against South African men by women. The chapter discussed the use of social constructionism as an ontological approach and the epistemological approach of interpretivism. This was followed by a discussion regarding the use of a qualitative research approach, non-probability sampling through purposive and snowball sampling, data collection by means of 10 semi-structured interviews, and data analysis through thematic analysis. Next, I introduced the 10 participants who voluntarily consented to participate in the study. As part of this discussion, I recalled how researchers who conducted similar inquiries found it particularly difficult to identify, recruit and retain participants who formed part of such a "hidden" (Browne, 2005) community of men. The chapter concluded with a clear demarcation of the ethical considerations that I adhered to before, during and after the collection of the data from the participants. As is evident from chapter 4, I adhered to the ethical standards of the NWU's BaSSREC.

Next, I discuss how I achieved the remaining empirical research objectives of the present study. As my inductive contribution to the topic under investigation in a South African context, I proposed the use of a conceptual model – **the (De)conceptualisation and (Re)conceptualisation Model of GBV and Masculinities (DeRe-GBVMs)** – in chapter 5 (refer to figure 6.1). This model encompasses each of these specific empirical research objectives.

7.2.2 Addressing the empirical research objectives: the DeRe-GBVMs

As basis of the **DeRe-GBVMs**, chapter 5 provided an in-depth account of the information male victims of GBV related. The first subsection of the chapter looked at primary socialisation as a source of participants' agency or conformity. The participants affirmed the presence of strict gender role expectations when growing up. They reflected on the influence that patriarchal and heteronormative notions had on them relating to the

performance of certain activities as men. Furthermore, participants conceptualised idealised masculinity: they defined what, in their view, represents “a man”.

The second subsection commented on participants’ accounts on their experiences of GBV at the hands of their partners. Participants provided varied definitions of GBV and its possible causes. The third subsection of the chapter provided an account of participants’ views on the consequences of GBV for men. Here, participants indicated being negatively affected by their partners’ violence. The violence resulted in the victims having suicidal thoughts, experiencing emotional trauma and had a negative impact on their educational, work and social spheres. The chapter further focused on the participants’ formal and informal disclosure processes and discussed both negative and positive reactions following their disclosures to male and female friends. In the final subsection, participants reflected on their help-seeking behaviours, discussed their attempts to seek help from professional services and informal sources and made recommendations and suggestions for change in the form of programmes that (should) cater for male victims of GBV.

Chapter 6 addressed the five specific empirical research objectives. By integrating the theoretical contributions discussed in chapters 1 to 3, I analysed the participants’ narratives based on the research objectives and research questions of the study. The first specific research objective focused on the **conceptualisation of GBV based on the empirical narratives of male participants**. Participants provided different definitions in this regard. Their definitions ranged from those that were gender-specific (i.e., men’s verbal and physical assaults directed towards women) (Dzinavane, 2016; Kumar, 2012), thus further emphasising the persistence of patriarchy and heteronormativity (Buiten & Naidoo, 2020), to those conceptualisations that sought to challenge stereotypical gendered associations with men being the sole perpetrators and women being the sole victims of GBV (cf. Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2005; Ratele, 2022). As part of this discussion in chapter 6, I implored social scientists to opt for a **(de)conceptualisation of GBV** that purports an either/or, man/woman and agent/victim dualism. Also, I recommended research that foregrounds the “whole [gendered] subject” (Francis, 2017) to **(re)conceptualise men’s experiences of GBV** in a contextually nuanced way.

The second specific research question and objective focused on **the identification and discussion of factors contributing to South African men's vulnerability to GBV**. Concepts used by male victims of GBV to describe causes of their abuse included examples of inability to fulfil prescribed gender roles (Adams, 2008; Mashiri & Mawire, 2013; Ratele, 2008), racial differences and their abusers' tendencies to emulate their own past abusive behaviours (Kalmus & Seltzer, 1984; Lyons & Berge, 2012; Nixon *et al*., 2013; Pingley, 2017) and psychological and mental illness (Calvete, 2008; Dowd *et al*., 2005; Swan *et al*., 2008). The third specific research question sought to explore **forms of GBV experienced by men**. In this regard, GBV emerged to be *physical* in the form of beatings and having physical objects thrown at them (Carmo *et al*., 2011; Drijber *et al*., 2013; Hines & Douglas, 2009; Kolbe & Buttner, 2020; Safariolyaei & Amiri, 2017; Sigsworth, 2009; Tshwaranang Legal Centre, 2012; Thobejane *et al*., 2018). The men also recalled being subjected to *verbal abuse* (Stith *et al*., 2012), *emotional abuse* (e.g., keeping their children from them, and "emotional blackmail or manipulation") (Roach, 2011; Thobejane, 2018), and *psychological abuse* (Dokkedahl *et al*., 2019; Kovacs, 2011; Ludsin & Vetten, 2005).

