INTIMATE PARTNER ABUSE AND MALE IDENTITY: EXPERIENCES AND PERSPECTIVES OF ABUSED MEN IN ZIMBABWE

by

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Abstract

Drawing primarily on post-structural feminist conceptualisations of identity and power, this study explored Zimbabwean men's comprehension of their own experiences of women-perpetrated abuse and the ways they construct meanings of such experiences in view of their masculine identities. To achieve this, the study specifically focused on five aspects:

1. The common conceptualizations of male identity in Zimbabwe;
2. The forms of women-perpetrated abuse experienced by men in Zimbabwe;
3. Male victims' perceptions of abuse perpetrated by women;
4. Strategies employed by the victims in response to the abuse;
5. The support needs of men who have been abused by women who are their intimate partners.

Interpretive phenomenology underpinned the qualitative approach adopted in this study. The main data sources were key informant interviews with selected individuals who, as part of their official jobs provided various services to abused men; semi-structured in-depth interviews with married and cohabiting men who had, in their recent past, been abused by their female intimate partners; focus group discussions with younger and older community members to solicit societal views on the markers of male identity in the Zimbabwean context. Tele-observation, which entails following television, social media websites and other media coverage of events and issues relating to the topic under investigation was adopted as an auxiliary method of capturing societal views on male identity and the types of abuse men are often subjected to by women in Zimbabwe.

One of the main finding of the study is that there is no single form of male identity in Zimbabwe. Rather, male identity is fragmented, fluid and unstable. It is also marked by vulnerability that emanates from the reliance among men on third parties, among other sources, to define what constitute manhood. The study also revealed that vulnerability among men is demonstrated when they experience the different types of women-perpetrated abuse which include emotional, physical, sexual, psychological, economic and legal abuse, inter alia. Despite the inherent multiplicity of meanings derived by male victims from their experiences of intimate partner abuse (IPA), the perceptions that stood out are that; IPA is an expression of women's power through both direct and indirect ways; and that women-perpetrated IPA is a basis for victims' questioned identity (masculinity). It emerged that there are multiple coping mechanisms adopted by male victims, which in this study are categorised into primary and secondary coping strategies. The former includes seeking help from the justice system, family and friends, and civil society and faith-based organizations. The latter, on the other hand, entails individual actions such as alcohol abuse, home-desertion, suicidal thoughts and divorce. All in all, these coping options were shown to be ineffective and/or limited. To this end, the support needs of men abused by their female intimate partners were identified as informational support – regarding possible remedial actions they may consider, emotional support,

instrumental support such as provision of temporary shelters, support through media coverage of cases of abuse against men, legal support and spiritual support.

The overall conclusion of the study is that inclusive approaches, interventions and programmes, which are open to acknowledging that persons of all genders can be victims or perpetrators of IPA, need to be adopted in the fight against IPA and all other forms of gender-based violence. The thesis concludes with recommendations for policy, practice and future research.

Dedications

To my ever-loving Mother and to the memory of my Grandparents (Mbuya & Sekuru Mapaona) and sister (Charity Chido).

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"In the beginning God…." His name is EBENEZER Lord, for thus far he has taken me. Through multiple episodes of illness, he fought for me. No word can express my gratitude for this great opportunity he afforded me and for taking me through this arduous journey to its completion. *WHAT AN AWESOME GOD!!!!!!!*

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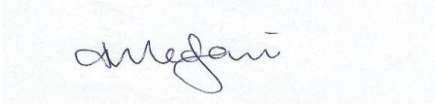
MAY GOD RICHLY BLESS YOU ALL

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SIGNATURE: DATE: 29 November 2019

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADVC — Anti-Domestic Violence Council

AIDs — Acquired Immune-Deficiency Syndrome

AU — African Union

CEDAW — Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women

CSA&G — Centre for Sexualities, AIDS and Gender

DHS — Demographic Health Survey

DVA — Domestic Violence Act

FAS — Femmes Africa Solidarité

GBV — Gender Based Violence

GSS — General Social Survey

HIV — Human Immunodeficiency Virus

HRP — Human Reproduction Report

IFRC — International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

IPA — Intimate Partner Abuse

IPV — Intimate Partner Violence

MHCW — Ministry of Health and Child Welfare

MHTE — Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development

MJLPA — Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs

MoPSE — Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education

MWCSD — Ministry of Women, Community and Small Enterprises Development

NCADV — National Coalition against Domestic Violence

PO-EU — Publications Office of the European Union

SDGEA — Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa

UCLA — University of California Los Angeles

UCSF — University of California San Francisco

UNESCO — United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNHCR — United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF — United Nations Children's Fund

UN-WOMEN — United Nations Women

USA   -United States of America

VFUs   -Victim Friendly Units

WCoZ   -Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe

WHO   -World Health Organization

WPR   -World Population Review

WVR   -World Violence Report

ZANU PF   -Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front

ZHRF   -Zimbabwe Human Rights Forum

ZIMSTAT   -Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency

ZimVAC   -Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee

ZWLA   -Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association

CHAPTER

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Intimate partner abuse (IPA) also known as intimate partner violence (IPV) is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) (2002:p.89) as any behaviour within an intimate relationship by either party that causes harm to the other party in the relationship. It occurs between two people who can either be in a heterosexual or homosexual relationship. Therefore, the perpetrators and victims can be men or women and may be dating, cohabiting or married (Howe et. al., 2012). This type of abuse, which generally occurs in private spaces, typically takes the form of behaviour such as acts of physical aggression (slapping, hitting, kicking and beating); psychological abuse (intimidation, constant belittling and humiliating acts); sexual abuse (forced intercourse and other forms of sexual coercion and manipulation); economic abuse (financially burdening a partner, denial of financial resources or support one is entitled to) and other controlling behaviours such as isolating a person from their family and friends, monitoring their movements or restricting their access to information or assistance (WHO, 2002; García-Moreno et. al., 2013). Although IPA is interchangeably referred to as domestic violence and gender-based violence (GBV), it is a subtype of these broad-brimmed categorizations of violence. Essentially, domestic violence occurs among members of the same family or household (Nybergh et. al., 2012), whereas GBV generally refers to all forms and dimensions of violence that is aimed at a person by virtue of their gender (McMahon, 2019). It happens in both private and public spheres, regardless of the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim.

The adverse implications of IPA on the health and socio-economic wellbeing of the victims and others within the same environments and communities at large, is a global concern (WHO, 2013; Buller et. al., 2014). Physical abuse is associated with injuries, permanent disabilities and even deaths of victims (Hines & Douglas, 2015; Krug et. al., 2015), while with particular reference to women it is linked to *inter alia* increased incidences of maternal mortality and still births (García-Moreno et. al., 2005; Shamu et. al., 2011; Issahaku, 2015). Sexual abuse, on the other hand, has many links with sexually transmitted infections like HIV and AIDS (WHO, 2002). This is primarily due to coerced sexual intercourse or indirectly interfering with one's ability or consent to use protection during intercourse (García-Moreno et. al., 2013). IPA is also a major risk factor for a variety of psychological diseases and conditions including depression, post-traumatic stress disorders and low self-esteem, which in some severe cases can result in suicide or attempts thereof (Hines & Malley-Morrison, 2001; Josolyn, 2011; Hines & Douglas, 2015). Additionally, people who witness IPA in the home, especially children, have a higher risk of developing a range of emotional and behavioural problems including anxiety, poor concentration and poor school performance (WHO, 2015). Furthermore, as noted

by de Macedo Bernardino et. al. (2016), victims of abuse are among the major users of health services in many countries. This places an enormous economic burden on national economies in terms of increased health care costs as well as lost productivity, such as in instances where one must miss some days of work or forgo paid work because of abuse. Although IPA may not affect the overall victims' probability of getting employed, the World Health Organization (2002) asserts that it does influence their ability to keep a job and their earnings.

Apart from the adverse health and economic implications on victims and the society at large, IPA is also associated with social ills such as destabilisation of families (Mukumbira, 2002; Jiri, 2013; Dewa, 2016), isolation, labelling and humiliation of victims (Black et. al., 2011). Marital instability, usually resulting in couples separating or unions dissolving, is a common feature among USA and South African families and one of the major contributing factors is IPA therein (Black et. al., 2011). Although this may be regarded as a common and general trend in the modern family patterns, it negatively impacts on an institution that is fundamental in the socialisation and identity formation of members of the society (Kendall, 2011). Concomitantly, even people who are remotely situated to the IPA settings are affected by it. Until recently, IPA in global south, had largely been perceived as a private matter between two parties (Mashiri, 2013). As such, victims would face disbelief, exclusion and lack of protection from families and service providers. Mashiri (2013) notes that IPA victims, especially women, often suffer rebuke or are accused by their partners' families of instigating the abuse. This partly depicts the subordinate position of women in relation to that of men in which some women within a patriarchal gender order, find themselves. On the other hand, male victims are often subjected to ridicule and other demeaning experiences upon seeking help (Musune et. al., 2016; Evans, 2019). Such experiences challenge men's masculine identities, which are engendered by and deeply embedded in the patriarchal social order, as they expose men's vulnerabilities as well as present evidence of changing gender roles and power relations between men and women. Yet the domain of IPA is not without controversy.

Despite the foregoing widely-documented negative outcomes, the domain of IPA remains complex and a subject of huge debate (Nybergh et. al., 2016) between proponents of the structural feminist movement and those from the Family Violence School. The debate centres on whether there is gender symmetry in domestic violence perpetration between men and women (Enander, 2011). Gender symmetry entails equal levels of aggression between men and women in intimate relationships (Enander, 2011; Swan et. al., 2018). The structural feminist movement maintains that IPA is essentially men's violence against women because statistically more women than men suffer abuse at the hands of an intimate partner (Kelly, 2002). Structural feminists are the proponents of the Duluth Model – an intervention method that focuses on changing 'men's perception of entitlement' (Kelly, 2002) to women. Their main thesis in this regard is that IPA is largely sustained by the cultural setup of patriarchy (Mullender, 1996; ZHRF, 2011). Hadebe (2017) avers that patriarchy is a social system which gives men power over women and organises society in such a way as to maintain men's dominance over women.

It essentially informs the gender relations between men and women and thus underpins the construction of masculine and feminine identities in societies within which it is present. From the structural feminist perspective, the patriarchal social order gives rise to gender inequality as a result of which men, by virtue of their male identity, wield power to dominate and oppress women, including through violent means (McHugh et. al., 1993; Mullender, 1996; Kimmel, 2001; Jewkes et. al., 2002; Dobash & Dobash, 2004; García-Moreno et. al., 2005; Vetten et. al., 2009; Connell, 2014).

Connell & Messerschmidt (2005a), proponents, among others, of the structural feminist movement, through their concept of 'hegemonic masculinity', posit that there are various masculinities or male identities in any given social context whereby some men exercise dominance and oppression over others. Connell's 'hegemonic masculinity' theory essentially places men in a hierarchy of four categories in which the dominant, culturally honoured and acceptable form of male identity (she termed it hegemonic masculinity) occupies the highest position of all as it exercises hegemony on and subordination of women and other men. The forms of hegemonic masculinity may vary from society to society. Nevertheless, the core element of the construction of ideal manhood is the 'relentless repudiation' of the feminine attributes – being weak, emotional and sentimental– and the perpetuation and support of heterosexuality and homophobia (Kimmel, 2008). While this form of masculine identity is glorified, for instance in the sporting fraternity, it is often also associated with aggressiveness and even violence in some cases. On the other hand, subordinate masculinity entails the ways of being a man that do not live up to the 'ideal' of what makes a man. Men that do not meet the societal expectations of a 'real man' or those that espouse feminine traits -exhibiting emotions as opposed to being stoic- are discriminated against. An example in this regard would be members of the homosexual community, whom Connell (2001) labelled as subordinated. Marginalised and complicit masculinities denote the exploited or oppressed groups of men that share many characteristics of hegemonic masculinity but do not have power due to either race, ethnicity or socio-economic status and those that accept the rewards of hegemonic masculinity –'patriarchal dividend'– without defending the patriarchal system (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005a), respectively. Connell's model of masculinities is renowned around the globe mainly due to its depiction of masculinity as a negotiated enterprise as well as its flexibility and adaptability. Nonetheless, regardless of the model's acknowledgement of variabilities among masculinities and its reformulation (Messerschmidt, 2018), it depicts men as occupying superior positions to that of women in the gender hierarchy (Connell, 2005) and use their position of power to perpetrate violence against women. Such a theoretical contention suggests that it is virtually impossible for women to be abusers, but only victims of male-perpetrated abuse (Lien & Lorentzen, 2019).

The Family Violence School, on the other hand, draws on Murray Straus' Conflict Tactics Scale studies, whose thesis is that IPA is not a gender issue but a human problem since men and women have equal levels of aggression against each other in intimate relationships (Gelles

et. al., 1993; Gelles, 2016). The family violence school is associated with such researchers as Gelles et. al. (1993); Cook (2009); Hines & Douglas (2009); Ross (2014); & Gelles (2016).

Evidence cross the world indicate that women use force and power both in lesbian (Burk, 1999) and heterosexual relationships to exercise control over their partners. For Straus (2010) abuse perpetrated by women has existed for almost three decades now since it was first reported after the National Family Violence studies in 1975. In her seminal work on IPA Steinmetz (1977) coined the phrase husband battering to refer to an 18th century British and French phenomenon where men who were known to be abused by their spouses were paraded in the market place on carts while condemning utterances were bellowed at them by the populace (Steinmetz, 1977). This would happen while the husband-batterer received praises for chastising the erring husband that could not fulfil his culturally prescribed roles of being strong, self-assertive and intelligent (Steinmetz, 1977). This provides evidence to the effect that in Europe as noted by Steinmetz (1977) IPA perpetrated by women has been existential since the 18th century. In the United States of America according to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (2015) one in every four men is physically abused by an intimate partner per annum. Furthermore, studies by Gelles et. al. (1993); Hines & Douglas (2010); Douglas et. al. (2012); & NCADV (2015b) point to the existence of IPA by women against men and the challenges faced by men who fall victim to it.

In Ghana as noted by Adinkrah (2008); Adinkrah (2012) women abuse their husbands or partners verbally by insulting them using derogatory terms, physically by beating or throwing objects at them and even killing them in what he referred to as mariticides. These abuses could be executed using such weapons as guns or there could be use of other men as accomplices and the main motive cited was the need to replace the husband with a new lover (Adinkrah, 2012). In Zimbabwe, the Demographic Health Survey 2012-2014 reported that 3.6% of the country's approximately 9 million women admitted to physically and sexually abusing their husbands whom at that time were not abusing them (Zimbabwe-DHS, 2015). Additionally, men are also abused by use of the institutionalised legal procedures. du Toit (2010) notes that women may make false accusations against men. Taking advantage of the fact that they are often perceived as the bona fide victims of IPA and the law enforcement agents often believe them (du Toit, 2010). Although these studies only indicate physical, verbal and sexual abuse that men are subjected to by women, they are often accompanied by emotionally abusive and controlling behaviours as part of much longer, systematic pattern of dominance and control (Adinkrah, 2007; Adinkrah, 2012). Johnson (2005) refers to the systematic control as intimate terrorism and for him it can be exercised by people of all genders.

Further evidence from the Global North General Social Survey Canada (GSS) (2008); Cheung et. al. (2009); Josolyn (2011); Silvers (2014); Gelles (2016); Hogan (2016); & Lien & Lorentzen (2019) and South Barkhuizen (2010); Kumar (2012); Chiramba (2016); Musune et. al. (2016); & Botha (2019) shows that although men also fall victim to IPA, there seems to be

continued controversy on whether their victimisation can be equated to that of women. Hooks (2000) and Cook (2009), while noting abuse of men by women, contend separately that there is no question that domestic violence directed against women is a serious problem and it is for this reason that it has been the main subject of research across the global divide. Such evidence, as noted above, is nonetheless crucial in this study as it points to the fact that, although women constitute the majority of IPA victims, the male gender does not guarantee men immunity to such abuse and that the gender-violence nexus is more fluid than stable.

1.2 Study Focus

1.2.1 Problem statement

Violence and abuse experienced by women has been the main subject of research across the global divide. However, emerging evidence shows that while men are the main perpetrators of IPA, women are also committing this type of abuse. Recent studies from countries in the Global North such as Canada (GSS, 2008), Japan (Cheung et. al., 2009), the United Kingdom (Hogan, 2016) and the United States of America (Gelles, 2016) confirm that men fall victim to violence and abuse by women, though at varying levels. For example, according to a recent British Crime Survey (Hogan, 2016), one in ten men in England and Wales reported that they had been victims of IPA within the year preceding the research. In the USA it is reported that one in every four men is physically abused by a female intimate partner annually (NCADV, 2015a). Countries in the Global South are not an exception. Studies from Ghana (Adinkrah, 2007), Zambia (Musune et. al., 2016), Seychelles (Chiramba, 2016), Fiji (Adinkrah, 2000) and India (Kumar, 2012), among others, have depicted men as being at the receiving end of women-perpetrated abuse. For instance, the Zambian Demographic Health Survey undertaken between 2011 and 2013 (Musune et. al., 2016) reported that 9 percent of Zambian women aged between 15 and 49 years stated that they had induced physical harm on their partners at least once in the year preceding the study. In India, Kumar (2012) noted that in 100 cases of domestic violence, approximately 40 cases involve men as victims.

In Zimbabwe, the 2015 Demographic Health Survey revealed that 3.6 percent of Zimbabwe's approximately 9 million women admitted to physically and sexually abusing their partners who were not abusing them at the time. This was an increase from the results of the same survey in 2011, which reported that 3 percent of approximately 8.5 million men in Zimbabwe had been abused by their female partners (Zimbabwe Demographic Health Survey, 2012). While this proportion may appear low, it is noteworthy that Zimbabwe is the Southern African country with the highest prevalence of violence against men (Zambia-DHS, 2015; Zimbabwe-DHS, 2015). Stigma and public ridicule could also account for the seemingly low statistics as they are often cited as reasons for men's underreporting. Pertinent to this proposed study is the fact that the noted abuse takes place within a patriarchal context in which men are regarded as endowed with power and authority which enable them privileged positions in all spheres of life, including the family, much to the subordination of women (Jewkes, 2002a; Kambarami,

2006). Abuse perpetrated by women in this context therefore somehow calls men's masculinity into question. Pertinent to this study, therefore, is a critical exploration of the meanings drawn by men from their experiences of abuse as well as examining the ways in which their masculine identities are constructed, expressed and negotiated in view of abuse perpetrated by women.

1.2.2 Research questions

The gender-violence nexus was examined using these questions: What meanings do men who face abuse perpetrated by women in Zimbabwe attach to their abuse experiences and how do they construct their masculine identities in view of the abuse?

1.2.3 Study aim and objectives

The main aim of the study is to explore the nexus between gender and violence by examining abused men's comprehension of their own experiences of abuse and the way they construct and negotiate meanings of such experiences in view of their masculine identities in a patriarchal context.

1.2.3.1 Specific objectives

1) To examine and delineate the common conceptualizations bordering male identity in Zimbabwe, centring on core ideations and expressions thereof.
2) To explore the various forms of women-perpetrated abuse experienced by men in Zimbabwe.
3) To examine the meanings attached by abused men to their experiences of abuse in relation to their culturally defined gender roles
4) To examine the mechanisms and strategies employed by men in response to the experienced abuse.
5) To identify the needs of abused men and examine the extent to which current support offered by service providers address these needs.

1.3 Post-structural feminist theoretical framework

Post-structuralism or post-structural thought represent a range of theoretical positions developed from and influenced by the work of Nietzsche (1977); Derrida (1997); Foucault (1997); & Baudrillard (2001) among many others. It does not have a unitary meaning. These theoretical positions, in their diversity, share a common polemic stance to the positivist conceptions of power, universalised and essentialised truth; and static categories of identity, which are mainly influenced by the ideas of the Enlightenment Age (Sawicki, 1991; Weedon, 1997; Graff, 2012). The shared principles among post-structuralists include, firstly, the notion of subjective identities. Post-structuralists conceive people's identities as subjects of cultural constructions i.e. they are always being produced and cannot have essential or core nature (Barrett, 2005). Thus, as Barrett (2005) notes, in post structural circles identities are subjective as opposed to being generic. Another defining principle of post-structuralism is that of deconstruction. Deconstruction is a term coined by Derrida (1997) to refer to the opening-up

of scrutiny to universal truth and meaning (Grosz, 1989; Wendt, 2008). As such, there is no single, but rather multiple explanations to social phenomena. Lastly, most post-structuralists share the Foucauldian conception of power, whereby power is viewed as multi-centred as opposed to being a position held by a certain constituted group of people (Featherstone & Trinder, 1997).

Post-structural feminism is a branch of feminism which draws from the above-mentioned principles of the post-structuralist thought. It is also associated with many divergent theoretical positions, but of interest in this study are those of Kristeva & Roudiez (1991); Weedon (1997); Halberstam (1999); McHugh et. al. (2005); & Butler (2011). As noted by Fardon & Schoeman (2010) the contribution of feminism to post-structuralism is the ability examine the way gender subjectivity interacts with power in its multiple manifestations, inclusive of which is violence and abuse (Weedon, 1997). As already noted above, the most significant contribution of structural feminism, i.e. radical, social and liberal feminism *inter alia*, to the conceptualization of IPA has been to 'conceptualise it as a problem of men's violence in the context of gendered social power relations in terms of male dominance and female subordination' (Itzin & Hanmer, 2000:p.360). Thus, IPA becomes men's violence against women (McHugh & Frieze, 2006). This theoretical notion obscures other forms of violence within families, including sibling abuse, elder abuse as well as violence by women (Featherstone & Trinder, 1997). Evidence of women perpetrated abuse in heterosexual relationships (Kelly, 2002; Lien & Lorentzen, 2019) and same-sex relationships (Renzetti, 1992; McHugh et. al., 1993; Renzetti, 1999; McClennen et. al., 2002; Frieze, 2005) points to a theoretical inadequacy in such structural feminist explanations of IPA. IPA has through research, proved to be more complicated to be pinned down as a male-perpetrator and female-victim conception. This calls into relevance theoretical explanations which accommodate nuanced conceptions such as the post-structural feminist framework. The post-structural feminist perspective presents a more disaggregated than a unitary depiction of IPA offered by structural feminist accounts (Featherstone & Trinder, 1997). This contributes to its relevance in this study because it locates women as actors rather than acted upon. As an advantage, the post-structural feminist approach enables the examination of the range of non-essentialised gender practices which operate in relationships between women and men and the contradictions or tensions between them (Featherstone & Trinder, 1997; McHugh et. al., 2005; Wooldridge, 2015).

Borrowing from Foucault et. al. (2012), the post structural feminists portray a nuanced conception of power whereby it is not available only to people of certain defined gender categories to the exception of others (Jones, 2004). In an intimate relationship, power is determined by the nature and circumstances of the relationship itself (Howard et. al., 1986). Any individual therein can embody it, but not constantly so. It is characterised by instability, fluidity and multi-centredness (Howard et. al., 1986; Weedon, 1997). According to Foucault et. al. (2012), people use tactics and strategies available to them to negotiate power based not only on gender but on other idiosyncratic factors such as their social location, political position,

age, physical capacity, class or economic position, as well as intellectual capacity, among others. Individuals may also derive and exercise power from the intersections of two or more of these aspects to produce identities that are fluid and multiple as opposed to those determined by the gender-violence dichotomy or gender stereotypes (Cannon et. al., 2015). Women and men as individuals are capable of being victimised in much the same way as they are capable of resisting victimisation and enforcing abuse themselves (Weedon, 1997; Cannon et. al., 2015). Such a conception of power and the emphasis on individual subjectivities (Wendt & Zannettino, 2014) contributes to the post-structural feminist theory's suitability and relevance to this study.

The post-structural feminist theory has analytical significance to the whole study. It is deployed to analyse male identity in Chapter 3; to examine men's experiences of IPA in Chapter 4 and the various vulnerabilities they are exposed to during help-seeking in Chapter 6; to examine men's nuanced comprehension of their experiences of IPA and their embodiment of positions of power and/or vulnerability in intimate relations in Chapter 5. The forms of power applicable to the post-structural analysis in this study include rewards power, punishment power, reproductive power, legitimate power and helpless power – to use Frieze and McHugh's (1981) terminology. These forms of power, as noted by Falbo & Peplau (1980), can be directly or indirectly expressed and can be embodied by persons of any gender, as illustrated in chapter 4 and 5.

Using a post-structural feminist approach to IPA, the study firstly endeavours to show that women cannot be understood as powerless and men cannot be depicted as having all the power in intimate relationships. Women can and do exercise power; sometimes based on their gender (Lien & Lorentzen, 2019), yet in some instances, by virtue of certain intersections between their gender and other above-noted aspects of their identities. More so, they may deploy power in ways similar to those used by men (such as to perpetrate IPA). Lastly, through employing the post-structural feminist theory, the study shows that abuse in intimate relationships cannot only be understood as 'a tool for control and power' (Kelly, 2002), but may also be explained as resulting from personal problems of perpetrators or the nature of the relationship. This theoretical framework thus promotes a nuanced and broad understanding of IPA as opposed to a narrow one, which attributes abuse only to men's use of their patriarchal power.

According to McNay (2018:p.39) agency, (which is inseparable from the analysis of power) is the 'capacity of a person to act or intervene in the world in a manner that is deemed relatively autonomous.' She further notes, that agency is not the same as people's automatic responses to structural forces. Rather, it indicates actions that are reflective and strategic which are undertaken by individuals in their everyday life. For Giddens (2013), although individuals have the ability to exercise power, such ability is dependent on one's position in the social structure. Agency operates within structural constraints and it should be understood in the context of its duality with structure (Giddens, 2013). Despite having some power or agency, women face

social constraints in their everyday life. Women, like men are held to certain gender standards and stereotypes non-adherence of which result in them facing social marginalisation. Therefore, women's power in this study is not envisioned as absolute. It conceptualised as one which is exercised within social constraints of patriarchy.

1.4 Significance of the study: Do abused men matter?

This study is closely connected to the researcher's observations of male victims of IPA who resorted to Zimbabwe's justice system as recourse during his employment at Kwekwe Magistrates' Court. It also follows his sociological interest in family studies and a realisation from a previous study that, despite the general appreciation and acknowledgment of the abuse perpetrated by women against men in Zimbabwe among academics (Mhaka-Mutepfa, 2009; Makahamadze et. al., 2012) and the society in general, few academic studies cover women-perpetrated IPA and men's conceptions around such abuse. Research shows that this trend is a common feature in many societies across the globe (Lien & Lorentzen, 2019) and that there are numerous possible reasons for such scarcity. Some of these are highlighted below.

IPA against men goes against structural and cultural expectations or gender stereotypes of passive and weak femininities in contrast to strong, stoic and supposedly violent masculinities (Brittan, 1989). It is an expectation, that a man is and must be 'strong enough to protect himself and his significant others' (Gelfand, 1992), failure of which then leads to him being perceived as 'weak and a failure' (Gelfand, 1992). This expectation is culturally endemic. Being a target of abuse by those one is expected to protect upsets such expectations and is presumed inexplicable. As a corollary, men's cases of abuse are supposedly incomprehensible and unbelievable compared to those of women (Barkhuizen, 2015a; McCarrick et. al., 2016; Huntley et. al., 2019). The way men are treated when they approach state institutions, which are constitutionally sanctioned to assist victims of abuse without regard for their gender or creed (such as police and other actors in the legal and justice system), bears testimony to such suspicion, as is shown in Chapter 6. Such treatment is also cited as one of the major reasons why men under-report their abuse (Barkhuizen, 2015a; McCarrick et. al., 2016; Evans, 2019).

Furthermore, research on women's abuse of men suffers severe funding deficits, as neither State nor civic organizations are as enthusiastic about it as they are about men's abuse towards women (Lien & Lorentzen, 2019). While state-bodies such as the police are key in capturing the statistics on IPA against women cases, that is not the case when women are the perpetrators, and this is well noted in Chapter 6.

Mullender (1996) argues that giving attention to IPA against men dilutes or deflects the already meagre attention paid to the abuse sustained by women. Other pro-feminist scholars such as Kimmel (2001); and Dobash & Dobash (2004) have also actively discredited women-perpetrated IPA by essentially arguing that it has relatively less negative impact on the target while further noting that discussions on the abuse of men by women downplay the abuse

against women and re-assert unjust patriarchal principles (Mullender, 1996; Kimmel, 2001; Dobash & Dobash, 2004). Evidence in this and other inquiries (Barkhuizen, 2010; Douglas et. al., 2012; Silvers, 2014; Lien & Lorentzen, 2019) however, indicates that men can be abused by women in intimate relations and IPA against men can have serious negative consequences. An assumption held herein is, therefore, that the victim-offender dichotomy in IPA cases between women and men respectively is not constant, but rather, as Muftić et. al. (2015) note, is unstable and characterised by overlaps.

There are four main reasons why studying men's meaning construction around their abuse experiences has significance in sociology. Firstly, the meanings attached by men to their experiences of abuse inform the ways they react to the abuse. Those who view women's abuse against them as acts of provocation either make attempts to retaliate or indeed fight back. Such aggressive and retaliative reactions often result in adverse consequences on men themselves (Connell, 2002; Prinsloo, 2017) and the exacerbation of violence against women and children which is already heightened (Kimmel, 2001; Tsui, 2014). A study on men's experiences thus contributes to the overall fight against gender-based violence.

Secondly, a study on men's construction of the meanings of their abuse experiences brings out their understanding of gender as an integral aspect in family relations and their interest, or lack thereof, in changed gender relations. This is in the context of growing calls for the involvement of men in the fight against IPA and in broader gender role transformation endeavours (Berkowitz, 2004; Hester, 2009; Flood, 2011). Researching and theorising about men will also contribute to attempts to make gender studies a study that not only looks at the subordinate status of women, but the substance of power in intimate relationships and how it is subject to a continuous process of renegotiation and reinterpretation.

Thirdly, although the gendered phenomenon of IPA has been widely studied, the focus – particularly in Africa – has mainly been on its nature, prevalence, and consequences as is experienced by women (Gelles, 2016), given the injustices women have historically faced as a result of patriarchal institutions and social relations (Mangezvo, 2015). Resultantly, intimate partner abuse experienced by men and its implications on their lives as men within patriarchal contexts, remain unknown. Therefore, this study presents insights on intimate partner abuse and on the counterintuitive aspect of men's vulnerability while simultaneously narrowing the paucity of studies on women-perpetrated intimate partner abuse in Zimbabwean and in global sociological literature.

Finally, as a result of its theoretical and methodological approaches, this study undertakes a critical appraisal of the structural theoretical insights to the gender-violence nexus while also illuminating the complexity and nuance in the fields of critical men's studies and gender-based violence, which have thus far accorded limited room for male victimhood. It cannot be overemphasised that the knowledge of women's use of abuse is theoretically informative of

the power dynamics that characterise hetero- or homosexual intimate relationships. In line with the post-structural feminist thought on power, the main argument in this thesis is that men who are abused by their female partners in Zimbabwe are a 'vulnerable minority' who may or may not have power to exercise dominance over their abusive partners. They also face societal rejection as they 'fail' to meet the patriarchal dictates of invincibility. Therefore, power positions in intimate relationships are not always based on gender, neither are they fixed, but should be understood as fluid and ever shifting, allowing women to sometimes also embody different forms of power therein (Howard et. al., 1986).

However, as Silvers (2014:p.20) cautions, this should not be taken to mean that all or most women are abusive of men. Rather, as she suggests, the argument should be that some women sometimes do abuse men and the subject is worthy of study given its implications on the targets and others in the occurring environments (Silvers, 2014). Additionally, as Fiamengo (2018) avers, researching abused men should be understood as an attempt to bring into discourse such issues that have had little attention in academia and policy thus far, and not an effort aimed at reversing the gains of the gender equality campaign.

1.5 Locating the study in Zimbabwean historical context of gender relations

Modern-day Zimbabwe is situated in Southern Africa and has inhabitants of predominantly African origin who themselves can be broadly divided into Shona, Ndebele and other demographically smaller ethnic groups. According to the World Population Report (2018), 70% of Zimbabwe's approximately 17 million people are Shona speakers, while 20% are Ndebele speakers. The other relatively smaller groups collectively constitute the remaining 10%. The Shona, being the largest group demographically and occupying much of the study areas, dominate discussions in this thesis. However, references to other ethnic groups is not precluded, especially considering the various cross-ethnic marriages and similarities in customs.

Although there are various historical versions tracing the origins of the Shona, the generally agreed upon one is that they are descendants of the Bantu people who moved south from central Africa (Bourdillon, 1987). The Shona people themselves are not a cognate grouping (there are the Karanga, Manyika, Zezuru, Korekore and Ndau). However, Bourdillon (1987) notes that their differences are merely dialectical. Essentially, their socio-cultural organization and customary practices are significantly identical (Bourdillon, 1987), warranting their reference as a collective herein.

Early Shona communities, before interactions with the Europeans, were clan and kinship based, with the hierarchy of authority including family heads, clan heads, up to the highest authority, which normally resided in the king or chief (*Ishe*). Families were typically large due to polygyny. Land and livestock were the major sources of livelihood through subsistence

farming. Typical of pre-colonial African groups, Shona communities had rudimentary forms of gender division of labour, with no serious conflict of roles, and a single-sex hierarchical structure was not a feature of their power relations. Rather, masculinities could conceivably be constructed as much around female as male dominance (Palmer & Birch, 1992; Shire, 1994). This challenges the common Western narrative that African women and children were labourers while men were loafers and drunkards. Whereas men occupied positions of authority in greater numbers, women were not without power and authority, both in the home and in public spheres (Gelfand, 1973; Bourdillon, 1987). Apart from being mothers and midwives – roles that were greatly venerated, women had exclusive control of the production and distribution of food in the home. Even to this day, in some parts of Shona communities, particularly in rural areas, the *'dura'* or granary (grain repository) is overseen by women. Both men and women were involved in farming, however, men would solely tend livestock and do the hunting (Gelfand, 1973). Such division of labour bears evidence to the effect that both men and women were protectors and providers in the home, roles of which were equally regarded as indispensable (Palmer & Birch, 1992). In the public sphere women also held positions of authority as regents, members of chiefs' council (Murambadoro, 2018), head-women, spirit mediums, chiefs and distinguished officials in traditional rituals (especially elderly women) alongside men (Makahamadze et. al., 2009). They would in some of these positions make decisions whose implications required men's recognition and respect. A prominent example is that of *Mbuya Nehanda,* a heroic spirit medium from Chiweshe in modern-day Mashonaland Central province, who spearheaded the early Shona resistance to British colonial conquest in the late 1800's, commonly known as the first *Chimurenga* (war) (Bourdillon, 1987; Vera, 1993; Keller, 2005). Reference to her is still made by political figures today, especially following her salient statement that she would resurrect her bones to fight a victorious war against the colonisers.

It is incontrovertible that colonisation impacted gender relations among the Shona people, although scholars differ regarding how men and women were impacted. Gelfand (1973); Bourdillon (1987); Keller (2005); & Makahamadze et. al. (2009) all concur that colonisation manipulated the Shona peoples' economy and tribal governance, thereby altering their culture. The commonly cited changes include but are not limited to land dispossessions and the adoption of tax laws requiring payment of hut and head taxes, which saw many men and women losing their chieftaincy, sources of livelihood and importantly, their culture. These changes had nuanced consequences for both men and women. Whereas men had to be migrant labourers in cities, mines and on farms in order to raise tax money and provide for their families, all work in the village had to be done by women. It was through this process that the value of women's work was eroded due to its lack of monetary gain compared to that of men. Even in political circles, women's influence compared to that of men became invisible as colonial administrators removed traditional leaders, installing those deemed loyal to them as replacements (Keller, 2005).

Some of women's power and authority lost during colonisation was not recovered despite the fact that they participated and even held commanderships during the second *Chimurenga,* and later, during the Year 1999 Land Occupations by ex-combatants, which was dubbed the third *Chimurenga,* alongside men (Sadomba, 2008; Makahamadze et. al., 2009). Nonetheless, the ZANU PF government at independence adopted some major legal and social reforms much to women's benefit. For instance, the establishment of the Ministry of Community development and Women's Affairs in 1981, the enactment of the Legal Age of Majority Act, giving women adult status for the first time after independence (they were treated as minors under their husbands during colonial rule), and the Matrimonial Causes Act enactment three years later, which allowed women to benefit from a share of the couple's property on divorce and upon the husband's death (Palmer & Birch, 1992; Nhongo-Simbanegavi, 2000). It is also worth noting that despite Zimbabwe having the death-penalty as part of its criminal justice system, women are constitutionally exempt from being executed. Only men can be sentenced to death in Zimbabwe.[1]

The political instability which has characterised Zimbabwe for the past two decades has also had socio-economic implications on men and women. All sectors of the economy have borne the brunt of corruption (Mutondoro & Chiweshe, 2017) and mismanagement by politicians has seen Zimbabweans, especially the urbanites, migrate in droves to other countries, with South Africa hosting the largest share of both legal and illegal migrants (Chikanda, 2006; Maphosa, 2007; Gukurume, 2010; Nhodo, 2014; Mangezvo, 2015). Mangezvo (2015) further notes that men constitute the majority of migrants leaving Zimbabwe, albeit facing nuanced experiences in their destinations. This arguably implies that a majority of women are left behind participating in the highly informalised economy as vendors, hawkers or illegal gold-panners among other activities that provide livelihoods for the greater Zimbabwean urban and rural communities (Jones, 2010; Nhodo, 2014). Such a description, however, only suits those of lower classes, whereas the elite, especially the politically connected, are largely unscathed. In fact, the recently held elections of July 2018 saw the highest number of women participants ever vying for both parliamentary and presidential positions. It is only open to question as to whether such political interest by women illustrates gender equality or depicts the endemic jobs scarcity that is characteristic of Zimbabwe.

The masculine vs feminine dichotomy in contemporary Zimbabwe is upset by women and men who unsystematically embody masculinities and femininities. For instance, the struggle of nationalist masculinities are mirrored and claimed by both men and women who participated in the second and third *Chimurenga* (Shire, 1994; Sadomba, 2008). Sadomba (2008:p.111) further documents how some women assaulted male farm workers who were perceived to be resisting the third *Chimurenga* land occupations in Mashonaland East province. Inferences can therefore be drawn following this argument that male identity does not always entail

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[1] The Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment 20 Act of 2013 *Section 3*

dominance. Alternately, vulnerability can be embodied by men and be part of their identity. An attempt is therefore made here to demonstrate that women have been and are active participants, holding significant amounts and various forms of power both in the domestic and public spheres. Their experiences and those of men in the home are multi-faceted, interwoven, mixed and fluid. They cannot only be understood as passive, docile and powerless in relation to men. Rather, as Hart cited in Forrest (2002) notes, power is an arena of contestations where individuals manipulate each other. On the other hand, such conceptualisation of power among men and women in Zimbabwe should not be perceived as gender parity in any way, given some patriarchal practices are still prevalent. IPA and male identity are thus interrogated within this political, economic and socio-cultural context.

1.6 Outline of thesis

In addition to this introduction chapter, this thesis has the following six additional chapters.

Chapter 2: Methodology: The chapter provides the key explanations to the various methodological choices, decisions made, and procedures followed, as well giving a brief picture of the context of the study. It ends with a reflexive account of the entire study process.

Chapter 3: Male identity: The chapter critically examines the concept of male identity by looking into the socialisation, masculinity crisis theory and the reality construction models in an attempt to delineate it. It locates the study in the Zimbabwean context through a brief historical reflection and various markers of male identity which include the body, marriage and fatherhood among others, which forms the crux of discussions.

Chapter 4: Forms of abuse experienced: The chapter presents men's nuanced accounts of the various types of abuse they have experienced at the hands of their intimate partners.

Chapter 5: IPA meanings among men: The chapter presents and interrogates men's negotiation and construction of meanings around the experienced abuse. It endeavours to bring together their gender identity constructions and their perceptions of abuse experiences.

Chapter 6: Coping mechanisms, help seeking behaviour and needs among men: This chapter engages the various options available to Zimbabwean men who find themselves at the receiving end of abuse in their intimate relations.

Chapter 7: Conclusion: This chapter sums up the major findings of the study and presents recommendations for policy, practice and future research.

CHAPTER

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the chosen research design, methods and techniques as well as the rationale for such choices. Details pertaining to the decisions undertaken, procedures and processes are laid out. It describes the inherent methodological limitations and how they were addressed for the realisation of the primary study questions. In the last section a critical reflection of the research process is presented.

2.2 Research design

Research design is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted (Kothari, 2004). It constitutes a guide or blueprint for the whole research process, dealing with such problems as: what the research questions are; what data are pertinent; what data to collect; how to collect the data; and how to analyse the results (Kothari, 2004).