The fourth specific empirical research question and objective explored the **reasons for**, **and challenges faced by South African male victims' underreporting of GBV**. These reasons were associated with the various institutions' lack of care regarding men as victims of GBV. The participants recalled how they were dismissed, blamed and even suffered secondary victimisation (Barkhuizen, 2015; Enaifoghe *et al*., 2021; Gathogo, 2015; Gennrich, 2013; Kumar, 2012; Monakali & Francis, 2022; Thobejane *et al*., 2018; Wallace, 2014) due to hypermasculinisation of men in South Africa. As regards the fifth specific empirical research question and objective, I wanted to explore **consequences of GBV for the construction and enactment of masculinity by participants**. Participants reported being negatively affected by such abuse. These consequences ranged from displaying suicidal tendencies (Safariolyaei & Amiri, 2017), retaining physical scars after altercations (Hines & Douglas, 2011) and being kept from their children (Walker *et al*., 2019). Emotionally, the men experienced shame, anger and guilt (Gomez, 2007).

Finally, I sought to achieve the research objective that read "**the identification and provision of recommendations related to policy formulations to address GBV**".

Examples of programmes that could help in addressing GBV against men included the use of more inclusive language –thus, dispelling the myth that GBV only relates to women, collaboration between women's and men's organisations to create a platform for gender-inclusive programmes, increased public awareness campaigns of the nature and consequences of and association between GBV and men (i.e., "sensitisation"), improved training opportunities for services providers that could contribute to dispelling gendered myths and stereotypes, and more funding for programmes that prioritise the plight of all victims of GBV.

As the culmination of the general and specific research objectives, I formulated the **(De)conceptualisation and (Re)conceptualisation Model of GBV and Masculinities (DeRe-GBVMs)** as potential approach to achieving three specific outcomes through sociological research on GBV **and** masculinities:

- to emphasise the reciprocal interplay between context-specificity, the men's intrapsychic scripting and their interpersonal interactions with their generalised and significant others. This could provide a much-needed social constructionist understanding of **GBV and masculinities** versus **GBV against masculinity**;

- to acknowledge the inherent reciprocation between GBV **and** masculinities versus GBV **against** masculinities. This highlights the constant interplay between gender (and sexual) agency and gender (and sexual) structural scenarios (cf. Jackson & Scott, 2010). In opting for such an approach, research on GBV could refrain from adopting an "either/or" approach in favour of exploring men's abilities to enact their agency amid potential internal, interpersonal and structural challenges;

- to focus on the plurality of masculini**ties** versus masculinit**y**. By doing this, scholars use an intersectional lens to carefully investigate the varied and contradictory experiences of men in relation to GBV.

7.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

This section provides recommendations for future research as well as recommendations for practical programmes to address issues concerning GBV against men in South Africa.

7.3.1 Recommendations for future research

Based on the inductive findings that originated from the present study, I wish to recommend the following potential foci for further sociological investigation of GBV.

First, notwithstanding the research and issues related to the differences in occurrence, it is clear from the findings that GBV affects both men and women. Therefore, GBV must be addressed and studied from a practical and all-inclusive (inclusion of men) or holistic stance, whereby scholars give an equal and balanced account of its consequences for both men and women to proactively work towards finding an amicable and workable resolution.

Second, research is required to comprehend the potential influences of and associations between a man's self-identified gender identification and sexual orientation and their GBV experiences. Furthermore, from a health and social view, any violence that leads to economic, individual and social costs requires high prioritisation. Thus, researchers ought to focus on capturing or making an enquiry into GBV against and its consequences for men, as more research focuses on women. Such research would assist in the identification and understanding of the different and multifaceted (read intersectional) experiences of male victims of GBV and further serve as a basis for informing policy reforms and social change. The aim of such research would be to inform national, provincial and local governments to prioritise GBV against men by taking proactive, constructive and urgent measures to safeguard the rights of all persons, irrespective of gender. Related to this point, the broader public's perceptions of or attitudes towards social movements that seek to redress GBV and how these movements tend to encourage or discourage gender equality regarding men as victims of GBV should also be considered.

Third, future research in this discipline may include methods or strategies for challenging different cultural and general stereotypical notions about male victims of GBV. Moreover, extensive research on male victims has mostly explored men's resistance to disclosure; however, less research has been conducted on conditions that make male victims more comfortable with such disclosures to seek help. Such research could adopt the tenets of IMT – that is, including questions in qualitative and quantitative studies that investigate men's levels of homohysteria, homophobia (and experiences of institutional and

internalised homophobia) and their partiality towards vertical and/or horizontal homosociality as means to cope with their experiences of GBV.