The need to generate detailed accounts of men's perceptions of self within the context of abusive relationships and the perceived meanings thereof necessitated the adoption of a qualitative research design. Additionally, the study problem and questions demand a design that captures the texture or quality of Zimbabwean men's lived experiences of abuse in the home and their self-perception as men. That can only be delivered through a qualitative study. Such accounts and texture are best extracted from personal observations of, conversations and close interactions with information rich individuals and cases as opposed to deductions or inferences derived from figures and statistics as in quantitative studies. I deployed the in-depth interview, focus group discussions, tele-observation methods, described in greater detail in 3.7, to investigate, understand and interpret the interface between men's self-identities and their experiences of abuse by women in intimate relationships.

It is difficult to come up with a universally accepted definition of qualitative research because it is many things at the same time and may mean different things to different people. Denzin & Lincoln (2005:p.3) assert that, *"qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set interpretive, material practices that make the world visible."* Qualitative researchers valorise a multimethod approach to studying social phenomena, displaying profound commitment to the understanding and interpretation of human experiences from a naturalistic perspective (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Human beings are studied in their natural settings free from experimental manipulations, in an endeavour to make sense of phenomena in terms of the meanings they give to them. In keeping with their transdisciplinary or counter-disciplinary nature, qualitative studies draw on and utilize the approaches, methods, and techniques of such fields as phenomenology, ethnomethodology and

feminism among others, (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Researchers within this methodological paradigm employ a wide range of interconnected and interdisciplinary interpretive practices and techniques to reflect on and answer research questions to satisfy the demands of its rigor.

2.3 Methodological issues

A phenomenological approach is adopted as the philosophical standpoint rationalising all methodological decisions made in this thesis. Phenomenology can be generally understood as an endeavour to comprehend experience as *'lived'* (Morehouse, 2012:p.1). This can be achieved through gathering detailed descriptions of the ways in which people encounter, grasp, and convey the meaning of their world and those of other people in the same environment and their thoughts, feelings, actions and perceptions (Nicholson, 1997). Thus, as Creswell (2013) notes, a *phenomenological study* depicts the shared or common meanings of a particular phenomenon or 'object' (Van Manen, 1990:163) of experience among different individuals.

The major aim of a phenomenological research approach is to overcome the naïve acceptance of the social world and its idealisations and formalisations as meaningful beyond question (Merleau-Ponty, 1962) by accessing first-hand understanding of human behaviour through nuanced perceptions. This approach is often used in identity, life transition and sexuality studies (Shinebourne in Frost, 2011) among others and it is foundational in answering research questions that deal with personal perceptions derived from experiencing a certain phenomenon (Janowitz, 1970). The approach was thus deemed appropriate for the investigation of experiences of intimate partner abuse among men in Zimbabwe because of its potential to capture the subjective realities of the men's social lives.

2.4 Study sites

The study was undertaken in two urban areas in Zimbabwe namely Harare and Kwekwe. Harare is Zimbabwe's capital city and economic hub and hence a major migration destination for people from both rural and urban areas of the country who are in search of employment and other livelihood opportunities. Harare's population of approximately 2 million people, which amounts to 14.2% of the national population (ZIMSTAT, 2012) comprises of people from diverse ethnic descents. Kwekwe is located in central Zimbabwe, in the Midlands province. The town's population of approximately 100, 000 people (ZIMSTAT, 2012) is made up of both Shona and Ndebele speakers. Although Kwekwe is historically an industrial town, many of the big firms were either closed or are operating at below 50% capacity at the time of the study due to the unfavourable economic and political environment prevailing in the whole country. As such, the major economic activity abounding was informal gold mining *(chikorokoza)* and street vending.

The choice of these two urban areas as research sites for the study hinged on the fact that both centres are in the provinces that often recorded the highest number of intimate partner physical abuse cases in Zimbabwe between the years 2010 and 2015, as shown in Tables 2.1 and 2.2

below. According to the Zimbabwe Demographic Health Survey Report (2015), Harare and Midlands had 16.4% and 12.3% of the 5 016 total national reported cases of IPA against men respectively in 2010. The corresponding figures in 2015 were 16.7% and 12.8% of the 5494 total national reported cases. These figures are relatively high considering that they reflect women's reports of their own use of physical abuse against men. An assumption would be that the cases would have been even higher had men been interviewed as well. Furthermore, these figures only show physical abuse to the exception of other forms of abuse, i.e. emotional, psychological, economic and/or financial *inter alia*, giving the impression that abuse against men could be more prevalent than the statistics show. Tables 2.1 and 2.2 below show that the two provinces maintained positions amongst the leading provinces when compared to other provinces such as Bulawayo, which maintained all-time low figures of 4.3% and 4% of the total national reported cases in 2010 and 2015 respectively (Zimbabwe-DHS, 2015). It should be noted however, that the findings in this study do not show any significant location-based differences between participants from Harare and those from Kwekwe.

Table 2.1 Cases of IPA against men by province, Zimbabwe 2010-11

Ever-married women aged 15-49 who committed physical violence against their husband/partner when he was not already beating or physically hurting them, according to women's own reports per province, Zimbabwe 2010-11

Province	Number of cases
Matabeleland South	202
Bulawayo	221
Matabeleland North	229
Masvingo	524
Mashonaland Central	540
Mashonaland East	595
Midlands	619
Mashonaland West	625
Manicaland	721
Harare	839
Total	**5115**

SOURCE: Zimbabwe Demographic Health Survey Report (2015)[2]

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[2] Zimbabwe Demographic Health Survey 2010-2011 *Final Report. Harare: Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency p. 338*

Table 2.2 Cases of IPA against men by province, Zimbabwe 2014-15

Ever-married women aged 15-49 who committed physical violence against their husband/partner when he was not already beating or physically hurting them, according to women's own reports per province, Zimbabwe 2014-15

Province	Number of cases
Matabeleland South	198
Bulawayo	240
Matabeleland North	249
Mashonaland East	547
Mashonaland Central	550
Masvingo	675
Mashonaland West	691
Midlands	708
Manicaland	732
Harare	905
Total	**5495**

SOURCE: Zimbabwe Demographic Health Survey Report (2012)[3]

2.5 Sampling

Sampling in social research is a process that involves obtaining, accessing and selecting research participants, from a larger population to which they belong using one of several ways in order to either be representative or non-representative of the cosmos from which they are selected, (Payne & Payne, 2004). The impossibility of studying every individual in a population is axiomatic, hence, social researchers concentrate on small subsets of elements (in this case individuals) when studying phenomena of their interest. The questions regarding, how and why particular individuals are selected to participate are pertinent in every research endeavour and they form the crux of this section. It is key as Morris (2015) notes, that the chosen individuals be in a position to provide data that enable the researcher to answer the research questions. As a consequence of the different categories of participants in this study, two sampling techniques were employed. These are purposive and convenience sampling.

Purposive or judgemental sampling was used to recruit key informant and male victims of IPA and to identify and select media reports covering IPA against men. This sampling technique is utilised in social research when the individuals selected, meet a particular criterion based on the researcher's prior knowledge and judgement (Bryman, 2012). It is sometimes referred to as fit-for-purpose sampling, (Olsen, 2011), because it is often instrumental in non-representative studies where participants are deliberately chosen due to their being interesting or suitable. It cannot be overemphasised that counsellors, pastors, police department are

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[3] Zimbabwe Demographic Health Survey 2012-2014 *Final Report. Harare: Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency p. 271*

suitably informed on IPA for they constantly deal with such matters and therefore know more about it. It also goes without mentioning that, men who are abused by women in intimate relationships comprised the primary participants in this study for they are the ones who could provide accounts of the abuse experienced as well as their interpretations thereof. The requirements for key informants were having dealt with IPA while male victims had to have experienced IPA perpetrated by women.

An advantage of this sampling technique is that it is non-restrictive. It gives the researcher leeway to define the sample and determine the sample size as deemed necessary, (Olsen, 2011). Overall, purposive sampling is suitable for qualitative phenomenological studies as the current study in which sampling for proportionality is not a necessity, (Payne & Payne, 2004). Rather, in such a study people who are competent are carefully and deliberately selected as participants to ensure that the information they provide is relevant in answering the research question. Thus, the male victims and key informants were competent in and vested with first-hand knowledge on the types and experiences of IPA.

Another category of participants comprised community members who were recruited using convenient sampling. Bryman (2012) notes that convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling technique whereby participants are selected because of their convenient accessibility and proximity to the researcher. The selection criteria followed for this group is broad and the study population was too large, making it impossible to include every individual. Hence, for this reason, the fact that it is inexpensive and that participants were readily available, convenience sampling technique was found to be most appropriate. Since the researcher was residing in the study sites on a fulltime basis, he approached and requested a total of 25 men and women suspected of having attained the age of 20 years to participate in focus groups which were then organised by age and gender. The sample of these participants was community based and details of the individuals who constituted it are provided in section 2.6.1.3.

2.6 Data sources

The qualitative data used in the study was derived from a combination of four sources of data: (i) key informant interviews; (ii) in-depth interviews with heterosexual male victims of IPA; (iii) focus group discussions with selected community members; and (iv) media coverage on IPA against men in the selected study sites. All data were collected during fieldwork undertaken between March and August 2018.

2.6.1.1 Key informant interviews

Key informants can be described as people who have first-hand in-depth knowledge and understanding, and can provide insight about a phenomenon under study (UCLA, 2010). In this study, these were individuals who, as part of their job, provided various services to abused men. A total of eight key informants were interviewed for the study: In Kwekwe, one pastor, one police officer and one counsellor at a local men's group, while in Harare there were five

key informants comprising of two pastors, one police officer and two representatives of men's interests groups namely Varume Svinurai and Padare. The key informants were purposively selected and recruited for participation. They further assisted in the purposive sampling of identified male victims of IPA.

The key informants comprised of 3 women and 5 men and were of ages above thirty years. All of them were employed professionals who participated in their official capacities as leaders, managers or senior employees in their organisations. The least educated among them had a fist degree while the highest qualification was a PhD degree.

The interviews with these key informants were set up after a series of initial email and telephone exchanges through which the researcher diligently explained what the study is about, what it entails and why the contact person was chosen. Where potential key informants agreed to meet the researcher face-to-face, he re-conveyed the essence of the study to the key informants, who upon informed consent (see Appendix A), were interviewed using semi-structured interview guides (see Appendix B). The interview guides were designed to solicit information on the basic characteristics of men who are abused by their intimate partners, the common types of abuse reported by men, the services abused men typically seek, the support services offered by the key informants and the key informants' views on the adequacy and effectiveness of these services. All interviews were conducted in English, which is the main official language in Zimbabwe, although both the researcher and key informants did occasionally use Shona and Ndebele expressions to emphasise some points. All key informant interviews were conducted with permission from the heads of the identified institutions and organisations. However, while some were reduced to writing, others were verbal approval. Written permission from Padare is marked as Appendix C while that from Varume Svinurai is Appendix D.

2.6.1.2 In-depth interviews with male victims

An in-depth interview is a research method which allows the participant to formulate any answer of their choice rather than to select from a set of possible answers (Morehouse, 2012). It was adopted in this phenomenological study due to its open-endedness (Morehouse, 2012), lack of prescriptiveness (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) and flexibility. Such features enhance and justify its appropriateness. As a result of the flexibility of this method, the researcher had an opportunity to probe participants' responses in search for the deeper subjective meanings (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) of and dimensions to the forms of abuse experienced by men in line with the research objectives.

In-depth interviews were conducted with a total of 34 men who as noted above were purposively identified and selected based on the following basic criteria:

- Were, during the study period or had previously been, in a union (married or cohabiting) for at least one year. A year was deemed a sufficient timeframe for one to make inferences on whether a partner's behaviour amounts to abuse or not.
- Aged at least 30 years. This criterion finds its basis in the fact that the average age at first marriage or cohabitation for men in Zimbabwe is 28 years (Zimbabwe-DHS, 2015).
- Had some experience of any form of abuse perpetrated by their female intimate partners.
- Had at some point sought help from a relevant service provider (e.g. Church, civic organizations, police).

The men were identified and selected with the assistance of key informants who were pivotal in mediating between the participants and the researcher, as noted above. The key informants contacted the men on his behalf and in some cases provided him with the contact details of those who consented to participation. The researcher, thus, gained access to male victims through the assistance of the key informants. Their liaison was crucial to the researcher's access to this otherwise hidden population, as Hines & Malley-Morrison (2001) contend that men who find themselves at the receiving end of abuse are usually reluctant to tell their stories to strangers (like researchers) unless a respected person introduces them. As was the case in this study.

Using the contact details obtained from the key informants, interviews with male victims were set up via telephone calls and the WhatsApp social media platform. Although an office space for the interviews was secured, all participants were comfortable with having the interviews at their own chosen locations. The researcher thus travelled to the places which were convenient for the participants. A total of 34 interviews with abused men were conducted, of which 21 were in Harare while 13 were conducted in Kwekwe. Of the 34 men, 20 were married while 14 were cohabiting. Thirty of the interviews were personal face-to-face interviews while four were telephonic because the men were working in places out of the study centres during the time of study, and for some that was the best and most comfortable way. In line with the nature of in-depth interviews, all the interviews were conversational, and Shona and Ndebele were the main languages used to conduct the interviews based on the participants' preferences. The researcher was very attentive to the language expressions and words used by the men, their tone changes (Kondora, 1993) and other non-verbal cues. The interviews were conducted following a semi-structured in-depth interview guide (Appendix E) designed to capture men's understanding of their gender identity; the various types of abuse they experienced; their comprehension of the abusive experiences, as well as their reaction to the abuse, including help-seeking and disclosure behaviours. The interviews were preceded by the participants giving informed consent to participate in the study (see Appendix F).

2.6.1.3 Focus group discussions with community members

A focus group discussion (FGD) or group-interview is a research method used to explore general views, opinions, beliefs as well as attitudes of population subgroups towards a focused topic (Bender & Ewbank, 1994:p.63). The views of community members of both genders and different age cohorts were deemed critical in this study in answering the question regarding the social markers of male identity in the Zimbabwean context. This is due to the fact that identity construction is significantly interactional and modelled around societal perceptions of being (Wetherell, 1996). Community members were also pivotal in casting light on the general perceptions around gender and gender relations between men and women within families and in the broader Zimbabwean context. Views from men and women of different age cohorts gave a broad generational reflection of what constitutes male identity in Zimbabwe. The specific age criterion was based on the assumption that those who have attained adulthood are in a position to hold some sound view of what constitutes 'being a man'. To this end, community members were recruited using convenient sampling as noted above. The participants were inclusive of the researcher's friends, neighbours, former workmates, strangers met on the streets and on buses i.e. en-route to and from the city centre, as well as social media friends. Thus, all the 31 community members were selected based on the categorisation criteria noted below.

- Category 1: young men (aged 20-40 years)
- Category 2: young women (aged 20-40 years)
- Category 3: older men (aged 41+)
- Category 4: older women (aged 41+)

Using the above categorisation, a total of five FGDs were conducted: one in Kwekwe; three in Harare and one in the virtual space using the *Synchronous WhatsApp Group*. The FGDs were constituted and conducted as follows:

- One discussion (with seven older men) was held in Kwekwe
- Three discussions were held in Harare (Each discussion had six participants. One with young women, one with older women and one with older men)
- One discussion was held in the virtual space using *Synchronous WhatsApp Group* (with six young men)

2.6.1.3.1 WhatsApp Group

WhatsApp is an application which enables communication through instant messaging between individuals who possess smartphones (Bouhnik et. al., 2014). The application has attained rising popularity across the world among people of all age groups (Bouhnik et. al., 2014). However, in Zimbabwe it is most popular among young adults. WhatsApp, just like other social media platforms, has a feature which enables group communication. Such WhatsApp groups can be created by any interested individual who becomes the group's administrator and the group can have a general or specific focus (Seufert et. al., 2015). The administrator needs to

have members' WhatsApp contact numbers through which they are empowered to add or remove members to the group. Apart from this, all participants enjoy equal rights and they can receive all messages sent to the group to which they can also respond (Bouhnik et. al., 2014).

A Synchronous WhatsApp group was not part of the research instruments initially considered in this study and was resorted to only after the realisation on the part of the researcher that young men would not commit to a face-to-face discussion, citing lack of time. It nonetheless proved efficient and effective as there was no need for a venue or other group dynamics that are associated with face-to-face discussions such as a specific time or appointment for the discussion. Participants in this group were six and they were largely the researcher's friends, their friends and peers from both Harare and Kwekwe and whose WhatsApp contacts were already in his possession or could be accessed through third parties. They were all not married. While two of them were employed, four were university students. Participants of the Synchronous WhatsApp group (Stewart & Shamdasani, 2015:p.162) would log-in and comment on the ongoing discussion, giving their perceptions anytime convenient to them.

The contact or face-to-face group discussions were held at venues convenient to the participants. The discussions were conversational in nature and were conducted following the FGD guide in Appendix G. All FGDs were audio recorded with the consent of the participants who had also given informed consent to take part in the discussions (see Appendix H). Those who participated in the Synchronous WhatsApp Discussion had the consent form individually sent to them to be returned after signing. It was only after they returned a signed consent form that they would be added to the group to participate. All messages sent to the Synchronous WhatsApp group were exported into a Microsoft Word document and constituted part of the FGDs transcripts. At the end of the discussion and when there was no new information shared, the researcher removed all group members and deleted the group as it had served its purpose. The face-to face-discussions lasted, on average, two hours in duration and were largely conducted in Shona.

2.6.1.4 Tele-observation (media coverage)

For the purposes of this study, tele-observation was adopted as the conscious effort by the researcher to follow television, social media websites and other media coverage of events and issues relating to the topic under investigation (Jaji, 2009). It was deployed as an auxiliary method of capturing societal views on male identity and the types of abuse men are often subjected to by women in the study sites for the length of the study period. Facebook, Twitter and YouTube posts and comments on male identity and IPA against men were cases of interest. Notes from these platforms were kept in a memoir.

Global technological advancements have unlocked endless possibilities through the internet and other virtual worlds, making the passage and harvesting of information easier (Stewart & Williams, 2005). The media cannot be ignored when gathering information on societal

perceptions, as the media is one among the major vectors of community views. Hence it becomes a resource from which social data and evidence can be tapped. Social media, for instance, has also become a dominant part of people in recent times as they spent most of their time on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube (Ahmed, 2019), to mention but a few. Since this study focused on the urbanites, tapping into these platforms assisted in capturing their perceptions, which are not usually expressed through other means. Urbanities are also the majority of social media users, as they take advantage of their location to utilise amenities such as internet connections.

2.7 Data analysis

Data analysis is a raw data management process which incorporates transcription, translation (where necessary), text coding and meaning making (Smith & Osborn, 2015). Thematic data analysis was adopted in this study. This method of analysis entails the examination of data to extract main ideas which are distinguishable across transcripts (Bryman, 2012). The themes were identified through the processes of comparative examination (Morehouse, 2012:p.88) and counterintuitive data exploration of transcripts.

After data collection the audio recordings of all the interviews, FGDs and notes from tele-observation were translated to English where necessary and transcribed personally by the researcher. After transcription, the transcripts were subjected to idiographic examination, where particular attention was paid to illuminating the repetition of words or ideas, use of rich language, contradictions in words or ideas and eye-catching or interesting issues raised by participants in their accounts. This is a process referred to as coding and is characterised by breaking down data into 'units of meaning' (Morehouse, 2012:p.87) which are then given labels or codes. Moustakas (1994) describes this process as an encounter when the researcher goes through the transcriptions and highlights 'significant statements', sentences, or quotes which build on the research questions and objectives. The ATLAS.ti software was instrumental in assisting the successful execution of this process. It was further used to produce pictorial presentations of relationships between various codes, as noted in Chapters 3 and 4.

Having coded the transcripts from all of the data sources, processes of constant comparative examination (Morehouse, 2012:p.88) and counterintuitive data exploration of the transcribed responses were embarked upon. These processes did not form separate data analysis methods but were part of the procedure of identifying themes within the triangulated data. Whereas constant comparative examination entails consciously searching for recurrences, similarities and differences of the sequence of the coded text across transcripts (Morehouse, 2012), counterintuitive examination involves identifying texts which contradict dominant trends across transcripts or literature in order to understand how such contradictions may be explained (Love, 2009; Doty et. al., 2018). It is through these processes that the interpretation and making sense of the data and subsequent development of clusters of meanings into themes was done.

It is important to note that despite the foregoing series of data analysis events leading to the identification of themes and the interpretation and sense making of the data, in a phenomenological study of this nature, data analysis is essentially done throughout the entire study. Meaning making in an interpretive study is not the prerogative of the researcher alone, rather it is shared between the researcher and the researched (Lopez & Willis, 2004), hence it commences long before transcriptions are done. As the researcher continued to examine and re-examine the transcripts, he grappled with some of the questions suggested by, Seidman (2006:p.128-129), such as: What connective threads are along the experiences of the participants? How do I understand and explain these connections? What do I understand now that I did not understand before I began the study? What surprises have there been? What confirmations of previous instincts? How have the findings been consistent with literature and also how have they been inconsistent? How have the findings gone beyond literature? In answering these questions, ideas and themes emerge in relation to the research questions and objectives.

2.8 Ethical considerations

Ethical concerns are part of the basic practices of doing social research (Denscombe, 2009) in order to maintain the inherent dignity, wellbeing and safety of human participants (Morehouse, 2012). To adhere to the ethical principles of social research, informed consent was sought from all study participants after they were briefed about the research aims and procedures. Additionally, voluntary participation and the participants' privacy and confidentiality were assured (see Appendices A, F and H). All noted ethical standards were strictly observed in the manner noted below.

The study proposal, the information forms, the interview and FGD guides were submitted together to the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Pretoria for ethical clearance, which was granted on the 7th of March 2018 with the clearance number GW20180225HS (see Appendix I). During the data collection process, the purpose of the research as well as the rights of the participants with regards to the study, as outlined in the information sheets and consent forms, were read out to participants in their language of preference as a briefing procedure before commencement of each interview and FGD. It was specifically clarified that participants would derive no personal or direct benefits from participation in the study and that participation was exclusively voluntary.

All participants were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time with no consequences. Confidentiality was strictly adhered to during the data collection, coding and analysis handling process through to the thesis production. The personal interviews and group discussions recordings were all labelled using numbers to replace names and locations of participants and interviews respectively. In text, pseudonyms are used to ensure participants' privacy. Real names of organisations are however used in this study, as consent to that effect was given.

Given the nature of the subject it was anticipated that some of the participants, particularly abused men, could feel distressed during, or at the end of, the interviews. To this end, arrangements were put in place with the department of Social Services and a private counsellor (Mr Wilfred Chinhanho), who volunteered to provide counselling and/or debriefing services to all participants who needed them, and this information was communicated to the participants at the beginning of the interviews. However, none of the participants requested such services.

CHAPTER

3 CONCEPTUALISATION OF MALE IDENTITY IN ZIMBABWE

3.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the concept of male identity by looking into the socialisation, masculinity crisis theory, and the reality construction model in an attempt to delineate the concept further. It advances the post-structuralist theoretical argument that male identity is not unitarily constituted, but manifests in multiple forms. It further feeds into the study contention that power is fluid, ubiquitous, and numerously centered allowing women in intimate partnerships to contribute to men's identity construction by using some of the multiple power centres as noted in Chapter 1. The significance of this chapter lies in the fact that it provides the background for an enhanced comprehension of women's use of abuse against men and of men's understanding of such abuse, which forms the objective of the next chapter. Without a delineation of what constitutes male identity among Zimbabwean men, understanding their experiences of abuse may be problematic. More so, violence and abuse in intimate relationships has been conceptualised as a function of masculinity and men's quest to prove that they are real men. It is therefore pertinent to explore abused men's self-identity and how it shapes the meanings they derive from being abused.

3.2 Delimitating male identity

Gender is one of the social attributes (others being class, race, ethnicity etc.) used to identify individuals and group of people. As noted by Boskey (2018), it entails a person's feeling or internal sense of self as a man, woman, transgender or non-gender within, a particular cultural context. It is a collection of ideations of how women and men should be (Horrocks & Campling, 1994). Such ideations, however, may not provide a full representation of men and women's reality (Khunou, 2014). As such gender categories are multiple, a reality which negates and invalidates the trite men-women binary (Horrocks & Campling, 1994). However, the object of this chapter lies in delineating male gender identity. In simplistic and general terms, male identity is a constellation of ideas regarding the way men should behave, be treated, appear, what they should succeed at and what attitudes and qualities they should have (Horrocks & Campling, 1994). For Kessler and McKenna cited in Brittan (1989:p.20), it is men's 'interpretations and acting out' of culturally accepted ways of being. Such a definition of male identity is not without controversy and complexities. Various writers and academics (Brittan, 1989; Barker & Ricardo, 2005; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005a; Chitando, 2007; Ratele, 2016; Adamson, 2017; Boskey, 2018; Mfecane, 2018) attest to its fluidity with regards to time, space and cultural context. However, natural or biological attributes such as sex are also considered by some as indispensable components of male gender identity (Reeser, 2010;

Mfecane, 2016). Although the phrase male identity is sometimes used interchangeably with masculinity in sociological literature and in gender studies to signify a collective identity for men, Brittan (1989:p.20) considers these to be distinct but related concepts whereby male identity forms an integral component of masculinity, which is broader. To the extent that there are multiple masculinities as opposed to a single form, as Brittan (1989); Barker & Ricardo (2005); Connell (2005); Chitando (2007); Morrell et. al. (2012); Ratele (2013); & Mfecane (2016) propose, masculinity and male identity are, for the purposes of this study, considered to be the same. This decision is made with full knowledge of the possibility of masculinity being embodied by people of other genders, i.e. women, transgender and non-gender individuals.

Brittan (1989), proffers socialisation, masculinity crisis theory and the reality construction model as possible ways of conceptualising and 'theorizing' male identity. The socialisation or structural perspective emphasises the adoption of gender identity through learning. This is done through sexual division of labour by ensuring that those who are born male are differentiated and treated differently from females from the moment of birth (Brittan, 1989). Therefore, one becomes a man not only because he learns the associated behaviour, but because his sex physically and biologically confirms so. Essentially, socialisation entails that men define themselves from their personal interpretation of their bodies and from the perspective of those around them who treat them as such (Brittan, 1989). It is through socialisation that male identity is constructed as powerful and authoritative as opposed to passive femininity. For Connell (1987), although masculinities are multiple and present themselves in a hierarchical form, they all enjoy dominance or hegemony over femininities represented by women. Connell's theory can be perceived as a critique of the world gender order resulting from socialisation; however, it also suffers the same flaw of being essentialistic. Its overarching contention that all men (whether they embody subordinate, complicit or marginalised masculinity) are power-holders positioned above all women, impedes the conceptualisation of gender as fluid and the multiplicity of power centres while simultaneously perpetuating gendered stereotypes about masculinity, men, and their existence in the world (Brittan, 1989). The belief that all women are less powerful than all men takes away all of the agency that is inherent in each individual woman apart from it being highly unrealistic.

Masculinity crisis theory is premised on the ostensible contention that gender identity is tentative and fragile, especially in the case of men (Robinson & Hockey, 2011). Brittan (1989) avers that both men and women may be forced by circumstances to deviate from the grand social gender stereotypes and norms, resulting in a situation of identity crisis and confusion among the affected individuals. Applying this perspective to male identity entails adopting the assumption that significant sections of men are experiencing identity quandary due to the erosion of their male power and their general inability to meet the expectations of manhood set by culture and society (Horrocks, 1994; Robinson & Hockey, 2011). Challenges to heteropatriarchal and 'traditionalist' male power by women and the LGBTI communities, as well as the promotion of a 'new man' who recognises gender equality, are cited as major causes,

among others, of the dilemma that modern day men, both in the developing and developed worlds, find themselves (Adamson, 2017). It is further argued that in response to the resulting anxiety and insecurity, men use violence against women, children and other men as compensation for the lost power, yearning to reclaim it if possible, (Ratele, 2016; Adamson, 2017; Van der Westhuisen, 2018). This 'traditional man' is therefore associated with oppression and domination of women and other genders which do not conform to culturally prescribed identities, which Connell & Messerschmidt (2005b) refer to as hegemonic masculinity. Adamson (2017:p.8) however, contends that the two are not synonymous because the oppression of other masculinities, which is the chief element of hegemonic masculinity, may be absent in other traditional masculinities.

Proponents of the reality construction or constructivist perspective argue that gender does not have specific fixed form. Rather, it is what an individual claims it to be at that particular moment (Butler, 1990). The argument advanced by constructivists is that gender identity is contextual and unpredictable, as people do gender work based on their personal choices and interests and not enacting what they have been taught by society. It is within the reality construction paradigm that male identity is regarded as practice (Connell, 2005; Kiguwa, 2017), performances, expressions and roles which are incoherent, contradictory and continually contested and acted out by men in particular contexts (Butler, 1990). According to Brittan (1989), the reality construction perspective provides a counter narrative to the socialization and masculinity crisis paradigms, whose claims that men cannot resist the imposition of socio-cultural controls and that they are vulnerable and experiencing some crisis as a result of shifts in gender roles, respectively, are challenged by the fact that gender binary has since been successfully disputed and men's vulnerability is proven to not only result from changes in gender roles, but also from intimate partner abuse, some of which is perpetrated by women. Nonetheless, the constructivist perspective suffers criticism too for ignoring the role of the body in gender identity construction (Pilcher & Whelehan, 2004). Klein cited in Pilcher & Whelehan (2004), notes that constructivists as post-modern feminists consider bodies as incorporeal, invalidating their material existence.

Despite the inherent flaws characterising the above noted paradigms on male identity, they provide profound insights on the subject. Divergent as they may seem, there are certain common inferences that can be drawn from them. These are; firstly, that studies on male identity are an effort towards making sense of the relationships between individual men and groups of men as well as between men and women. Secondly, as Brittan (1989:p.181) also notes, both masculinity and femininity are relational terms and have no meaning by themselves. They make meaning if they are juxtaposed against each other. Thirdly, vulnerability can also be a feature of male identity, i.e. men as a collective are not invincible. Finally, our 'embodied subjectivity' originates from the natural or physical body, which itself is engraved by continuously redefined and renegotiated culture, making it possible to have a mismatch between the expected and the real practice. They can also be embodied by individuals of any

gender and even those who do not identify with any gender (Reeser, 2010). This study draws from the above noted paradigms as it explores and examines the expected and practiced forms of masculinities among Zimbabwean urban married men.

3.3 Male identity: ideal versus practice

Gender stereotypes in the form of norms, values, myths and taboos for men and women in any given society may not necessarily be commensurate with the lived experiences and practices of the concerned people. Conformity is not always guaranteed as some individuals choose to modify, alter, extend or contradict culturally defined ways of being. This section presents the markers of male identity in the Zimbabwean context, i.e. the body, marriage, fatherhood *inter alia* while simultaneously interrogating literature by confirming, disconfirming, offering alternatives to or expanding upon it. The data presented in this chapter were drawn from FGDs with community members of different age groups and semi-structured in-depth interviews with abused men from both study sites as presented in Chapter 2. While no significant differences based on participants' study site were observed, there were notable differences based on participants' age. These, and the possible reasons proffered, are delineated below.

3.3.1 The body

The body lies at the heart of theoretical debates on gender identity and equality in sociology (Scott & Morgan, 2009). The bone of contention being whether the human body carries natural meaning or only acquires meaning in the discursive realm (Scott & Morgan, 2009; Chiweshe, 2019; Presterudstuen, 2019). While some like (Honegger, 1991) perceive it as a natural entity, for Reeser (2010:p.91) it is a *"tabula-rasa"* without meaning outside of cultural and political circles. Yet, the likes of Connell (1998) recognise the natural effect of the body, but still emphasises the socio-culturally imposed meanings surrounding it. Essentially this debate can be pinned down to the biological, constructivist and embodiment perspectives on gender identity (Pilcher & Whelehan, 2004). Critical questions herein therefore pertain to whether men's anatomy or physical makeup in terms of their appearance, as well the size and potency of their genitalia, is of any significance to their identity construction.

No easy answer seems to exist for such questions. Although it is clear from men's responses that the body forms a fundamental part of male identity, without which one cannot claim membership amongst men, there is also a salient realisation that the body alone cannot suffice or guarantee one's masculinity. Such notions imbue the noted extracts below. The male genitalia featured prominently as integral to one's masculinity in all focus group discussions, i.e. those with young men and women, and in-depth interviews with abused men. The following is an interview excerpt with Mr XL, a 45-year-old man from Harare:

> Kkkkkkk (laughing)…. I see where you are going… a man <u>has to be male</u>; a man <u>has to be male</u>… right. I think that is pregnant with meaning right, a man <u>has to be male</u>… Which means the body is integral, when it comes to defining a man, and I think it is the

first port of call and when I say a man, I am talking about somebody who is male and after looking at the male aspect must be respectful, truthful, strong must be a good leader, whether you are leading from the front, back or middle is something else, you are that after being male, so first of all you <u>must be male</u> before you have those characteristics.

The four-times repetition of the phrase *'must be male'* shows an effort on the participant's part to underscore the pre-eminence of a man's genitalia in his identity. He referred to it as the *'first port of call,'* making it the initial selection criteria for gender identity classification.

The body was also a recurring theme in some of the FGDs, as illustrated in the excerpt below where the word, *'nhengo'* (sex organs) was continuously repeated among the interlocutors. The word literally means body parts in everyday language, but it is euphemistically used here to refer specifically to male genitals (the penis). The reason for such repetition cannot be overemphasised. It is clear that the men see it as a primary element in differentiating people, specifically males from females. Interlocutor R3 even posits that the genitals are the underlying determinant of child naming and he gave the researchers' name as an example. The excerpt is from an FGD with older men from Kwekwe. They had this to say:

> ***R2:*** *a man is a man because he has male sex organs, and also at times people consider age…eheee becoming of age…*
>
> ***R3:*** *yes (R2 and R3 agree on genitalia). God differentiated people by sex organs when he created human beings, that is what he wanted. We deal with one' appearance first, right, what he is right? That is what shows us whether one is female or male, right? So, that is the first stage*
>
> ***R2:*** *(R3 agrees) in customary terms we also look at whether one is potent or fertile?)*
>
> ***R3:*** *… (R2 agrees and laughter) Indeed, in most cases it is about your sex organs, they are the ones that show your identity. Whether male or female? In fact, some even say one's name is determined by his genitalia, right?*
>
> ***R2:*** *the issue of having children may not even be considered…*

In a *Synchronous WhatsApp Group* with young men, the genitalia as a marker of male identity were also given primacy, although there was use of different terminology. Here, the young men were using such words as *'member', 'sex' and 'assets.'* However, references to such words still attest to the fundamental position with which the genitals are regarded in identity construction by young men. Below is the excerpt from the *Synchronous WhatsApp Group* with young men.

> ***RA:*** *Mmm, that's a broad question, like it's a whole lot of stuff.*
>
> ***RB****: sho, very broad…but kkkkk. I don't even know how to answer it.*

> *Interviewer:* yeah, it's broad…. but you can say even one or two things that you consider important.
>
> *RC:* eish, I have no idea. But maybe it starts with one's biological makeup
>
> *RC:* eeeeh. I mean possessing the member. you know. Kkkkkk.
>
> *RA:* yaah bro, you nailed it. my sex tells me everything. Isn't it? …well just thinking.
>
> *RC:* shoo man…there is no talk of a man pasina ma assets... hahahahaha.

The valorisation of the male genitals as the major instrument for differentiation and identity construction may be understood as the adoption of biological determinism by Zimbabwean men which, as Reeser (2010) points out, connotes that the body is perceived as carrying pre-existent meaning that has to be understood in a prescribed way. The penis is accorded a special place on its own which pre-dates cultural and social practices. The repetitions, the use of rich language and terms such as *'nhengo,'* 'sex organs' imply great emphasis on the uniqueness and peculiarity of the penis and its 'profound' role in their identities. Although there is no use of the words 'power' or 'dominance' by the respondents, one would be forgiven for perceiving the distinctiveness with which they associate the penis as a symbol of virility. Confirming Brittan (1989:p.57) notion of the 'overburdened penis,' whereby it is accorded a life separate from the whole body. Their genitals are as much a source of differentiation as they entail competency, prowess and potency (Brittan, 1989), aspects which feature prominently in their responses but are fraught with overtones of cultural interpretations.

3.3.1.1 Potency and size issues among men

Despite the noted emphasis on the biologically determined meaning of men's genitalia, there is also a sense of socio-cultural interpretation of the genitalia's size and potency. Such interpretations are, however, not without controversy. While some men consider large genitals as critical for one to be regarded as a man, others perceive it as a non-issue, as long as the genitals are there and are male. In an interview, Mr TS, a 50-year-old male victim from Kwekwe stated that:

> *A man is seen by his physical appearance and his sex at birth, it does not matter whether your genitalia look small of big. Those with small are still able to reproduce in the same way as those with big genitalia. That is what differentiates us from women.*

He placed emphasis on the genitalia's functions, mainly reproduction and as a source of differentiation from women, other than on their appearance. This downplaying of the role of genital appearance in defining a man also plays out in another interview, where another male victim from Harare, while noting the acceptability of circumcision among other sections of the Zimbabwean population, quickly casts his doubt on and distances himself from such conceptions as follows:

> *Kupinda musmart (circumcision) is regarded as another way of being a man, those who are circumcised see themselves as more of men than those who are not. Certain benefits believed and claimed to come with circumcision eeeh…like, you know the belief that they will be longer during sex, like take long to climax, which is also something that is much celebrated among both men and women. It is also eeh …. believed that it results in the satisfaction of women sexually, the penis becomes longer and bigger. However, those are just beliefs that have not been proven, kkkkk (laughter). You know... many men generally don't want to be circumcised and some women also want their men with the skin. So, you can still be a man with the skin...* **Mr MP-45 years old, Harare.**

It is clear from this statement that the circumcised penis is perceived as just another form but not as the essence of masculinity. It is not emphasised in Zimbabwe's broader cultural context. This is despite the fact that circumcision is practiced among some communities, for instance among the Varemba ethnic group of Central Zimbabwe, who circumcise their young men as a rite of passage into adulthood (Matumbu & Chimininge, 2019). It should be noted that such circumcision has nothing to do with elongating the penis. The emphasis is not on its effect on the size, but on its cultural meaning (Matumbu & Chimininge, 2019). An inference can be made therefore, that size of the genitalia as an aspect of the male body is not an essence of manhood.

In contrast to the above-noted conceptions regarding the size and appearance of the male body, the excerpt from a *Synchronous WhatsApp Group* discussion with young-men below demonstrates that size is an important issue to them. Such discrepancies are a clear indication that meanings attached to the body are far from being objective. Thus, the embodied meanings are characterised by nuance and subjectivity. The young men had this to say:

> **RE:** *Oh kkkkkkkk. …that is a hot issue with my guys...you know guys avoid being seen by others because sometimes it will be small…hahahahahaha. its true guys...this other time one of my friends was like yhooo! Tango is the man...he has got a donkeys dong. hahahahah*

> **RA:** *I find if funny, but it is real...even ladies like it big*

> **RF:** *kkkkkkkk. the bigger the better guys. I know someone who was ditched by a girl because he had a small one. hahahahahaha…*

Reference in the above excerpt is given to the embarrassment and humiliation that is associated with small sizes. RE notes that men jealously guard against having their genitalia being seen, especially by other men who may then judge them. Anxiety and insecurity regarding the size, appearance and potency of genitals among men is commonly linked to capitalist media representations, which portray superficial male bodies that in turn compel men to emulate such representations (Reeser, 2010). Hence, they buy gym memberships or exercise equipment

(Reeser, 2010). Among the Shona people, however, such anxiety has historical roots in men's lived experiences, mainly due to their inherent desire to please women (Shire, 1994). Shire (1994:p.154) contends that the *Mumvee,* (Kigelia pinnata), a wild tree plant, has great significance to that effect. A boy would bore a hole into its tender fruit without having to pluck it from the tree, into which he would insert his penis and then observe the fruit for days. The death of the fruit signified a threat to one's sexual potency while its growth to maturity resulted in an enlarged penis and sexual competence (Shire, 1994). Furthermore, as laughable as it may seem, size is quite a serious issue among Zimbabweans that even some musicians find it important to make it part of their music lyrics. A particular example, as noted by Chiweshe & Bhatasara (2013:p.163-164), is King Shady –a Zimbabwean young Dance-Hall musician, whose song *Ndezve varume izvi (*It's for the men) has the following lyrics, though not in the correct order:

> *"Handina sini rebaccossi (I do not have small penis)*
> *Ichi chipo handidye mugondorosi (My big penis is a gift; I do not eat any medicines)*
> *Muhomwe handina mari asi mubhurugwa ndiri loaded (I do not have money in my pocket, but I am loaded in my pants)"* Chiweshe & Bhatasara (2013:p.163-164)

Numerous newspaper articles outlining stories of men jilted by their loved ones for having small penises are also often published in Zimbabwe. One such story that made headlines between the years 2014 and 2015 is that of a famous local musician whose wife cited his small genitalia as the reason she divorced him. The story received unprecedented media coverage in the main Zimbabwean print and electronic media as well as on social media. Such publications as *The Sunday Mail* (Anonymous, 2014); *Chronicle* (Ndlovu, 2014); *and My Zimbabwe News* (Sibanda, 2015) carried eye-caching headlines on the matter. This demonstrates the significance of size and potency as socially constructed defining elements of masculinity in Zimbabwe, but more importantly, it exposes the role of women in the formation of men's identity. It further unravels the urge among men to please and satisfy women, since they are the ones who can confirm men's potency. In the above *Synchronous WhatsApp Group Discussion* excerpt with young men, both RA and RF make reference to pleasing women and meeting their demands as vital aspects of male identity, whose absence may render one to suffer rejection and have a questionable view of their masculinity. Some men therefore, due to the constant doubt, some of which comes from women, go for penis enlargement procedures whose scientific benefits have not yet been proven (Del Rosso & Esala, 2014).