A fourth recommendation could centre on GBV in same-sex relationships. Further research needs to focus on issues regarding GBV when it occurs within marginalised and subordinate populations such as same-sex couples. Such research can broaden the scope of the unique intricacies among gay, lesbian, queer, non-binary and transgender persons or couples so as to strengthen understanding of how they experience gender norms, particularly as it relates to heteronormativity and homonormativity.

Furthermore, studies could investigate how violent, ruling and/or Puritan masculinities continue to inform men's views and actual experiences of GBV. In particular, research on masculinity, health and GBV among men from different racial backgrounds should overtly convey the justification fundamental to the theorised connections between these patriarchal structures and effects. It will also be vital to explore GBV and masculinities that cut across socially distinct groups and to capture the exclusive experience of men that vary by race, ethnicity, sexual identity, age, and other socially meaningful categories.

Lastly, while research on men's experiences of violence in intimate relationships is beginning to expand, there is a lacune of studies on what happens after the dissolution of such violent relationships. Further research is important to explore how divorce procedures, residence negotiations and child contact or custody measures tend to potentially exacerbate emotional or psychological abuse and harassment of men. Therefore, there is a need for research on the dynamics of male victims' parental alienation on a larger scale in South Africa.

7.3.2 Recommendations for practical initiatives and social change in South Africa

Informed by the recent research that addresses complexities relating to GBV, service providers and police need to be sensitised through compulsory training sessions to approach issues of male GBV through a gender-neutral lens. Crisis and helpline service workers similarly require such training and sensitisation to ensure that they acknowledge that both men and women can be victims of GBV. This recalls Kumashiro's (2002) advocacy for a critical pedagogical approach – that is, training about these supposedly

“othered” topics to inform, educate, sensitise and empower service providers to assist those persons in need. Moreover, organisations should consistently re-evaluate their screening processes for victimised callers, with particular consideration to men’s distinctive impediments and challenges when reaching out and gaining access to the services.

Furthermore, notions that address GBV as male-perpetrated should be replaced with more gender-inclusive perspectives that address both men and women as possible perpetrators and/or victims. Training may also redress myths and stereotypes relating to male GBV. This is done to ensure that when male victims report or seek help, their experiences or narratives are handled with equal respect and dignity. Such initiatives should emphasise current South African legislation that conceptualises GBV along gender-neutral lines, such as, The Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Amendment Act 32 of 2007 (SOA) (RSA, 2007). In keeping with this, interventions or legal entities can explore ways in which they can provide support and legal requirements to male victims of GBV. These needs may include, but are not limited to, obtaining protection from abuse through, among others, restraining orders, legal accompaniment in the courtroom, assistance with divorce, and child custody matters (cf. Tsui *et al*., 2010).

Additionally, South African educational institutions (primary through tertiary) need to introduce initiatives to include curricula and courses that focus on GBV as it relates to people of different genders and sexuality. This could encourage an emphasis on non- or underrepresented groups of people. Employing such courses from the lower level of education would assist in the sensitisation and creation of awareness of GBV and its dynamics from an early age. Gender sensitisation among children and young adults teach them to be less dependent on stereotypes and oversimplifications and to employ their agency to actively engage in debates and matters regarding GBV. This disrupts the restrictive gender norms and gender binary while embracing inclusivity and equality.

Counselling services should provide strategies for how men can combat experiences relating to stereotypes in their communities. It also imperative that service providers respond to male victims without doubt, scepticism and dismissiveness. Similarly, services and agencies specifically tailored to the needs of male victims of GBV should be availed to serve the interests of male victims, as in the case of their female counterparts. Given

male victims' reluctance to report such abuse, reliance should not only be on official structures and institutions to report GBV. This is because there is a likelihood that results may not reflect the actual number of male victims; however, sources such as research studies and national surveys may also be used to collect important information on male victims of GBV.

7.4 FINAL THOUGHTS: MY REFLECTIONS AS RESEARCHER

Given the differential experiences of South African men regarding GBV, the findings suggest that academic and practical interventions can contribute to constructively addressing the challenges men face in this regard. Having discussed the academic contributions of the present study at length, I wish to conclude with a personal reflection on my own positionality in the study.

As a self-identified cisgendered and Black woman, I chose the topic because I believe that GBV is a human rights violation and crime that affects both men and women. The current GBV framework is largely viewed from a women-as-victims stance, which tend to provide a skewed perception of some men's reality. To mitigate this skewed perception of reality, men need to be provided with an inclusive platform that allows for open discussion relating to their daily experiences of GBV at the hands of their female partners. My decision to undertake this topic was also based on limited research and empirical evidence to foster inclusive policies and strategies that aim at the prevention of and intervention in the matter of GBV as it relates to men.