It is noteworthy from this discussion that size, appearance and potency are socially constructed interpretations of the body whose meaning is contextual and sometimes person specific. These aspects of masculinity are conferred upon individual men by third parties, who in most cases are women, considering the heteronormative context that Zimbabwe finds itself in. Men in such

contexts find themselves in a vulnerable position as their masculinity can be rescinded should they be deemed short of the expected size and potency (Buchbinder, 2013). Such conceptualizations of masculinity are often criticized for overrating the socio-cultural while overlooking the natural or biological attributes of male identity. However, of essence in this study is then the above-demonstrated nuances in the conceptualization of the body's role in defining what constitutes a man.

3.3.2 Marriage

Marriage can generally be understood as a legally or socially recognized sexual union involving two or more people, with assumed permanence (Little et. al., 2012). Historically, marriages are a means among others such as cohabitation and adoption to create a family, which in turn is the most basic social unit of the society. Both marriage and family create status roles that are sanctioned by society (Little et. al., 2012). They, in most cases, are sexual relationships, and it is possible, especially in the western world and in a few African countries such as South Africa, to have same-sex marriages. This is, however, not the case in Zimbabwe, where the legal and social environment are hostile to such sexual relations. Although individuals may engage in same-sex activities privately, they cannot openly declare such relationships for fear of prosecution and social exclusion (Epprecht, 1998; Mudavanhu, 2010; Shoko, 2010; Mabvurira & Matsika, 2013; Chitando & Manyonganise, 2016). The default marriage in the country is therefore between a man and a woman.

A marriage among the Shona people must be done following certain formalities and procedures, failure of which renders it nothing more than cohabitation (*kuchaya mapoto*), which despite gaining prominence in the past decade (Muzvidziwa, 2001; Moyo, 2017), is still perceived with suspicion. Due to customary patrilineality, the potential groom is expected to pay bride wealth to the bride's family. In contemporary society such a payment can be made in cash whereas traditionally, symbolic items like a hoe (*badza*) were used (Gelfand, 1973:p.174-175). Although there are multiple variations on the fundamentals of the procedure followed across clans and communities, the implications of marriage remain largely the same. One of such implications is that it marks one's transition from boyhood to manhood. Such a perception kept recurring during FGDs with community members and interviews with abused men, portraying the deep-seated developmental meaning imbued in marriage. The excerpts below illustrate:

> *When we are talking about a man, we are not referring to a boy, mukomana haasi murume (a boy is not a man).* **Interview-Mr XL-a victim of IPA, Harare (45 years old)**

> *Marriage separates a boy and a man, even if you have a child but if you are not married the respect is withheld, a boy must marry because (musha mukadzi). A home can only be, if there is a wife, without which it is not a home* **Interview-Mr TS-a victim of IPA, Kwekwe (50 years old)**

> *A man must get the right wife and have children and raise his children in the Christian way.* **Interview-Mr DNN-a victim of IPA, Kwekwe (57 years old)**

> *Marriage is another maker of manhood… eeh …because eeeh. Sometimes boys have to excuse mature men. So that they can deal with issues that cannot be discussed in their presence, like married men issues.* **FGD-with older men, Harare**

The foregoing excerpts express unambiguity on the position of a boy in relation to that of a man in Shona communities. Mr XL and TS's statements that '*mukomana haasi murume'* and '*marriage separates a boy and a man,*' respectively, carry the same meaning that the marriage condition has to be met as part of male identity. This follows what has already been noted that being male sexed is not a confirmation, but only an initial stage in a series of such markers leading to masculinity. Mr TS also used an idiom, *'musha mukadzi,'* which literally means 'A home is a wife.' The use of that idiom shows the embeddedness of marriage within the Shona culture. Marriage is engraved in the Shona language to the extent that it can be conveyed and articulated figuratively. The metaphorical meaning of *'musha mukadzi,'* is that, 'A home can only be, if there is a wife, without which it is not a home.' Such an idiom also expresses the paramountcy of women's position in marriages in Zimbabwe as also noted by Owomoyela (2002), contrary to the notion by pro-Western feminists such as Jewkes et. al. (2002); Hunter (2004); & García-Moreno et. al. (2013) that women are objectified in marriages.

The centrality of marriage as a boy's turning point to manhood in men's conceptions of marriage as shown in the excerpts above, raises questions regarding the age at which one is expected to marry for the first time. However, that question finds adequate response from the excerpt by R2, a participant in an FGD with older men from Kwekwe. He noted that:

> *Customarily, when one gets to the age when he can ask girls out or able to impregnate a girl, he is old enough to marry…like it's usually said, 'you are now a grown up, you need to get married'.*

Although there is no specific age mentioned, indications are that any time from puberty is customarily acceptable as being eligible for marriage. Seemingly, therefore, any boy who can approach or impregnate a girl can marry. Looking at R2's statement as a stand-alone statement, it may be found to be illogical as it suggests that Shona people are officiating teenage marriages, therefore, they are rampant. However, an examination of the Zimbabwean legal context shows that the age of majority is 18 years, below which one is still considered a minor[4]. Therefore, from reading the customary and legal age of majority together, one may get a full appreciation of the contextual meaning, thereby coming to the conclusion that any boy above the age of 18 years can marry and marrying any girl of the same age or older.

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[4] The Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment 20 Act of 2013 *Section 81*

Age at first marriage is indeed an important aspect due to the life changing nature of marriage and the consequences of non-conformity. As is the case with all the other conditions or markers of masculinity, non-conformity to marriage carries dire sanctions from one's family, clan or community at large (Meekers, 1993; Tatira, 2016). The statements below speak to some of these consequences.

> *An unmarried man is not well received by a society and is viewed as abnormal, for instance if there is an argument he is labelled and stigmatised and such statements like, (ndoosaka usina mukadzi) 'that is why you have no wife/you are not married', are thrown at him.* **Interview-Mr TS (50 years old), Kwekwe**

> *When one becomes an adult, he is expected to marry. Even if you have girlfriends, if you are not married you do not earn the respect of the community or society. Being unmarried when one is an adult is stigmatised and shunned upon.* **Interview Mr MC (53 years old), Harare**

Apart from the fact that the above statements indicate the disdain with which being single is regarded, they also confirm an assertion by Muzvidziwa (2001:p.153) that an unmarried man has historically been unwelcome among his Shona kin. Remaining single or getting divorced was seen as resulting from bad luck due to evil spirits or failure to appease one's ancestral spirits. It was and still is perceived (especially in rural communities) as a curse for one to die as a bachelor. In the event of that happening, one would be buried with a rat or a maize cob and his spirit would be condemned to wonder forever in the forest (Gelfand, 1973; Bourdillon, 1987; Muzvidziwa, 2001:p.153). Hence, marriage would guarantee a man acceptability and status among his kin and automatically book him a position among his ancestors when he dies.

Further to that, labelling, shaming and cursing are also major consequences of bachelorhood. Of note are sentiments implied in this statement:

> *If you remain unmarried, then you may be suspected of being a homosexual and those that choose to be homosexuals are not accepted and there is no argument about it.* **Interview-Mr TS (50 years old), Kwekwe**

The statement carries overtones of the undesirability as opposed to the appropriateness of homosexuality. While another participant chose to use tacit but loaded language, by saying, '*A man must get the right wife,*' whose insinuation is that there is no option other than heterosexuality, Mr TS (in the excerpt above) blatantly declares that homosexuality is unacceptable. The implication of which is that anyone who remains unmarried after reaching the expected age of marriage may be a suspect and therefore labelled as a homosexual.

Contrary to older men's perceptions of marriage, young men see no importance in it. The extracts below from a *Synchronous WhatsApp Group* discussion with young men in relation to the questions on whether they think marriage is important, lay bare such contradictions:

Interviewer: What about marriage, do you think it's important?

RC: oh ok... well I don't know but I think it's not...I don't see it as important

RB: yaah my parents always lecture me about it...its nothing I think of now, maybe...maybe later

RA: my aunt.... just can't give a break about that... she is always asking when I am gonna marry... the funny part is, eish...it's not even on my mind...am just thinking of my degree now...

RF: talk about aunts and uncles... I now avoid going to my uncle's place... the guy is always on my throat about marriage...he saw me with a girl the other time and told me to introduce her to the family ...kkkkk (laughter) imagine guys...

RD: I want marriage... just that I haven't found one...but yoh my sisters be hee we want makoti kkkk funny they never ask what I want...

RC: my parents never ask, but my pastor...eish!!! He always says, your parents need grandkids. kkkkk. Yet I don't even have a job...its funny... **Synchronous WhatsApp Group Discussion with young men (20-40 years old)**

In the above extract by young men, it is clear that despite all the participants noting persuasions by their parents, siblings, relatives or church leaders to marry or show signs of planning to marry, they demonstrate total indifference to such persuasions. They instead confess varied interests in other aspects of life. For RC it is finding a job that is important while RA has a degree to complete. More striking is RD's implied perspective that there is an alternative to marriage when he states that, *'funny, they never ask what I want.'* This statement is in clear contrast to one by Mr DN above in which it is noted that, 'A man must get the right wife,' which does not seem to give room for options other than marriage.

Two inferences can be made from the findings on marriage in this study. The first one being that multiple perceptions exist regarding the importance of marriage as a defining attribute of male identity. Such multiplicity confirms the post-structural feminist argument held herein that identity is characterised by subjectivity. Secondly, perceptions regarding the importance of marriage in defining a man among younger men are opposed to those held by older men. While older men consider marriage a significant maker of male identity, younger men view it as having no important bearing to their identity. However, despite serious challenges to it, marriage is still regarded as a passage to legitimate sex (Chaplin, 1961) and a moral obligation every man has to his family to ensure its continuity through siring children (Musiyiwa & Chirere, 2007) among Zimbabwean urban communities.

3.3.2.1 Marriage as a conduit to sex and reproduction

Sex and childbearing conspicuously emerged in most of the conversations on male identity, warranting their separate discussion herein. Both men and women perceive these as central aspects in a marriage, contributing to identity construction of the parties therein. As noted above, marriage among the Shona people has never been an end in itself. Rather, it is a passage to legitimate sex and sexual relations (Musiyiwa & Chirere, 2007). As noted by Chigwedere, cited in Makaudze (2015), sexual activity in marriage was and still is in some sections of Zimbabwe regarded as something more than a privilege. Every party to a marriage is customarily obliged to attend to the sexual needs of the other (Chigwedere cited Makaudze, 2015). Rabe (2006), in her study among mine workers in South Africa, notes that maintenance of sexual relations between husband and wife constitutes good fatherhood or husband-hood. Although her study focused on South Africa, it points to a view that African men are expected not only to marry but also to have and enjoy consensual sex with their wives which, as anticipated, should result in having children. Such notions are well captured in the following excerpts:

> *The first issue is the issue of sex, which is the hottest issue in families and homes because if she doesn't cook or fails to cook, I can always cook for myself, but when it comes to sex, its different, she has to provide.* **Interview-Mr MH (32 years old) from Harare**

> *Sex ndiyo imba yacho but men assume to know that women are being satisfied. It has to be well communicated between the two who are married.* **Interview-Mr MS (57 years old) from Kwekwe**

> *Sex between husband and wife. Sex is the essence of marriage. And that is the reason why men pay lobola. The man should not be denied sex for no good reason when he wants it because that is the reason why the woman had to leave her family.* **Interview-Mr TS (50 years old) from Kwekwe**

> *...sex matters are for both parties, we all have a duty. I can only get sex from my husband, so I have to be satisfied. We discuss any issues that may arise, that is what is important in a marriage.* **W1-FGD with older women-(41 years and more) from Harare**

> *(Agreeing wing **W1** above) ...a marriage is a union; we are one flesh so keeping quiet when I am not satisfied would cause infidelity and other problems that destroy the marriage. There are diseases these days...* **W2-FGD with older women-(41 years and more) from Harare**

It is evident that there are various descriptions attributed to sex in all the foregoing extracts. Of note is its portrayal as *'the essence of marriage'* by Mr TS; *'ndiyo imba yacho'* i.e. it is the marriage by Mr MS; and *'the hottest issue in… marriages'* by Mr MH. All of these statements place sex at the heart of marital affairs, rendering it indispensable. Marriage is very important

to the extent of being almost compulsory for all adult persons in Shona society (Tatira, 2016). As a result, everyone is expected to look forward to marrying, having sex and producing children (Tatira, 2016). Men expect women to provide them with affection through sex as much as women do. Mr MH above narrates that he can do all other things for himself including cooking but when it comes to sex, his wife has to provide. The same sentiment is noted in the excerpt above from an FGD with older women-(41 years and more) from Harare where W1 states that, *'sex matters are for both parties,'* and she further notes that she expects sex from no one else other than her husband who must provide it to her satisfaction. These claims of sexual entitlement between men and women can only be understood through examining the implications of marriage in a particular cultural context, without which one may easily conclude that men claim entitlement over women's bodies as Du Plessis & Maree (2009) state. Marriages among the Shona entail the trading of duties and benefits between the people involved (Gelfand, 1973; Gelfand, 1992). Therefore, men are not the only ones who expect affection from wives, but women do too, from their husbands. The same is the case with men's ability to sire children. Men's ability to sire children is an issue which affects their identity more in patriarchal contexts through stigma, as noted by Mr MN – a male victim of IPA from Harare. However, the statement by W3 in the excerpt below from an FGD with older women from Harare show that women equally suffer the same stigma and labelling by society in the event of their failure to conceive and bear children.

Du Plessis & Maree (2009) however, challenge conceptualisations of male identity that are attached to sex and reproduction as hegemonic. Their argument is that men become the centre of the whole reproductive process while women only become vessels of men's seed, a role they view as peripheral. Further to that, it is argued that technology has advanced to the extent that children can be conceived by other means such as in-vitro fertilization. Hence, attaching identity to childbearing sounds archaic (Du Plessis & Maree, 2009). In line with the same critiques is the statement in an excerpt below by Mr MD –a male victim of IPA from Harare, who avers that children are a gift from God, hence, one's identity cannot be based on whether he has children or not since God gives as he wishes. Despite these arguments being sound, for instance the one by Du Plessis & Maree (2009), one may argue, using some of the responses by women in this study, that they are not vessels of men's sperm, but active participants in the process of child bearing. This is demonstrated by older women's continued reference to negotiation and communication between them and their sexual partners during the FGD in Harare. For instance, one woman in the same FGD stated that, '*marriage is about two people, so you have to stand your ground,'* thereby, making reference to their bravery and ability to *'stand their ground'* as partners. Additionally, it is evident that not every ordinary person has access to modern technology like in-vitro fertilization due to the costs involved. Those that cannot afford such technologies can, therefore, still resort to their sexual performance, potency and fertility as important markers of their masculinity.

> *Men also then suffer from self-doubt regarding their potency and virility especially if the marriage does not have children, elements of which form part of their identity.* **Interview-Mr MN-a male victim of IPA (60 years old) from Harare**

> *Having children is a gift from God, to be a man is gift from God, so the failure to have children does not make one a lesser father. For instance, a mango tree remains a mango tree whether it has fruits or not.* **Interview-Mr MD-a male victim of IPA (49 years old) from Harare**

Similar sentiments were also raised in the FGDs as shown in the excerpt from an FGD with older women below.

> *W2: A child is important in marriage. Customarily relatives consider marriage as a means to family growth and even yourselves as a couple, want a baby.*

> *W1: Some do not consider having children as important, but I personally want them. A child strengthen love between the couple.*

> *W3: Childlessness brings so much sorrow in a family, and it affects both parties. At times it can even cause violence.*

> *W4: Men usually get depressed when they discover their infertility or impotence. They may see themselves as inadequate, but a child is a gift from God and not everyone is given...* **FGD with older women-(41 years and more) from Harare**

It is of profound significance to infer from this discussion that sex in marriage, apart from being a pleasurable act, is also a responsibility or an obligation which men and women jointly share. Together with childbearing and fatherhood (which forms the object of discussion in the next section), sex is perceived as an essential element of marriage (Parpart, 1996) without which identities of the involved parties may be questioned. Of even greater significance is the finding in this study that masculinity or male identity in a marriage setup is a negotiated enterprise. Continuous bargaining, through sexual contact and childbearing, between a man and a woman – who together enter into marriage, result in the construction of masculinities and femininities. One's identity as a man in a marriage is not an event, but a process which takes place, not in isolation but with the involvement of other people, particularly women as wives (Buchbinder, 2013). The contribution of women therefore makes masculinity a negotiated enterprise.

Although marriage is still firmly regarded as an important marker of masculinity, it is not uncontested. As in many parts of Africa (Posel et. al., 2011; Mair, 2013), marriage in Zimbabwe has over the last three decades seen acute restructuring and reconfiguration due to various causes, one of which is the economic downturn, resulting in high divorce rates (Majoko, 2017) and an increase in alternative patterns of marriage such as cohabitation (Muzvidziwa, 2001). Other signs of contestations to marriage include an emerging trend in delayed first marriages, particularly among men, and an increase in single parent families

(Mhloyi, 1991; Zimbabwe-DHS, 2015). Pro-feminist writers in both the Global North (Dobash & Dobash, 2004) and Global South (Jewkes, 2002b) have too denounced the practice as a site where men's domination is secured (Chiweshe & Bhatasara, 2013; Mazibuko, 2016) and violence against women is perpetuated (Jewkes et. al., 2002). The views of young men herein, who consider education and careers as more important to life than marriage, further bear testimony to the challenge that the practice faces in Zimbabwe. Such negation of marriage as a socially constructed practice of defining male identity only attests to the fact that identity is never stable. In lieu, it is always contested and continuously reshaped, making it an arena marked by fluidity. Nonetheless, marriage, childbearing and fatherhood are still held in high esteem among many Zimbabweans.

3.3.3 Fatherhood

Fathers come in various forms (Khunou, 2006). Writing on South Africa, Richter & Morrell (2006:p.1) attest that the isiZulu word *'baba'* (father) denotes a man in a respectable manner and does not only refer to one's biological father but can also refer to social fathers such as grandfathers and uncles. In Zimbabwe, Musiyiwa & Chirere (2007) note that there are mobile or absent fathers, who wantonly impregnate and abandon women and do not care about how the women and the children they bear survive. A participant in an FGD with older men from Kwekwe stated that "a father does not earn such a recognition by simply 'wearing a trouser', rather, it is one's ability to accomplish certain family responsibilities that renders him deserving of the title". Fatherhood, therefore, is an overarching concept for several fatherly roles as well as forms of interaction between fathers and their families that include, but are not limited to, the provision of financial and other material resources, protection, emotional support, communication, leadership and caregiving. Figure 3.1 below shows an ATLAS.ti generated pictorial synopsis of responses from the FGDs as stipulated in Chapter 2 and interviews with male victims of IPA on the duties and responsibilities that are associated with fatherhood. The roles presented in Figure 3.1 below, as some participants in the FGDs indicated, may in a broad sense extend to the community level and not only to one's respective household.

Figure 3.1: Roles and responsibilities of fathers
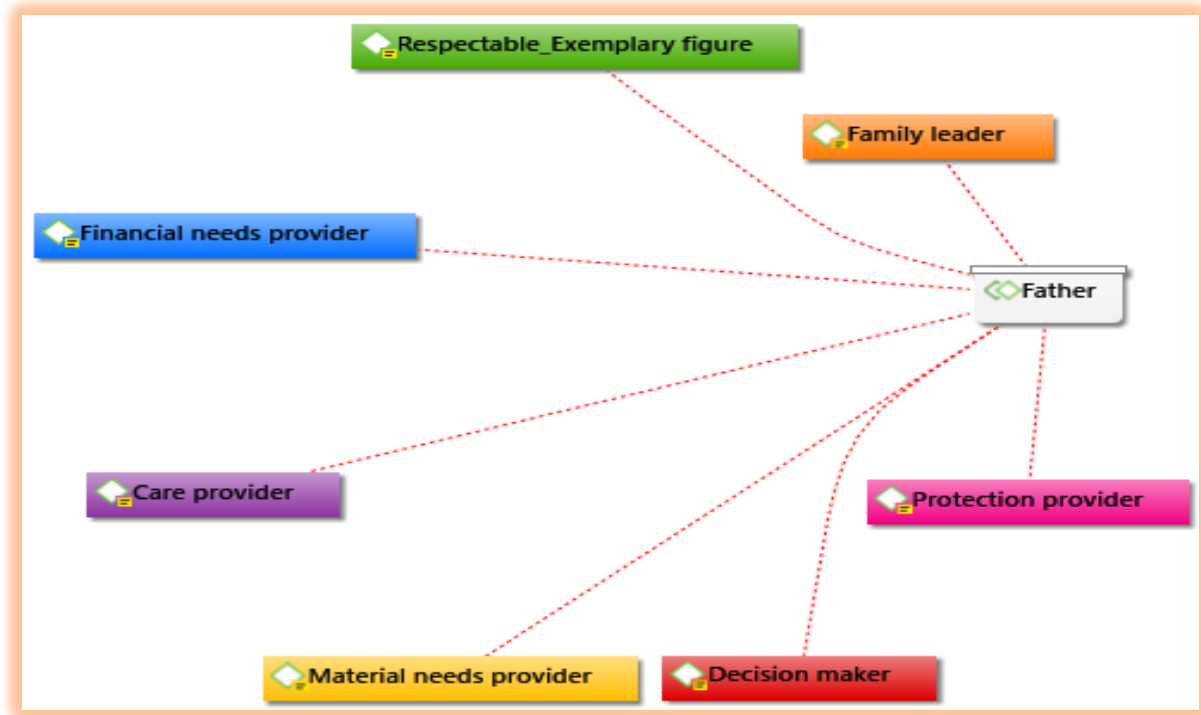
SOURCE: Responses from FGDs with community members and in-depth interviews with male victims of IPA

Musiyiwa & Chirere (2007:p.156) argue that 'it is difficult to comprehend fatherhood independently of motherhood since the two are mutually inclusive.' They further aver that good fatherhood among the Shona people is complementary to good motherhood. This argument holds true if consideration is given to the fact that a man's family –wife and children included, bestow fatherhood upon him based on his accomplishment of family responsibilities. It is not based on one's idiosyncratic traits but on the assessment of one's conduct by third parties. It can thus be conceptualised as a set of cultural practices enabled or constrained by structural forces which include, but are not limited to, the socio-economic changes obtained in a particular society (Richter & Morrell, 2006). As a contextual phenomenon, fatherhood in Zimbabwe today is the result of the oppositional and frictional interplay between Zimbabwean indigenous and Anglophile cultures (Musiyiwa & Chirere, 2007) as well as political and economic crises stretching back two decades. Some of the common fatherhood responsibilities as identified by the study participants in the FGDs and in-depth interviews are delineated below.

3.3.3.1 Provider role

One participant in an FGD with older men from Harare pointed out that being a man, and particularly a father, has historical ties and biblical traces to the provider role.

> *...eeeeh one of the biblical scriptures that guide us is 1 Timothy 5 eeeeh...I am forgetting eeeeh I did not cram eee eee ee the verse, but it says any man who fails to provide for his family is worse than a nonbeliever ... because we are Christians and we also take directions from the bible so Christian values also guide our lives greatly.* **Mr JQ in FGD (older men) from Harare**

Recent debates regarding the provider role centre on the form of resource or commodity that men should provide considering that women have also been active providers of emotional and material support in families. For Franklin et. al. (2015), who consider the provider and caregiver roles as incompatible, men have historically been associated with the former while the latter formed the basis of women's identity. They argue, thus, that men should also be active in caregiving as a sign of transformation into the *'new man'* or fatherhood. The premise of their contention is that whereas the provider role represents hegemony, caregiving is a form of fatherhood that is sensitive to gender equality. Other scholarly evidence, however, indicates otherwise. For example, Ntantala cited in Ratele et. al. (2012), notes that men have always simultaneously performed the two roles. Reference therein is also given to a statement made by Desmond Tutu's (a prominent South African Anti-Apartheid activist and Christian Bishop) daughter –Thandeka Tutu-Gxashe, to the Cape Times newspaper in an interview in which she stated that her father was also a mother in the sense that he would bathe her and perform other caring duties during her childhood (Ratele et. al., 2012). He was receptive to and supportive of his children, qualities of which are usually disassociated with traditional black fathers of his time. The same views were enunciated by participants in this study, both men and women, who consider provider and caregiver roles as constituting fatherhood, yet the roles are also shared by women. In an interview, Mr MC, a 53-year-old male victim of IPA from Harare, noted that "a man is one who takes care of his family ... like eeeh ... he looks after boys and girls in the same way, he is not afraid of equality." Caring is so broad that it also involves making correct decisions regarding the socialisation of the children. Hence Mr MC finds it important that a father as a parent must be conscious of his socialisation *modus operandi* to avoid the perpetuation of gender inequality.

3.3.3.1.1 Financial and material provision

In the narratives below, the expectation to provide financially is ostensibly the sole responsibility of fathers, who are framed as indispensable financiers in families. Mr AK, in an FGD with older men from Harare, stated that:

> *A father must be able to take care of the family, support them by eeh you know buying their needs ...eeeh like food, paying children's fees and hospital bills and other things, regardless of whether the woman works or not...* **Mr AK-FGD (older men) from Harare**

Such conceptions affirm findings of several studies (Khunou, 2006; Rabe, 2006; Musiyiwa & Chirere, 2007; Nyanjaya & Masango, 2012; Ratele et. al., 2012) which show that African

families without fathers' involvement are prone to poverty and other forms of vulnerability. In addition, other movable and immovable assets such as land and livestock emerged as saliently tied to fatherhood, as described in the excerpts below. It is not surprising that in an African context, where land and livestock are regarded as a heritage, even urban men consider these as significant identity markers which every man needs to hand over to their children. Barker & Ricardo (2005) had the same findings in their study among northern Ugandan men:

> *In my own view, a man is supposed to be responsible, especially when you have a family and must ensure that his family, has all provisions, like food, school fees, housing or if it's in rural areas there should be livestock, and there are structures at the homestead i.e. musha wacho wakavakwa.* **Interview-Mr ND-a male victim of IPA (53 years old) from Kwekwe**

> *Kana tichiti murume, zvinoreva responsibility, i.e. one who is able to support, take care of or provide (food, clothing, housing or a home) for either a wife or children, because when we are talking about a man we are not referring to a boy, mukomana haasi murume, a man must have assets i.e. property, a house or home, where your family stays, and the family has enough in terms of food and if it is in the rural areas there must be land and livestock (cattle, goats, fouls/poultry) those that do not have these are also men but they will be lacking and may not have or earn the same respect from their families as those who provide.* **Mr ZM in FGD (older men) from Harare**

In many cases, supporting children and the families financially, which involves paying family bills, children's school fees, among other things, as noted by Mr ZM above, enables the participants to earn the respect that is associated with the father identity. He unequivocally stated that those who fail to provide "will be lacking and may not have or earn the same respect from their families", thereby confirming Muzvidziwa (2013) contention that the person who brings a wage into the household among Zimbabweans is expected to have some kind of privileged status in relation to other household or family members. This nevertheless can apply to both men and women, as it is not gender specific. He further notes in the same study among Zimbabwean women-breadwinners that apart from men, women who provide for their families command respect therein, in the sense that their input in the family is easily recognisable and is valued (Muzvidziwa, 2013). Conceptualisations of fatherhood which are linked to financial provision have, however, been criticised by Rabe (2006:p.262) as "limited". She argues that such conceptualisations portray a rather narrow conception of fatherhood, especially considering that many supposed fathers may be under- or unemployed due to bad economic environments (Rabe, 2006). Such fathers may not fit in such a 'limited' definition of fatherhood. However, participants in FGDs and in-depth interviews overwhelmingly associated men's financial provision for their families with fatherhood.

Shona men have historically been taught from childhood that it is their role to render protection to their vulnerable family members (Gelfand, 1973:p.34; Parpart, 2007:p.104). In other words,

their own vulnerability was not expected. Women on the other hand perceived such socialisation as necessary and welcome (Gelfand, 1973). It seems that such perceptions still exist even though the reality of everyday life indicates that some men are vulnerable and hence may also need protection themselves. Although stereotypically men among Shona people should be protectors for their wives and children (Gelfand, 1973), in real life not all men execute that responsibility. While some chose not to be, others are rendered unable to be protectors due to various factors inclusive of which is sickness *inter alia*. For young women from Harare in the FGD excerpt below, a man is one who provides them with a sense of security and safety as opposed to one who fails to stand for them when danger strikes –someone referred to by L2 (a young woman participant) as a 'weak guy.'

> **L2:** *a man must be strong ...like give other people a sense of security ...you know, girls are vulnerable, and I have always known men to protect...*
>
> **L1:** *A real man must not show emotions and react in front of people. In front of the people he must calm down and to respect the people around.*
>
> **L2:** *(agreeing with L1) exactly... I wouldn't want weak guy... like my guy should be strong (giggles)...like when we get mugged, he has to stand for us...* **FGD (young women), Harare**

Perceptions of men held by L1 and L2 in the excerpt above are often associated with so-called 'toxic masculinity', which according to Kupers (2005:p.713) comprises "the need to aggressively compete and dominate others and encompasses the most problematic predispositions in men" and is often portrayed in literature as the main driver of violence against women (Bhana, 2005; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005b). It is however, difficult to discern whether their views serve in promoting the construction of toxic masculine identities. On the flip side, the views expressed in the FGD excerpt with young women above may innocuously be taken to mean that men as fathers must be there for other vulnerable members of society. 'Being there' is a phrase that is commonly used with reference to responsible fathers, denoting the sense of security that is experienced by family members when a father is involved (Nyanjaya & Masango, 2012). It is not only limited to physical presence and protection of one's physical integrity, but it may also imply spiritual, moral and emotional presence, as noted by Mr MC –a male victim from Harare, who stated in an interview that, *'a father maintains a relationship and bond with children and family.'*

According to Mfecane (2018:p.13), colonial and successive governments in Africa successfully took away men's role of protecting children and women. This was done mainly through the enactment of laws for legal protections of women and children and the use of state apparatus like police, which legitimated a particular version of family in which the relevance of fathers as protectors was weakened (Mfecane, 2018). Whether these state sponsored initiatives have been a success or not is debatable, but the pertaining circumstances, especially in African

communities, point to the fact that men no longer have the sole responsibility of protecting the gendered other (Mfecane, 2018). Thus, men's role as protectors of vulnerable family and community members is not unchallenged, even though they remain providers of emotional security to people close to them.

3.3.3.2 Men as family heads

Fatherhood in Zimbabwe is also constructed in terms of men being household heads (Musiyiwa & Chirere, 2007; Nyanjaya & Masango, 2012). Based on this conception, fatherhood implies that men are key decision makers and disciplinarians in the home who are endowed with character strength and should always be a site of their families' admiration. A number of participants, both men and women, in the study made it explicit that their perceptions of fatherhood are built on a heroic and celebrated figure who should have authority to make decisions in the home. For example:

> *I should be able to kutonga, (to lead) and make decisions undisputed. Uye semurume I should be able to discipline and be respected by the wife and children. The man is the one who marries ie kuroora not kuroorwa, so I should earn that respect.* **Interview Mr TS-a victim of IPA (50 years old), Kwekwe**

> *He must be a problem solver for his children even family or clan problems should be dealt with by the father. A man should be the one who decides on family matters and the wife has to submit eeeh it's like eeh submission means she has accept the decision whether wrong or not, because ndini murume wake -I am the husband of the house...* **Interview Mr NK IPA victim (70 years old), Kwekwe**

> *...because the man is supposed to be the head even in the bible, but it is not happening* **W2 in FGD (older women), Harare**

> *The man may be the head of the house, but he is also my helper. In marriage we help each other in everything we do. We plan together on issues regarding our children or any other issue. We discuss issues as a family.* **W3 in FGD (older women), Harare**

> *In the bible, God created Adam first and from him Eva was created and that means the man is the head of the household, but this does not mean that a mother or wife, has no right to make a decision e.g. In government we have a cabinet and a president where the cabinet may make a decision, but the president has the final say. The same is the situation in homes the husband is the face of the household.* **Mr ZM in FGD (older men), Harare**

It is evident from the above excerpts that both men and women are emphatic about fathers' roles as decision makers, leaders and pillar-like characters in their families. Mr TS and Mr NK individually state that the father of the house is the sole decision-maker whose decisions should not be challenged or 'disputed' by anyone, not even by their spouses or partners since that would amount to disrespect. Respect from family members especially spouses and children run

at the core of male identity among Shona men (Gelfand, 1973). They use such words as "…lead and make decisions undisputed" (Mr TS) and "the wife has to submit eeeh …she has to accept the decision …because I am the husband of the house..." (Mr NK), unequivocally depicting men as the sole family heads. These constructions of masculinity feed into the cultural stereotyping of women as irrational and incapable individuals without agency and serve as evidence of perpetual patriarchal conceptions of male identity as based on male power and privilege. Nonetheless, W3–a participant in the FGD with older women form Harare, while noting that fathers are heads of families, further stated that a father should make decisions in consultation with the mother of the household. This indicates that although some women consider fathers to be heads of households, they consider such roles to be equally shared with mothers. In line with the general sentiments expressed in the excerpts above, men can be seen as the culturally ordained family heads. However, such culturally grounded gender roles are not unchallenged. The views expressed by W3 above clearly challenge such cultural stereotypes.

Despite it being socio-culturally normative for Zimbabwean men in households as fathers, in workplaces and communities to be leading and providing guidance through decision making, it is not universal since women also occupy that space and act as key figures contributing in strategic decisions (Muzvidziwa, 2002; Makahamadze et. al., 2012; Muzvidziwa, 2013). In an FGD with older women in Harare, as above-noted, W2 stated that, *'…the man is supposed to be the head…,'* before further stating that, *'…but it is not happening…'* Although she conflated being a man and fatherhood, it is clear from her statement that the culturally expected form of fatherhood is incongruous with what is obtained among Zimbabwean households. Fathers do not always have the sole access to leadership, decision-making and instilling discipline among family members, to the exclusion of women as mothers therein. Rather, mothers are active decision-makers in homes, either individually or as a collective with fathers. Mr ZM, in an FGD with older men from Harare, as noted above, hints to this effect when he stated that, *'…this does not mean that a mother or wife, has no right to make a decision.'* More so, Mr SS –a victim of IPA form Harare, in an interview had this to say about fathers' discipline and leadership roles, *'… discipline at home is not about one person. eeeh the father needs the mother's support and the mother also needs the father's support. So, I think it is about two people...'* He portrays a form of a disciplinary fatherhood which is dialogical and based on negotiation with mothers as opposed to the punitive and violent type of fatherhood. Thereby confirming the post-structural feminist notion held in this study that identity is not stable, but fluid and negotiated, denoting the possibility of shifts or changes to it.

3.3.4   Gender role 'shifts' among urban households

There is growing literature within the gender discourse documenting the various effects of changing national economies globally on gender relations (Muzvidziwa, 2002; Hoang & Yeoh, 2011; Muzvidziwa, 2013). For Ratele (2016:p.16), there is 'a sweeping gender and sexual transition that in turn is changing the very nature of society.' As already noted earlier, colonial

governments in Africa, by and large, ensured the exclusion of women from participating in productive sectors of the economy. However, legal and social developments in the post-colonial era in Zimbabwe have seen an increase in women's involvement in political and economic spheres. A considerable number of Zimbabwean women have become income earners in the past two decades, either in the formal or informal economy (JPGE & ILO, 2017; Zimbabwe-Gov, 2018). Some even earn more than their husbands do, whereas in other cases men are dependent on their self-employed wives (Muzvidziwa, 2002; 2013). Concomitantly, more women are becoming breadwinners and providers for their families, attributes of which are generally associated with masculinity, while men are in some cases spending more time caring for their children and establishing father-child bonds (Khunou, 2006). This, although arguable, may be considered as a shift in gender roles between men and women because care work has historically been associated with women (Chitando, 2007; Adamson, 2017), especially in the Global South during the colonial era and beyond.

Findings in this study confirm women's involvement in providing home necessities through their income earning endeavours and that men's identity as breadwinners and therefore, family heads, is one that is negotiated and sometimes shared between them and women, making it unstable. The excerpts below reveal the conceptualisations and reactions of both men and women to this seemingly new phenomenon:

> *The issue of responsibilities changed from the old days (zvakunyanyoti sanganei) but a man must make sure that he provides in the home... whether the wife works or not...* **Interview-Mr DN-a male victim of IPA (47 years old), Harare**

> *Women used not to be providers as they were care takers and maintained the home but... times are different now, eeh the situation has since changed, and women are now providers as well. You know, my wife is a cross border-trader...* **Interview-Mr MH-a male victim of IPA (32 years old), Harare**

> *A man must be the one providing in the home but because the wife is the helper, she must also bring whatever she can because it about helping each other.* **W3 in FGD (older men), Kwekwe**

> *The man may be the head of the house, but he is also my helper. In marriage we help each other in everything we do. We plan together on issues regarding our children or any other issue. We discuss issues as a family.* **W3 in FGD (older women), Harare**

> *The man is the decision maker, and leader and the wife support.* **Mr ZM in FGD (older men), Harare**

An emerging pattern of perceptions is evident from the excerpts above. Participants noted that family headship and provision roles are shared between fathers and mothers –who in this case are men and women, a perception which warrants the 'shifting gender roles' label, since these roles have previously, especially during the colonial era, been associated with men, as already

noted. The shift can therefore be understood in terms of the conversion of these roles from a fathers' prerogative to the inclusion of mothers too. In the excerpt above, Mr DN and Mr MH– both victims of IPA from Harare, make use of the word *'change'* and there is no need to overemphasize that it means a transformation, reconfiguration, reorganization and shift in roles between men and women in families. Female participants also perceive providing as a shared responsibility and not only a preserve of men. W3, in an FGD with older women from Harare, excerpt above, regards her husband as the family head but also as her helper or supporter, in much the same way Mr ZM regards his wife in the last excerpt from an FGD with older men in Harare.

There are two important inferences from these excerpts. The first is that household responsibilities among Zimbabweans are collectively accomplished, as articulated in the focus group discussions and interviews by almost all of the participants. Such an inference confirms Muzvidziwa's (2013) study documenting the various ways in which some Zimbabwean women actively contribute to providing in their homes. It must, however, be clearly stated that the noted inference is made with specific reference to urban women. There might be significant differences between the findings made in this study and those made in a study on rural women. Secondly, W3's reference to her husband as the head of household regardless of the shared family roles and duties is a clear expression of the way patriarchy is entrenched in people's lives, making it difficult for her to view family headship as a role that can be shared too. This inference corroborates Muzvidziwa's (2013) contention that Zimbabwean women find it difficult to regard themselves as family heads even when they, in actual fact, head families and share family responsibilities through breadwinning, among other things.

One would expect that, due to the apparent gender role shifts, men would be worried and insecure as the proponents of the masculinity crisis would suggest. Findings herein run counter to such conceptions of the role shifts. Working class men, a majority of whom constituted the study participants, as well as those from middle classes, expressed comfort with having their wives working or doing something that generates income for the family. For example:

> *That is true, ehh my wife is a tailor and she earn her own money. We thought it was a good idea because my income was not enough…you know. Life is difficult these days*
> **Mr DC in FGD (older men), Kwekwe**

Some stated that their wives were government employees including those holding high ranking positions, while others were cross border-traders. Additionally, the use of inclusive language by men and women depicted in Mr ZM's excerpt above exhibits the satisfaction with which they welcome the changes. Mr DC above makes use of the phrase, *'we thought'* while W3 employs, *'we plan together'* and *'we discuss...'* It is important to note that there is a common use of the preposition *'we'* by both participants which suggests that the action or decision was not unilateral but a collective one. It further dispels men's discomfort with, while confirming their amicable acceptance and consent to, women's influence in the home.