I entered the interviews with some trepidation for two reasons. First, I was concerned about my own safety, since I would be travelling alone and spending time with men as part of fieldwork; I was concerned that my feminine appearance would position me at my own peril due to the socially constructed notion that men are perpetrators of violence. Second, my anxieties were related to how I found myself inspecting the nature of my study and revising my personal preconceptions, assumptions and, yes, potential prejudices, which were interfering with the way in which I was conducting my research and having to study racially different men as a woman without imposing said bias on them. To curtail this, I sought to (and was able to do so) see myself through the eyes of Black and White men – how *they* would interpret being approached and interviewed by a

woman who, depending on their cultural context, could be seen as inferior or subordinate (a notion that is mostly, by tradition, contested) because of my gender. Despite my “outsider status”, I kept reminding myself of the importance of said study to raise awareness and establish rapport and “build a research relationship” that “allow[ed me to] access that person’s story” (Magrath, 2017:18). Lastly, I contend that I was able to amicably engage with the participants to contribute to further understanding GBV as experienced by these men.

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ADDENDUM A:

ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER

Private Bag X1290, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
Fax: 018 299-4910
Web: http://www.nwu.ac.za

Senate Committee for Research Ethics
Tel: 018 299-4849
Email: nkosinathi.machine@nwu.ac.za

1 February 2022

ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY

Based on approval by the **Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (BaSSREC)** on 01/02/2022, the Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee hereby **approves** your study as indicated below. This implies that the North-West University Senate Committee for Research Ethics (NWU-SERC) grants its permission that, provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the study may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

Study title: Silent sufferers: a sociological exploration of gender-based violence against South African men by women.

Study Leader/Supervisor (Principal Investigator)/Researcher: Prof. J. Rothmann

Student/Research Team: T. Tshilongo

Ethics number:

N	W	U	-	0	2	0	5	2	-	2	0	-	A	7
Institution				Study Number						Year			Status	

Status: S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional Authorisation; A = Authorisation

Application Type: Single Study

Commencement date: **01/02/2022** **Risk:** Low Risk

Expiry date: 01/02/2023

Approval of the study is initially provided for a year, after which continuation of the study is dependent on receipt and review of the annual (or as otherwise stipulated) monitoring report and the concomitant issuing of a letter of continuation.

Special in process conditions of the research for approval (if applicable):

General conditions:

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, the following general terms and conditions will apply:

- *The study leader/supervisor (principle investigator)/researcher must report in the prescribed format to the BaSSREC:*
  - *annually (or as otherwise requested) on the monitoring of the study, whereby a letter of continuation will be provided, and upon completion of the study; and*
  - *without any delay in case of any adverse event or incident (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the study.*
- *The approval applies strictly to the proposal as stipulated in the application form. Should any amendments to the proposal be deemed necessary during the course of the study, the study leader/researcher must apply for approval of these amendments at the BaSSREC, prior to implementation. Should there be any deviations from the study proposal without the necessary approval of such amendments, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.*
- *Annually a number of studies may be randomly selected for an external audit.*
- *The date of approval indicates the first date that the study may be started.*
- *In the interest of ethical responsibility, the NWU-SCRE and BaSSREC reserves the right to:*

- *request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the study;*
- *to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process;*
- *withdraw or postpone approval if:*
  - *any unethical principles or practices of the study are revealed or suspected;*
  - *it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the BaSSREC or that information has been false or misrepresented;*
  - *submission of the annual (or otherwise stipulated) monitoring report, the required amendments, or reporting of adverse events or incidents was not done in a timely manner and accurately; and / or*
  - *new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.*

- *BaSSREC can be contacted for further information or any report templates via* 21081719@nwu.ac.za / 13128388@nwu.ac.za.

The BaSSREC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your study. Please do not hesitate to contact the BaSSREC or the NWU-SCRE for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely

Prof Lynnette Fourie

NWU Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Original details: (22351930) C:\Users\22351930\Desktop\ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY.docm
8 November 2018

File reference: 9.1.5.4.2

ADDENDUM B: TITLE REGISTRATION

NWU®
NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT
YUNIBESITI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA

Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom
South Africa, 2520

Tel: (018) 299-1111/2222
Web: http://www.nwu.ac.za

Higher Degree Administration

Tel: 0182994194
Email: 24510785@nwu.ac.za
Enquiries: MRS R JAFTA

22 April 2021

Dear MISS TSHILONGO
University number: 25837907

REGISTRATION OF TITLE

At the recent meeting of a relevant committee meeting of the NWU Faculty of Humanities your title was approved as follows:

Silent sufferers: a sociological exploration of gender-based violence against South African men by women

The above-mentioned title may under **no circumstances** be changed without consulting your supervisor and obtaining the approval from the relevant committee in the mentioned faculty, in regard of which this office must be furnished with the latest approved title.