A question may nonetheless arise as to why some men in Zimbabwe would not feel threatened by productive and breadwinning wives? While there is no clear answer to this question three possibilities are proffered. Firstly, despite, Clarfelt's (2014) contention that men who depend on their working wives in some African contexts may face social ridicule, it is possible that the well-documented Zimbabwean economic crisis (Muzvidziwa, 2001; Maphosa, 2007; Mason, 2009; Jones, 2010; Gukurume, 2015; Chiweshe, 2016) is enough insulation for men against such ridicule. Mr DC in the excerpt above specifically points out that, *'life is difficult these days,'* while Mr DN and Mr MH chose to be subtle by saying, *'responsibilities changed from the old days'* and *'eeh the situation has since changed,'* respectively. The last two statements may have several meanings but for the purposes of this study they are adapted to refer to the economic situation in Zimbabwe, which is in bad shape and has caused untold suffering on the inhabitants of the land (Chikanda, 2006; Mangezvo, 2015). A single person's salary may, therefore, not be able to meet the family financial needs. A helping hand from a working wife is therefore welcomed. General preferences among young Zimbabwean male graduates, although arguable, revolve around marrying an employed girl or one who is employable in terms of her level of education (Mubaiwa, 2019).

Secondly, men's perception of women's participation as complementary to their efforts to provide as fathers. This means that they may work together or separately but they combine their income in the end for the realisation of collective family duties and responsibilities. For Mr DC, his individual *'income was not enough'* while Mr ZM noted that his *'wife supports'* him. Their perception of their wives' roles is that of collateral involvement and not dominance by women. They, for this reason, do not feel disempowered or useless with regards to their role as providers. Despite Adinkrah's (2012:p.475) contention that men feel emasculated when women take leading or supportive roles in providing for the family, this study demonstrates that some men in Zimbabwe are at peace with female providers.

Lastly, Stoltenberg (2018) contends that there is a difference between moral identity and gender identity. Providing one's family with material and other forms of support is only a moral act that has nothing to do with one's gender. Any person, even those who do not identify with any gender can perform such moral acts. It is logical to aver that some men in Zimbabwe's urban spaces may perceive their masculinity in the same way as Stoltenberg, i.e. as being divorced from the roles they perform in the home. Thus, they find no threat in women's participation as main or co-providers.

Although no sense of insecurity was expressed by male participants herein, it cannot be inferred that all men in Zimbabwe are comfortable with their wives becoming breadwinners. Family life, as already noted, is characterised by multiple subjectivities across communities. Furthermore, a claim cannot be made that the domestic arena or the family in Zimbabwe is egalitarian, however consideration should be given to the significance of the role played by

women therein as well as the value accorded to them in the Zimbabwean context (Owomoyela, 2002) and in African contexts at large (Magoqwana, 2018).

Gender roles such as fatherhood (paternity) marriage, provider and protector as reported by participants are portrayed as rigid. However, there is evidence of contestation of such rigidity and the inherent negotiations even with people of opposite gender. It cannot be overemphasised that the high levels of unemployment in Zimbabwe have been impactful at household level resulting in men and women renegotiating their gender identities towards inclusivity. With regards to masculinity this may be perceived as transformation, reconstruction or reconfiguration of gender identities. It shows that although hegemonic forms of masculinity still persist, changes and reformations to more inclusive forms are possible (Messerschmidt, 2018). The above-noted gender role shifts bear theoretical significance especially if one considers Messerschmidt (2018) notion of the reformulation of hegemonic masculinities. Having formulated the hegemonic masculinity theory which essentially placed all men in a hierarchical pattern of power and dominance over women (Connell 1987), Messerschmidt (2018) reformulated the concept. The reformulation entails *inter alia* the recognition that women and girls may also embody aspects of hegemonic masculinity. Messerschmidt (2018) also acknowledges Demetriou's (2001) concept of dialectical pragmatism which captures the metamorphic nature of masculinity. According to Demetriou (2001) patterns of hegemonic masculinity may evolve through the incorporation of elements from other forms as well as feminine elements.

3.3.5   The Nationalist versus the Christian man

Masculinities and femininities are as much products of cultural and socio-economic contexts as they are politically and religiously structured. The identities adopted by both men and women are not immune to political ideologies and the religious environment in Zimbabwe. Particular attention is drawn to the role of nationalism and Christianity in producing certain versions of men and women. Although very few participants drew linkages between certain nationalistic events and their identities, it is important to note the influence of nationalism as an ideology or movement on people in general and men in particular, due to the subtlety of such (Nagel, 1998). According to Ngoshi (2013), the nationalist struggle against British colonial domination had numerous consequences in the way men and women construct their identities, even in the post-independence era. Of note is a distinct version of masculinity associated with participation in the struggle and the subsequent support or upholding of ZANU PF political views in the post-colonial age. Liberation war credentials in Zimbabwe are valorised and venerated as the only passport to key leadership positions in government, without which one is regarded as unfit (Mawere, 2017). Individuals embodying this type of nationalist masculinity, who are often touted as 'war veterans,' demand recognition and respect from citizens and are often prepared to even use force and violence if not accorded (Sadomba, 2008). Whenever need arises, war credentials are invoked and those without such or opposed to an agenda advanced by the 'war veterans' or 'comrades' are labelled as 'sell outs', or

'homosexuals' (Mawere, 2017). Labels which are strongly stigmatised and are meant to feminise opponents. It is important to point out that, as noted by Sadomba (2008:p.111), this version of masculinity is embodied by both men and women and is highly valorised across the country, especially among ZANU PF (the ruling revolutionary political party in Zimbabwe) members. It is also interesting that a female participant in an FGD with older women from Harare in the study identified herself as a 'war veteran' in her response to a question regarding the qualities of a Zimbabwean man. She perceives men as colleagues who are her equals and would relate to them in the same way as she did during the liberation struggle. The excerpt below details her response:

> *I consider men as our colleagues, eeh because back then during the war, we fought together. We moved together regardless of one's gender. Each and every person would carry their weapons without any assistance. We could do everything that men did. There were days we had to sleep on empty stomachs. After the war we were given political positions, war veterans' money and land even though women initially had problems having their names appear on land documents, the issue was resolved later...*
> **W4 in FGD (older women), Harare**

Her response evidently demonstrates the influence of nationalism on her perception of identities. Her struggle experiences form the basis on which she views men as her equal/colleagues.

As any other form of hegemony, nationalist struggle masculinities in Zimbabwe are not uncontested. There is strong resistance from younger generations and opposition political movements who perceive this version of masculinity as oppressive and exclusionist (Mawere, 2017). The use of the rhetoric of nationalist liberation war credentials by ZANU PF politicians to support their claim to power and undermine their opponents, as Mawere (2017) postulates, immensely shapes individual representations among men and women in Zimbabwe and the uncertainty of such identities.

In somewhat the same manner as nationalism, Christianity, as one of the major religions claimed among Zimbabweans, has had immense impact on feminine and masculine identities. Whether the people who cite the bible or claim to be Christians indeed practise its teachings is a question for another day. What is important to highlight here, is the finding in this study that, participants were impacted by Christianity in either of the following two ways: Firstly, Christianity and specifically, the Bible, is presented as the premise of male power, leadership and provider roles. Male dominance and female submission are inscribed therein, hence they are unquestionable. In the excerpt below from an interview with Mr NK –a victim of IPA from Kwekwe, despite not citing specific scriptural references, he mentioned the Bible as an authoritative source, the dictates of which cannot be challenged *"...we can't overrule what God said and enshrined"* The power of Christianity is being used to warrant domination of

women as contended by Greene (2008), who further views it as perpetuating hetero-patriarchal hegemonic masculinities.

> *Biblically, a woman was created to honour her husband, and this means that she should respect him ...look even naturally we have different organs, I don't get pregnant, but she does. We can't overrule that which God said and enshrined.* **Interview Mr NK IPA victim (70 years old), Kwekwe**

On the other hand, for some, Christianity is a foundation of a more considerate version of male identity which is not predicated on hegemony, but converted to depend on a super power above, that is, God. Chitando (2007) contends that this form of male identity has Pentecostal divisions of Christianity as its main proponents. Pentecostalism posits the ideal of 'a new man for a new era'. Zimbabwean Pentecostals are optimistic that masculinities are not frozen; they can be transformed. Men are thus converted through the work of the holy spirit into 'new men' who recognise women as their equals and therefore deserving their respect (Chitando, 2007). There are various ways in which the conversion process ensues, and these include teachings in the children's ministries, scripture unions at secondary and university levels, men's fellowships and finally couples meetings (Chitando, 2007). At all noted stages, boys and men are taught how to interact, associate with women and be better men. Indeed, couples' fellowships are a common feature in the Zimbabwean Pentecostal movement and the teachings are aimed at both men and women in marriages. Women are both attendants and conveners of such meetings with typical examples being the famous female preachers, Mai Gunguwo and Mai Chitawo, whose teachings awash social media and internet websites. Men who view God as the giver of wives and children as expressed in the excerpt from a male victim of IPA below, subscribe to this version of male identity. Their perception of a man is not one with all power but one who is dependent on God. Such men are tamed through the intervention of the Holy Spirit (Chitando, 2007).

> *When we are talking in cultural terms marriage and having children is a very important part of the identity of a man, (kunzi murume ndookunge uine vana uine mhuri) however when we look at the Christian way of being a man, those are not important because children come from God. So, the failure to have children does not make one a lesser father.* **Interview-Mr DN-a male victim of IPA (47 years old), Harare**

A problem arising from Chitando's (2007) conception of men's conversion by the Holy Spirit is that all men are treated as perverted and needing spiritual intervention while all women are pure and good, only deserving good converted men. The sweeping consideration of individuals as homogenous is always problematic and questionable. There obviously are some men who are not depraved and who regard women and their wives with respect in much the same way as there are women who need the same conversion. Hence identities, whether feminine or masculine, should be understood as multiple, unstable, fluid and constantly reshaping.

3.4 Chapter overview and conclusion

This chapter began by characterising the contemporary approaches to the conceptions of male identity within gender discourse. The chapter developed further into presenting findings on the diverse patterns, practices and manifestations of male identity in Zimbabwe. The presentation moves from those practices involving the body to those embracing the socio-culturally defined gender roles for men. The findings show that the male body is considered fundamental to identity construction among men, but only within a cultural context where interpretations are made regarding its appearance, i.e. size and potency – men's ability to meet sexual expectations of their sexual partners, who in heterosexual relationships are women. Male identities among Zimbabwean urban men that are constructed on the basis of the body are, therefore, relational and negotiated between men and their partners. Marriage and fatherhood epitomise the basic cultural practices associated with masculinity among Zimbabwean men, even though they are themselves challenged, sometimes negotiated and manifest in multiple and varied ways. The same is the case with nationalist and Christian masculinities with which some men identify.

The study's conspicuous finding that has had little attention in gender discourses is that of men's vulnerability, as opposed to their invincibility. Vulnerability in common cultural perception or in gender research is not among the traits that are associated with male identity (Lien & Lorentzen, 2019). It is confirmed in this study that some aspects of male identity such as the significance of the size of men's genitalia, their sexual potency, child siring and provider roles, to mention a few, are heavily dependent on confirmation and validation by women. Thus making male identity, to that extent, a women's prerogative whereby they can rescind or affirm such identity, as Lien & Lorentzen (2019:p.164) note. Chapter 4 builds on this key finding by illustrating other forms of men's vulnerability which are exposed through their victimisation by women.

The findings noted above demonstrate that male identity is fragmented, fluid, and unstable. They further depict a variety of identities which are either confirming or contesting hegemonic forms of being a man, thereby posing a challenge to an imaginary homogeneous Zimbabwean masculine identity. The post-structural feminist conception of identity as subjective as opposed to it being essentialised (Barrett, 2005), is also confirmed. An analysis is also made in this chapter of men's real or lived and expected identities, as a result of which, it is argued that, conformity with social gender stereotypes by men, is not always guaranteed.

CHAPTER

4 TYPES OF INTIMATE PARTNER ABUSE EXPERIENCED BY MEN IN ZIMBABWE

4.1 Introduction

This chapter advances the contention emerging from Chapter 3 that vulnerability is an aspect of male identity. This is done through bringing out the various types of abuse reported by men as suffered at the hands of their female partners. Inclusive of these are physical, sexual, verbal, proximate (abuse experienced by those people in the environment where abuse occurs), financial or economic, emotional and psychological abuses as well as other non-descriptive harmful acts by women towards men. The chapter builds on the study's theoretical argument that intimate relationships are characterised by multiple power centres which can be embodied by both men and women. It illustrates how women use reproductive, political, seductive, patriarchal, coercive as well as reward power bases to control or inflict harm on and punish their male partners. The data presented in this chapter was drawn from key informants in selected organizations, as noted in Chapter 2, and male victims of IPA using semi-structured in-depth interviews.

4.2 IPA against men in Zimbabwe: Who are the abused men?

The purposive sampling and recruitment of IPA victims in this study, i.e. those who either reported their cases to police, sought help from pastors and/or men's groups or had their cases published in various media platforms covering Harare and Kwekwe, renders the sample less representative and profiling the victims problematic as a corollary. Nevertheless, the subject of IPA against men in Zimbabwe is an intriguing one. This is due to the fact that societal perceptions of a man depict an invincible figure whose strength is guaranteed by membership of the male gender. This and other previous studies (Mhaka-Mutepfa, 2009; Makahamadze et. al., 2012; Zimbabwe-DHS, 2012; Zimbabwe-DHS, 2015; Kembo & Madzingaidzo, 2017) however, challenge such perceptions through presenting evidence of Zimbabwean men's vulnerability, thereby making it pertinent to understand the socio-demographic and economic profile of the abused men who participated, even though such data cannot be used for representation purposes.

Studies from both the Global North (Pizzey et. al., 2000; Josolyn, 2011; Hogan, 2016) and South (Gear, 2010; Hamilton, 2019) have shown that certain groups of men are relatively more susceptible to IPA and these include the young and elderly (Jejeebhoy & Bott, 2003; Clarfelt, 2014), the unemployed (Carmo et. al., 2011), the disabled, sexual or ethnic minorities (Javaid, 2017) and those in prisons or institutional care who, according to Hamilton (2019), are particularly at high risk of sexual assault.

In Zimbabwe, data from the Demographic and Health Survey (2015) suggests that IPA against men is relatively high among those who are employed and those who at least have secondary education as shown in **Tables 4.1** and **4.2** below respectively.

Table 4.1 Employment status of male victims as reported by perpetrators

Women's violence against their spouse according to partner's characteristics

Husband's/partner's employment status	Number of women who committed abuse	Percentage of women who have committed physical abuse against their husband/partner (%)
Employed	3167	57.6
Not employed	2327	42.4
Total	**5494**	**100**

SOURCE: Zimbabwe Demographic Health Survey Report (2015)[5]

Table 4.1 Level of education of male victims as reported by perpetrators

Women's violence against their spouse according to partner's characteristics

Husband's/partner's level of education	Number of women who committed abuse	Percentage of women who have committed physical abuse against their husband/partner (%)
Do not know	973	17.7
No to primary education	1048	19.1
Secondary educ. & beyond	3473	63.2
Total	**5494**	**100**

SOURCE: Zimbabwe Demographic Health Survey Report (2015)[6]

It should be noted that the statistical data presented in the tables above were drawn from the ZDHS reports which were based on interviews with women. Statistical data on male victims of IPA in Zimbabwe is virtually none existent and it has been argued in various parts of this study that that maybe the reason for the lack of coverage on the subject. Various reasons are also proffered for the none existence of such data. These include lack of systematic collation of such data by state agencies such as police where abused men report their cases and the failure to report abuse by many men who fall victims to IPA. The data presented in the table, however, suffices the assertion that IPA against men by women is existent in Zimbabwe.

The pattern in **Table 4.1** above was also evident among the male victims of IPA who participated in this study. Although the majority of men who participated were self-employed in the informal sector as informal miners, sole dealers and small-scale metal manufacturers, they cannot be considered as middle or affluent class due to the small income they generate

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[5] Zimbabwe Demographic Health Survey 2012-2014 *Final Report. Harare: Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency p. 338*

[6] Zimbabwe Demographic Health Survey 2012-2014 *Final Report. Harare: Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency p. 339*

from their businesses. For the purposes of this study they are thus considered as working class. Not more than one participant, a male victim, identified as a top executive member at their place of employment while three participants self-identified as pastors and respected persons among their congregants. These findings challenge the view by Carmo et. al. (2011) that unemployed men are more susceptible to IPA. All of the participants also had some basic level of education with the least educated being Ordinary level (last grade of secondary school) graduates and the highest being bachelors' degree holders. This could be conceived as a confirmation of study findings by Nybergh et. al. (2016) and those by the Zimbabwe Demographic and Health Survey (2015) in Table 4.2 above, that men with higher education are more prone to experience IPA. It is unclear, however, whether these men indeed experience higher levels of abuse compared to men with no formal education or they are knowledgeable regarding their rights and thus are more open to talk about their abuse experiences or to report them. In terms of age, basically all age groups (young – below 35 years old; middle-aged – between 35 and 50 years old and elderly men – above 50 years old) participated in the study as victims of IPA and the average age among them was 52 years. As already noted above, 20 participants were married while 14 of them were living with their partners without having any marriage formalities completed (cohabiting). While some participants had previously been married to or cohabiting with but were now separated from their abusers and no longer living with them, others were still married and living with their abusive partners.

Most of the key informants struggled to characterise the IPA victims they deal with. The common phrase among their accounts was that, "men from all walks of life" fall victim to IPA and would seek assistance. Implying that there is no particular category of men who are more vulnerable to IPA than others. One key informant (a pastor) had this to say:

> *… and it [IPA] does not have class, the problem is that it is not recorded… In fact, the macho ones are the ones that I have seen coming here for help and I think something happens when they are intimate, when intimacy comes it softens the so-called tough men and the little boy that is inside comes out and when that happens the woman takes chance and advantage.* **Key informant interview (BISH) a pastor and church founder from Harare**

> *Men who come here are from all walks of life, businessmen usually come for divorce advice which we cannot give but refer them to legal experts. …and because of our presence in rural areas even the poor of the poorest can approach us.* **Key informant from a men's organization in Harare**

> *It's very difficult to say…but maybe I can say ever since I have been in this job, I have seen mostly young and middle-aged men of let's say between 35- and 45-years old report domestic violence cases. Although older men do report such cases, they are usually few. …eeh maybe I should also say that men who normally come here cannot be viewed as wealthy people… ngwere hadziuye kuno… (rich people do not come here.* **Key informant (police officer), Harare**

*There is no physically observable among these men that you can use to characterise them although in some instances they may have scars especially if they have been physically abused…the only thing I manged to identify among my clients is that they all have ordinary level or secondary level education. **Key informant from a men's organization in Kwekwe***

An inference can be made from the above that men can be abused regardless of their socio-economic and demographic characteristics (Mhaka-Mutepfa, 2009). The fact that they are human and men, suffices to warrant victimization. Additionally, it is noted in the preceding chapters that being a man does not entail invincibility, in lieu, men also embody vulnerability as an element of male identity.