In the instance that you wish to submit for examination, please inform your supervisor/promoter accordingly. *Also ensure absolute adherence to the prescripts of A Rule 4.10 for the submission of a Master's study and of A Rule 5.10 for the sumbission of Doctoral thesis.*

Upon approval of your supervisor/promoter, please ensure that the Notice of Submission form is submitted THREE months in advance to this office.

Note that the Notice of Submission form is availbale on the NWU DIY portal.

For ease of reference, herewith a reference to the following useful resources:

- General Academic Rules (A-reels):
- Manual for Higher Degree Studies:
- Policy on academic integrity:

We wish you a pleasant and successful period of study.

Kind regards

Registrar

NWU®
NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT
YUNIBESITI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
2021/04/22

Reference number: 7.1.11.1.2

ADDENDUM C:

INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT:
"Silent sufferers: a sociological exploration of gender-based violence against South African men by women"

ETHICS NUMBER: NWU-02052-20-S7
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Ms. Tshanduko Tshilongo
STUDENT NUMBER: 25837907
ADDRESS: 154 Khala Street, Pimville Zone 7, Johannesburg
CONTACT NUMBER: 063 784 1843

You are hereby invited to take part in a research project that forms part of my **Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Sociology** research. Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this project. Please ask the researcher any questions about any part of this project that you do not fully understand. It is very important that you are fully satisfied that you clearly understand what this research is about and how you could be involved. Also, your participation is **entirely voluntary**, and you are free to decline to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part. Prior to publication of the study's results (or the point that publication is in process), you may also withdraw the data you generate.

This study has been approved by the **Basic Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (BaSSREC) of the Faculty of Humanities of the North-West University (NWU Ethics number: NWU-02052-20-S7)** and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of the Ethics Committee of the North-West University's Faculty of Humanities. It might be necessary for the research ethics committee members or relevant authorities to inspect the research records to make sure that we (the researchers) are conducting research in an ethical manner.

What is this research study all about?

- The objectives of this study centre on an exploration of the lived experiences of self-identified biological males who are or have been victims of gender-based violence (GBV), with a particular emphasis on how they potentially experience violence in the hands of their partners/spouses; disclose and how masculinity notions may play a role in their help-seeking behaviours.
- This study will be conducted in South Africa and will involve either video conferencing, telephonic or face-to-face interviews, depending on the preference of each participant. Face-to-face interviews are subject to Covid-19 restrictions. The researcher has been trained to use the methods mentioned in the previous sentence.
- Approximately 15 participants will be included in this study. If the target sample size of fifteen (15) participants is reached, and there as still men who wish to participate, the researcher will oblige their request and conduct a further five interviews to determine whether data saturation has been achieved and whether further interviews are feasible.

Why have you been invited to participate?

- You have been invited to participate because you are a married/cohabiting self-identified biological male who is or have been a victim of gender-based violence (GBV) in the hands of a partner/spouse.
- There are no further exhaustive criteria for this study, i.e. your age, race, social class, gender identity, educational status, and nationality, will not exclude you from participating.

What will your responsibilities be?

- You will be expected to participate in a semi-structured interview, either through a face-to-face or through a video conferencing or telephonically interview (based on your personal preference), whereby you will answer questions that contribute towards the topic regarding your experiences as self-identified male who is or has been a victim of gender-based violence (GBV).
- After concluding the interview, the researcher may ask you to recommend the study to other friends or acquaintances who qualify to participate in the study and who might be willing to do so. In this regard, you will be requested to liaise with these people and request that they contact the researcher.

Will you benefit from taking part in this research?

- *The direct benefits for you as a participant will probably be*
  - Whilst the experience of reflecting on your experiences as self-identified male victim of gender-based violence (GBV) may be of value to you, your participation will hold minimal direct benefits for you.
  - A summarised version of the findings of the study will be made available to you by the researcher through a personal email once all is finalised.
- *The indirect benefit will probably be*
  - Participation in the study may provide the academic community with invaluable information that could ultimately lead to serve as guidance and empowering tool to persons with / topics associated with gender, violence and masculinities.

Are there risks involved in your taking part in this research and how will these be managed?

The risks in this study, and how these will be managed, are summarised in the table below:

Probable/possible risks/discomforts	*Strategies to minimize risk/discomfort*
Due to you having to spend between 45 to 90 minutes completing the interview through video conference, telephonically or face-to-face, it is possible that you may become bored or experience minor inconvenience to your daily routine.	The interviewer will ask every 20 minutes if the participant is still okay and if they require a comfort break (5-10 minutes), in which case the interviewer will phone back after an agreed time or resume the interview after a comfort break in the instance of a face-to-face interview. The participant may at any time request a comfort break or a call-back in order to deal with possible unforeseen distractions.
The sensitive nature of the questions may induce discomfort or stress.	Possible questions, on request, will be provided to the participants before the interview in order for them to familiarise themselves with the line of questioning prior to them giving consent. The questions are attached to this application as an addendum. The participant will also be informed that they may leave the interview or decline to answer the questions at any point during the interview with no repercussions. Participants will be referred to a qualified clinical psychologist, Angelina Maphula, if they experience any distress. If required, the researcher will also consult with the gatekeeping organisation to refer the participants to a qualified clinical psychologist, other than the one affiliated with the study (if they so request), who will be able to assist the participant should they require intervention as a result of the interview process. The first counselling with the above noted clinical psychologist, will be offered free of charge. They may continue to consult with this psychologist, if they wish to do so, but the additional sessions will not be paid by the researcher. Additional sessions of counselling will be paid for by the participants.
Possibility of exposure	All participants will have the option of individual video conference or telephonic interviews at a time and place of the participants own choosing, thereby minimising the possibility of exposure. Face-to-face individual interviews will be conducted at a time and place of the participant's choosing, which also minimises the risk of exposure. This is subject to the particular Covid-19 levels of restrictions and the comfort of the participant and interviewer to do so. During such instances, additional care will have to be taken to safeguard the health of both parties involved during the interview

	(e.g. the sanitisation of the immediate interview environment, taking the temperature of the researcher and participant (using a thermometer), observing 2-metre social distancing and providing the participant with a three-ply facial mask and hand sanitiser (with at least 70% alcohol content). The researcher will request that the participant chooses their own pseudonym at the beginning of the interview. This will be used throughout the transcription of the interviews, the writing-up of the findings and eventual reporting of the research findings. The actual names and any other biographical information that may identify the participant, will not appear in any discussion and publication of the research.

- However, I do believe that the benefits to you and to science (as noted in the previous section) outweigh the risks listed. If you disagree, then please feel free not to participate in this study. I will respect your decision.
- Should we learn, in the course of the research, that someone is harming you, or that you are intending to harm someone, then we must tell someone who can help you/warn the person you are intending to harm.

Who will have access to the data?

- *Anonymity (i.e. in no way will your results be linked to your identity)* will be ensured.
- *Confidentiality (that is, I/we assure you that we will protect the information we have about you)* will be ensured by assigning unique pseudonyms to each participant in order to ensure that their personal information is not accidently divulged to third parties.
- *Reporting of findings will be anonymous by* reporting as group findings and not as individual findings.
- *Only the researchers and* her supervisor will have access to the personal data of the participants.
- *Data will be kept safe and secure through* de-identification by research team, the data will be placed in a locked office, locked filing cabinet and master list secured elsewhere.
- *Audio-recorded data will be t*ranscribed by the researcher personally. As soon as the data has been transcribed and checked against the recording, the recording will be stored in a password-protected storage device. The transcripts will be stored on a password-protected computer for a period of five (5) years.

What will happen to the data?

The data from this study will be reported in the following ways:

- It will be written up in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy is Social Sciences with Sociology at the North-West University. Therefore, the data/thesis will be available at the university's repository in the library catalogue.

- The data may be reused for secondary research involving the same general topic. This will be undertaken by the researcher at a later stage.
- The data will be published in peer-reviewed academic journals. As is the case with the dissertation itself, the anonymity and confidentiality will be observed throughout the process.

Will you be paid/compensated to take part in this study and are there any costs involved?

You will be provided with a compensation of your desired network data bundles to use for communication through video conferencing (Skype, Zoom, Google hangouts, WhatsApp, or Vidyo) for the duration of the interview. The allocation of the amount of data bundles will be dependent on the device you will be using as a medium for communication.

How will you know about the findings?

- The general findings of the research will be shared with you by via email.
- If you would like feedback on your personal results, then you will be able to obtain this from the researcher via email.

Is there anything else that you should know or do?

- You may contact Ms. Tshanduko Tshilongo at 063 7841843 or tshandukotshilongo@gmail.com or her supervisor, Dr Jacques Rothmann at 018 299 1595 or 21081719@nwu.ac.za if you have any further queries or encounter any problems.
- You can contact the chair of the Basic Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (Prof Chrizanne van Eeden) at 016 910 3441 or chrizanne.vaneeden@nwu.ac.za if you have any concerns or complaints that have not been adequately addressed by the researcher.
- You will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own records.

Declaration by participant

By signing below, I …….. agree to take part in a research study entitled: "Silent sufferers: a sociological exploration of gender-based violence against South African men by women".

I declare that:

- I have read and understood this information and consent form and it is written in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- I have had a chance to ask questions to both the person obtaining consent, as well as the researcher (if this is a different person), and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is **voluntary** and I have not been pressurised to take part.
- I understand that what I contribute (what I report/say/write/draw/produce visually) may be reproduced publicly and/or quoted, but without reference to my personal

identity (e.g. conference presentations; seminars and publications in peer-reviewed academic journals).

- I understand that the interview will be recorded (Voice/Video).
- I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.
- I may be asked to leave the study before it has finished, if the researcher feels it is in my best interests, or if I do not follow the study plan, as agreed to.

Signed at (*place*) .....…..…….. on (*date*) ……...…….. 20....

....

Signature of participant **Signature of witness**

- The interview may be recorded (Video/Audio) ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**
- You may contact me again ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**
- I would like a summary of the findings of this research ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**
- I would like feedback on my functioning/wellbeing as reflected in the questionnaires I completed ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**

The best way to reach me is:

Name & Surname: _____
Postal Address: _____
Email: _____
Phone Number: _____
Cell Phone Number: _____

In case the above details change, please contact the following person who knows me well and who does not live with me and who will help you to contact me:

Name & Surname:

_____

Phone/ Cell Phone Number /Email:

_____

Declaration by person obtaining consent

I *(name)* ……...…… declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to _____ , encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above
- I did/did not use an interpreter.

Signed at (*place*) .....…..…….. on (*date*) ……...…….. 20....

....

Signature of person obtaining consent **Signature of witness**

Declaration by researcher

I *(name)* …… declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to _____, encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above
- I did/did not use an interpreter.

Signed at (*place*) .....…..…….. on (*date*) ……...…….. 20....

……..... …….

Signature of researcher ..... **Signature of witness**

ADDENDUM D:

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

SECTION A
BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Gender	
Sexual orientation	
Race	
Nationality	
Language/culture	
Age	
Relationship status	
At what age did you marry or cohabitate?	
Employment status	

SECTION B: OPINION-RELATED QUESTIONS

Personal history

Socialisation

Question 1.1 *Describe your upbringing as it relates to particular gender expectations during your childhood and teenage years.*
Question 1.2 *What is your view/opinion on traditional sex/gender roles for men and women? (i.e. are there specific expectations or rules that men and women should conform to?).*
Question 1.3 *In your opinion, what does it mean to be a man? (Probe for more traditional ascriptions, if any).*
Question 1.4 *Has your relationship been influenced by particular traditions in your culture? In what ways?*

Relationship experiences in terms of GBV

Question 1.5 *In your opinion, what do you understand by the term gender-based violence?*
Question 1.6 *What do you think are the causes of gender-based violence?*
Question 1.7 *Describe your relationship history with your partner (whether married or cohabiting).*
Question 1.8 *When did you first experience GBV? What was the nature of your initial experiences?*
Question 1.9 *Can you tell me about your most recent experience of GBV? What, in your opinion, are/were the causes for this?*
Question 1.10 *Please describe any particular incident/s related to your personal experience of GBV.*
Question 1.11 *What happened after the incident/how did it end?*
Question 1.12 *Was the violence inflicted in a physical, emotional, sexual or other ways? Please identify, if you feel comfortable doing so, any of these and explain the nature of your personal experience in this regard.*
Question 1.13 *How did the violence affect you? (e.g. Personally, at your workplace, interacting with friends and/or family, etc.).*
Question 1.14 *Looking back, how do you feel about the violence now?*

SECTION C: OPINION RELATED QUESTIONS

Disclosure

Question 2.1 *To whom did you disclose your experiences of GBV?*
Question 2.2 *Why did you decide to disclose to this person or people?*
Question 2.3 *How did other people react to you telling them about your experience of GBV?*
Question 2.4 *If you chose to tell others, what prompted you to do this?*

SECTION D: OPINION-RELATED QUESTIONS

Help-seeking behaviours

Question 3.1 *Have you tried seeking help from a professional, and why? (e.g. Psychologists and social workers, among others.)*
Question 3.2 *Have you reported the violence to the police? (Yes/No)?*
Question 3.3 *Why did/did you not report the violence to the police?*
Question 3.4 *What were your experiences when you reported the violence? (I.e. How did the police official react and treat you?).*
Question 3.5 *Have you ever tried calling helplines that could assist you with regard to your experiences associated with GBV? Please explain why.*

Question 3.6 *Who/what was your support system after the violence? (e.g. particular person, people or organisations).*
Question 3.7 *How did they support you?*
Question 3.8 *Are you still with the same partner (the person who inflicted harm on you?). Why?*
Question 3.9 *Describe your relationship with your partner at this point in time.*
Question 3.10 *How has GBV influenced your view/decision about your present or any future intimate relationships?*
Question 3.11 *What, in your opinion, were the reasons for the GBV towards you?*
Question 3.12 *Do you think that men are treated differently than women when it comes to reporting GBV?*
Question 3.13 *Please elaborate on your answer to the preceding question.*
Question 3.14 *What advice would you give to men experiencing gender-based violence?*
Question 3.15 *What recommendations would you give regarding GBV programmes for men experiencing gender-based violence?*

Thank you for participating in this interview.
If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

ADDENDUM E:

RECRUITMENT MATERIAL

LOOKING FOR PARTICIPANTS
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE RESEARCH STUDY

WHAT IS THE STUDY ABOUT?
We want to learn and explore the lived experiences of South African men who are or have been the victims of gender-based violence (GBV) in marital or intimate relationships.

WHY IS IT NECESSARY TO UNDERTAKE THIS STUDY?
The study is conducted in fulfilment of the requirements for a Doctoral degree in Sociology at the North-West University. The study will contribute to a sociological investigation of this under-researched topic and pressing social issue. The researcher wants to encourage a better understanding of the matter of GBV and to identify specific initiatives to further educate and sensitise people about the effects of gender-based violence (GBV) against men who are the victims of GBV at the hands of their partners.

WHO MAY PARTICIPATE?
1. Self-identified biological males who are or have been victims of gender-based violence/intimate partner violence.
2. They may be married or cohabiting (i.e. living together).

WHAT WILL BE EXPECTED FROM PARTICIPANTS?
1. Participants will be requested to consent to an interview (45-90 minutes) to share information about their experiences of gender-based violence as perpetrated by their partner. The interview take place in a face-to-face setting or via video conferencing or telephonically.
2. Due to the current Covid-19 restrictions, the use of Skype, Zoom, Vidyo, Google Hangouts or WhatsApp calls, will be the preferred method of conducting interviews, to protect the health of all parties involved.
3. The anonymity, confidentiality and privacy of every participant is guaranteed.

WILL PARTICIPANTS RECEIVE ANY COMPENSATION FOR THE INTERVIEW?
You will be provided with compensation of your desired network data bundles to use during a video conferencing or a WhatsApp call for the duration of the interview.

This research is being conducted by Ms Tshanduko Tshilongo, a PhD candidate at the North-West University. If you want to participate, please contact Tshanduko by calling 063 784 1843 or email her at tshandukotshilongo@gmail.com to learn more.

ADDENDUM F:
COUNSELLING SERVICES

Confidential

PS0097608 Angelina Maphula

Pr No: 0360511 Clinical Psychologist

BA (Vista University), BAHons (University of Venda), MA Soc Science in Clinical Psychology (North West University, Mafikeng Campus),

PHD (University of Venda (SA)/University of Virginia (USA)

angelinamaphula@gmail.com

Office No 6, Matodzi Phungo Complex

Thohoyandou

FROM : DR A. MAPHULA
CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST
TO : TSHANDUKO TSHILONGO
PHD: NORTHW-WEST UNIVERSITT
DATE : 27 AUGUST 2020

RE: CONFIRMATION TO PROVIDE PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

This letter serves to confirm that I will provide Psychological services to participants referred by Ms Tshanduko Tshilongo at a fee indicated below.
One on one 45-60 minutes session rate – R1009. 00 will be settled prior to service provision.
Counselling services will be provided based on condition that participants will be referred solely for counselling excluding forensic/legal assessment.

If in doubt or need further clarity, do not hesitate to reach out.

Dr A. Maphula
27/08/2020

ADDENDUM G:

PROOF OF LANGUAGE EDITING

Dr. JACKIE DE VOS

Academic copy editor / Akademiese teksredakteur

BA (Psychology & Communication studies), BAHons (Psychology) (NWU)
MEd, PhD (Educational Psychology) (NWU)
BAHons (Translation) (UNISA)
MA (Linguistics) (UNISA)

BA (Sielkunde & Kommunikasiestudies), BAHons (Sielkunde) (NWU)
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072 435 8024
Jackie de Vos
acadwritingconsult@icloud.com

EDITING

18 November 2022

To whom it may concern

This letter serves to confirm that the following thesis was revised:

Silent sufferers: a sociological exploration of gender-based violence against South African men by women

The onus is on the client(s) to work through the proposed track changes and to accept or reject proposed changes. Clients might amend the content after the editing process. Clients should also make certain that all sources/references have been cited.