4.3 Types of abuse experienced by men

The participants in this study referred to manifold behaviours by their female partners and spouses which rendered them physically, sexually, verbally, emotionally and/or financially abused. Although in some instances they were certain about the type of the abuse they suffered, in other instances the participants failed to find suitable descriptive words for their experiences. As a result, they would use explanations or examples to clarify the types of abuse suffered. Based on the men's accounts, the abuse suffered can be classified into five broad categories: (1) sexual abuse; (2) emotional and psychological abuse; (3) physical abuse; (4) financial, legal and spiritual abuse; and (5) proximate abuse. These types of IPA are not mutually exclusive. The behaviours and impacts associated with each type often overlap, coincide or intersect with those of other types. For instance, seducing a man for malicious purposes using words and body language is verbally, sexually and psychologically abusive at the same time (Silvers, 2014). Similarly, a counsellor at one men's organisation from Harare had this to say:

*What is also very common here are the reported cases of physical and sexual abuse as compared to emotional abuse. I think this is because emotional abuse usually, emanates from these other forms of abuse and targets are not always able to identify or distinguish it. So, it's a progression of one form of abuse which then get to another form of abuse … **Key Informant Interview-Mr MCN (a counsellor), Harare***

In some instances, abuse happens in a particular pattern, whereby it is initially non-combative but with time, progresses or evolves to physical. Yet, others remain non-combative and without having any notable pattern as noted by Marshall (1999), who dismissed any correlations between physically abusive behaviour and psychological abuse. Nonetheless, a prominent feature in the meanings constructed by men from their experiences, as can be noted in the succeeding sections, is that whether there was a pattern of abuse or not, every abusive act had an emotional and psychological effect. Such findings are consistent with Silvers' (2014) assertion that emotional abuse cuts across all the other abuse types and the observation by Lien & Lorentzen (2019) of notable correlations between psycho-emotional and physical abuse.

Aspects of abuse as frequency or cycle, normality versus abnormality, and its degree make its delimitation among targets contentious. The abused men who participated in the study reported that they often found it difficult to decipher normal from abnormal or abusive behaviour in the same way they struggled with their perpetrators' behavioural shifts, as in most cases they followed no defined cycle. The men also grappled with determining the extent to which their partners' behaviour can be perceived as abusive. Silvers (2014) suggest that it is the perpetrator's motivation that should form the basis of whether it is abusive or normal behaviour, while the frequency and duration one endures the abuse can be determining for the extent of abuse. Despite being helpful to some extent, Silvers' proposition is not applicable in all circumstances, including in the context of this study. Firstly, the findings from the study suggest that there is no specific period to which one may refer as the standard time to then describe the abuser's behaviour as abusive. Secondly, targets are also not always sure when and how the abuse starts due the complexity of intimate relationships which are often based on affection and emotions. When they become toxic, it is often difficult for the target of abuse to decipher. Thirdly, the abusive acts are sometimes once off, – what Johnson & Leone cited in Frieze (2005:p.230), refer to as "situational couple" abuse, yet they are still very injurious, and in some circumstances they follow a series of both serious and less-seriously harmful events occurring over a long period of time, as in the case of Mr DN, whose wife was abusive for 15 years. More importantly, IPA is not always one-way or one-sided. In some instances, it is mutual, in which case all parties are initiators, or retaliatory, in respect of abuse targets who fight back.

It is of significant importance to further note that despite IPA behaviours being gendered in most cases, as the Duluth Model proponents assert (Pizzey, 2015), there are instances where abuse is linked to such idiosyncratic aspects as substance abuse and psychological problems, traceable to childhood experiences or neglect (Goodwin et. al., 2009) or spiritual problems, as is the case in some narratives which emerged in this study. Still more, this study found that women can also deploy gendered abusive behaviours whose bases may both be structural and individual, examples of which are paternity fraud and the use sex for manipulation of targets. The following sub-sections discuss the various types of abuse experienced by men in more detail.

4.3.1   Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse entails an abuser using sex as a means of controlling or punishing the target, or for achieving egoistic ends that harm the target (Chynoweth, 2018). While some perpetrators use direct methods of sexual activity such as rape, sexual harassment, sexual assault or sexual molestation (PI-Focus, 1998), others indirectly employ sex as a mechanism to solve or deal with non-sexual matters, (Silvers, 2014:p.48). Sexual abuse of women by men is widely acknowledged and documented –see, for example Jewkes et. al. (2002); Black et. al. (2011); Spohn & Tellis (2012); & Dartnall & Jewkes (2013). Nonetheless, women's sexual abuse of men remains a controversial subject which has continuously been denied across the world. The

reasons advanced for such denial include physiological impossibility (Fuchs, 2004) and the scarcity of empirical research evidence on the subject. There is, however, considerable research evidence globally documenting men's experiences of sexual abuse in general (Chynoweth, 2018) and that perpetrated by women in particular (Dowd, 2001; Ray, 2001; Jejeebhoy & Bott, 2003; Ganju et. al., 2004; Kumar, 2012; Clarfelt, 2014; Gordon, 2018; McMahon, 2019). In Zimbabwe, research on women's sexually abusive behaviour against men is scant, thus giving the impression that such abuse is non-existent. In a 1998 study among secondary school students it was reported that 30 percent of the student participants reported sexual abuse; half of which were boys abused by women (PI-Focus, 1998). Kembo & Madzingaidzo (2017), in the 2017 Rural Livelihoods Assessment Report, reported cases of sexual abuse against men in each of Zimbabwe's 10 provinces.

In this study, while no abused man reported being coerced or pressured into sexual activities, virtually every interview with male victims had narratives about women's use of sex as a manipulation tool, or to lure and trap unsuspecting male partners. Withholding of sex and belittling partners' sexual performances were also constantly arising themes. These forms of abuse occurred regardless of the phase or type of relationship, i.e. dating, cohabiting, marriage or even after divorce. For the purposes of the discussion on sexual abuse, the focus here is only on women's use of sex to trap men and their use of mockery to belittle men's sexual performance; use of sex for manipulation purposes forms part of the succeeding section on emotional abuse.

As noted earlier, sex is an important part of marriage among Zimbabwean communities. It is one among other obligations to be met by each of the parties in a marriage (Gelfand, 1992). Sex is also a human need (Slattery, 2009; Feldhahn, 2017) that ought to be fulfilled through mutual engagement based on communication and negotiation in good faith between involved parties. It is however, a moment of men's 'vulnerability', as Silvers (2014:p.53) argues, whereby their performance is rated and measured or evaluated by the other party who should in good faith highlight concerns if they are there. The other party, who in this case – heterosexual relationships, is a woman, may abuse such a responsibility by instead inflicting harm on the man through belittling his sexual performance or trapping him into making certain concessions.

A number of men indicated that they felt abused by their spouses use of sex to ensnare them. This, as most of the men stated, is typically done during a sexual encounter when a woman would unexpectedly make a demand that the man does something for her, the subject of which is unrelated to the intimacy obtaining at the particular moment. Men consider such behaviour as abuse because sex is seen as the moment of highest degree of closeness and affection to one's partner that should not be conflated with other personal or family matters (Silvers, 2014). The participants further noted that any demands made during such a time are difficult to turn

down even if one does not necessarily agree to them. Silvers refers to this moment as *'the heat of the moment'* (Silvers, 2014p.:53). One key informant from Harare described it as follows:

> *…they (women) know where to control men, the woman knows where power is, she does not work on the physical, and she will not be big and all that, but when the man is vulnerable, during that intimate time …yes that's when she strikes…* **Key informant interview (BISH) a pastor and church founder from Harare**

Such an abuse of a supposedly shared moment of bliss to then make personal demands can be described as latent but harmful due to its dire implications on the sexual lives of the targets. The excerpts below give a synopsis of some of the perceptions held by men regarding their ensnarement through sex.

> *… then you realise that sex is not just about love making, when demands for certain promises are made during that intimate time… and at times for such things that she knows I don't agree to. It's like I am trapped through sex. …it happens often, I can't even have a count.* **Interview-Mr DH -a male victim of IPA (40 years old), Kwekwe**

> *I feel like I am being treated as a child than a lover when she makes demands during intimate times… this happens often with my wife. I know a demand will pop up somehow when we are having sex. I have always thought sex was about love, but I now think it is not. I always give in because I want the sex and I can't stop…* **Interview-Mr TY -a male victim of IPA (37 years old), Harare**

> *One thing that my wife realise is that I love sex. So, it becomes her very prominent and strong bargaining tool …that even when she wants to ask for money from me, she can actually ask for it in the middle of love making. Knowing very well that I will not deny her …like in that situation, you may even agree to give her a million dollars which you never have had. Because of that weakness that we have as men, we enjoy sex to the extent of forgetting that everything else matters or exist …* **Interview-Mr RB-a male victim of IPA (42 years old), Kwekwe**

As noted by Silvers (2014:p.55) and Alberta-Gov (2008), sexual performance, sexual preferences and fantasies as well as the appearance of each partners' sexual organs in intimate relationships are shared and discussed with the understanding that they are private. However, an abusive partner may use that information to comment on the other partner's physical appearance in terms of size and shape, sexual performance, sexual desirability, sexual preferences or desires in a demeaning and mocking way. Some participants in this study reported that they were currently, or at some point in their intimate relationships, subjected to comments which belittled their sexual performance or that mocked the appearance of their sex organs. In the extract below, Mr SS a victim of IPA from Harare, narrates how a suggestion was made by his wife for him to consult a traditional healer because of his 'pathetic' performance in bed.

> *...and you can't make love, you just can't make love, you are weak. Go get 'guchu' (a concoction believed to give men sexual virility) from traditional healers… this is not sex. (haugone hautombogone zvako, wakaneta-neta. Enda unopihwa guchu naana sekuru uko, hapana zvebonde apa).* **Interview-Mr SS -a male victim of IPA (45 years old), Harare**

While Mr RT's experience as described below is almost the same as that of Mr SS, the comments by the former's wife went further to derogate his genitalia by referring to it as *'kadiki'* which literally means *'it's too small':*

> *I can't feel anything… just stop it. This is as good as I do not have a husband… of what use are you? I can't feel anything, it's too small. (Handina zvandiri kunzwa … chiregera zvako. Zvakangofanana nekuti handina murume… unobatsirei? Hapna zvandiri kunzwa ini, kakazonyanyawo kuita kadiki.)* **Interview-Mr RT -a male victim of IPA (30 years old), Kwekwe**

In the case of Mr UV, his wife said "*ndoosaka ndakakusiya, hapana zviripo* (that is the reason I divorced you, you are good for nothing…" The comments were made during a hearing in a child-custody court, which is a public space where even the media was present. As noted by (Silvers, 2014:p.42), intimate relationships by their nature create vulnerabilities to humiliation due to the fact that there is a natural longing to be respected by one's partner. An intimate partner has access to friends, family, co-workers, and other significant people and is often privy to other party's shared secrets. Thus, as above noted, the abused partner (who in this case is the man) may find it difficult to defend oneself against humiliating comments on things that happen in the most secluded or private arena (Silvers, 2014).

Apart from the apparent demeaning overtones running across the foregoing statements, they exhibit men's dependence on and deference to subjective judgments or evaluations by women, of their potency and ultimately, male identity. Such mockery affect the core of men's gender identity (Smith, 2013) and may be perceived as challenging the same since it is linked to their sexual potency (Segal, 2007), as is noted in Chapter 3. As a consequence, men often develop what Segal (2007:p.184) terms, 'performance anxiety,' a concept describing men's fear of the reality or possibility of failing to please women sexually, and thus wanting as 'real men'. Gordon (2018) refers to the same phenomenon as 'sexual shame', which according to him develops as a result of sexual performance insecurity. This holds true, especially if one considers the high volumes of men who visit sex therapists, physicians and in some cases surgeons for penile implants. In Zimbabwe, sex therapy sells and forms a major part of roadside and newspaper advertising in main urban centres. Figure 4.1 below shows a newspaper advert for male sex enhancers in a local online newspaper.

Figure 4.1 Male sex enhancement advert

Source: Zimbabwe Classifieds[7]

In addition to exposing women's use of subtle but harmful behaviours to sexually entrap and humiliate men, the above discussions illustrate that sexual power is not monolithic. Instead, as Hollway (1984) notes, heterosexual sex is a political cite, characterised by power contestations between the men and women involved. Women as intimate partners do have the ability to also embody sexual power and usually in an indirect way, making use of relatively unknown and unacknowledged acts like deception and ridicule (Currie, 2012). This may be the reason why such abusive behaviours do not find much expression in academic literature, as they are not readily as visible as physically abusive acts. Women's agency is thus confirmed through their ability to use sex to as a negotiating tool when, as above noted, they make demands during sexual encounters. Sexual performance complaints and other belittling comments by women which men in this study reported only serve to perpetuate the hetero-patriarchal notions of sexually virile and invincible men. They additionally illustrate women's role and power in the construction of male identity, as already noted in Chapter 3. It should be noted further that sexually abusive acts have emotional elements, to which the discussion now turns.

4.3.2 Emotional and psychological abuse

Emotionally and psychologically abusive behaviours can be overt, but are mostly covert and indirect harmful acts which cause internal and mental pain or harm such as shame and humiliation to the target (Silvers, 2014). The harm resulting from emotionally abusive behaviours is largely invisible, hence the adage that beatings and burnings may break your bones, but words, manipulation and deception may break your psyche and affect, while alienation and false accusations may break your spirit (Adapted from Silvers, 2014:p.33). For Merz (2016), emotional abuse is an attack on personality rather than the body. As averred above and also noted by Alberta-Gov (2008), all other categories of abuse have an emotional or psychological component and for that reason there are a myriad of means by which a part of an intimate relationship can be emotionally abusive. These include alienation of children's

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[7] Zimbabwe Classifieds https://www.classifieds.co.zw/en/Zimbabwesexualwellness/ Accessed on 17 March 2019

affection, playing helpless, paternity fraud (Turney & Wood, 2007; Chiwanza, 2018), neglect or withholding affection, withholding sex or using sex as a manipulation tool (Silvers, 2014), abdicating responsibility for decision-making, false accusations of rape/sexual abuse (Palmatier, 2011), sexual infidelity (Boonzaier, 2005), verbal insults (Lien & Lorentzen, 2019), character assassination and gaslighting (Abramson, 2014) among others.

In this study the most common types of emotional and psychological abuse experienced by the study participants were denial of sex, alienation from children or significant others, being verbally insulted, being falsely accused of sexual abuse, and cheating by female partners. The ATLAS.ti-generated Figure 4.2 below shows an ATLAS.ti generated graphic showing the various emotionally abusive behaviors identified by the victims in interviews.

Figure 4.2 Emotionally abusive behaviours by women
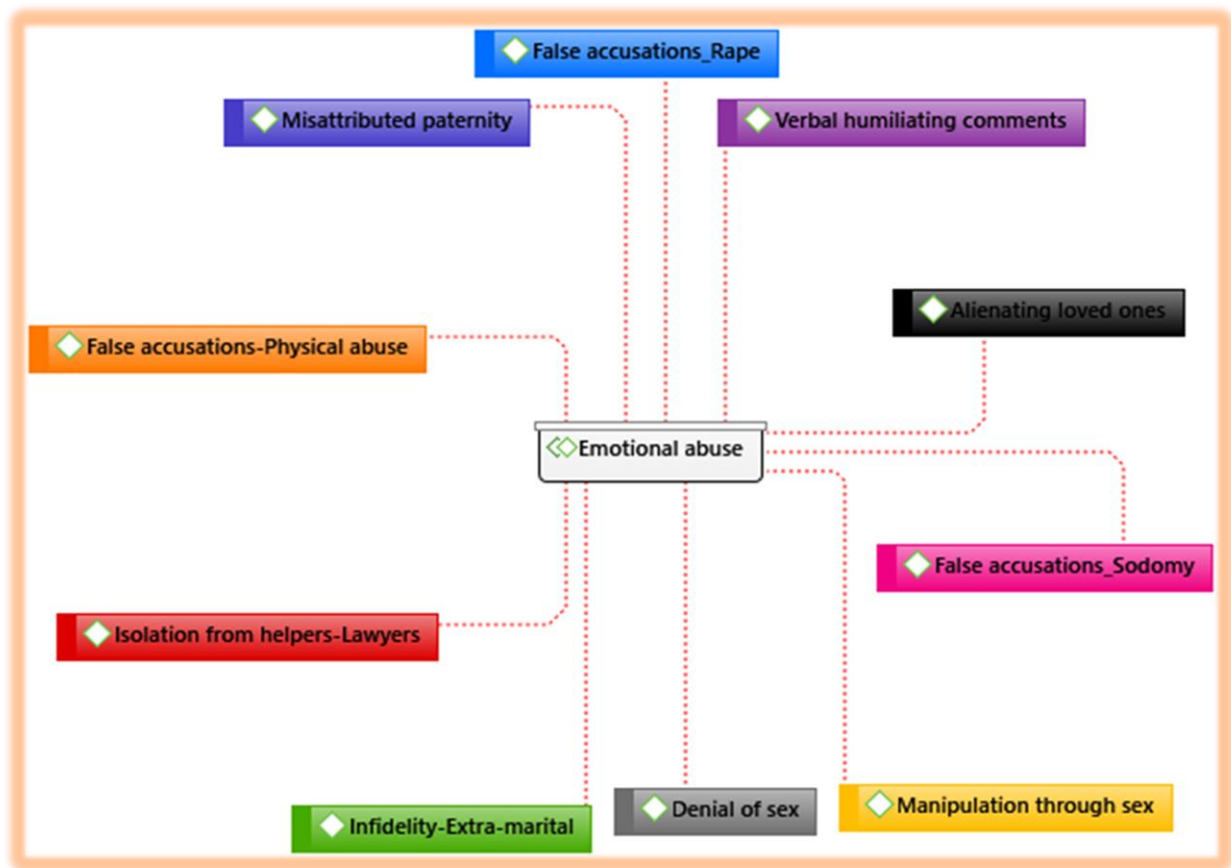
SOURCE: Responses from in-depth interviews with male victims of IPA form Harare and Kwekwe

To the extent that it is difficult to treat psychological and emotional abuses exclusively, since they often result from the same set of behaviours with the same consequences on the targets' thought, feelings and behaviours (Rachel, 2011), they are thus discussed together and interchangeably herein.

4.3.2.1 Prolonged withholding of sex

All but one of the interviewed men talked about how they felt abused by being denied sex by their wives. The word sex is given preference herein instead of the phrase "conjugal rights" due to the latter's implied entitlement in the word "rights." As reported by the participants, their female intimate partners use such denial to punish or reward certain behaviours, while in some instances it is meant to force them to concede to certain requests. The participants further noted that such withholding of sex is an indirect and covert abusive behaviour which outsiders may not be able to perceive. In a monogamous relationship, when a woman withholds sex, that would mean there is no sex at all, especially in conservative societies like Zimbabwe, where other means of sexual gratification such as masturbation are shunned and heavily stigmatised. A sexless relationship, especially marriage, causes feelings of rejection, unattractiveness, inadequacy, undesirability, shame for having sexual desires, emotional detachment and even sexual dysfunction (Silvers, 2014; Hamilton, 2019). The excerpts below indicate how it played out in the different participants' lives:

> *She also withheld sex. We would spend 3 to 4 weeks without sex. And for no reason. That to me is not a marriage.* **Interview MCS-TTK –a male victim (aged 46 years, Harare**

> *It all started when she denied me sex. We were staying apart, as I stayed here in town and she was staying in the rural areas with children. So, whenever we met, we would maybe after 2 months, we would have sex once and there would not be a next time and I suspected that she had demons and her denial of sex was spiritual.* **Interview-Mr DN- a male victim of IPA (47 years old), Harare**

> *But there are cases now where even if I want it, (sex) I must understand my partner that she is not in a position, like maybe we have just had a fight, right... Somebody may just not be in the mood, like when she is sick, right, I cannot force myself on her or when I am sick. Like maybe there are issues of our conditions, the HIV status now ...you know the discordant couple status and one is insisting on you using protection and the positive one refuses, then the negative partner (wife) is entitled to refuse such intimate advances.* **Interview-Mr OP-a male victim of IPA (49 years old), Harare**

Interviews with key informants also suggested that the denial of sex was one of the key issues brought to their attention. For example:

> *She will tell him I don't want to have sex for two to three weeks. I am busy and there is nothing he can do about it. And what does the man do, he waits for the wife, whatever she is doing and wherever she is, and that is violence, its emotional violence.* **Key informant interview (BISH) a pastor and church founder from Harare**

> *You want sex what have you done? So, women will be telling men that they do not deserve sex because they are not doing anything in the home. And some men end up*

It is evident from the above excerpts that some study participants clearly differentiate occasional rejection resulting from life's vicissitudes such as exhaustion, stress, illness or hormonal swings from the withholding of sex motivated by punishing, manipulating or controlling the target. Periods of as long as '2 months' '2-3 weeks', and '3-4 weeks' mentioned by participants indicate long stretches of time which cannot be conceptualised as occasional or once-off denial. As a key informant, who is a female church leader, BISH in an excerpt above described, a period of 3-4 weeks without sex as a very long time for a couple who biblically, biologically and socio-culturally (Holleman, 1969) are expected to have frequent and regular sex. She indicated that denial of sex concerns among men was one of the top issues that she has had to deal with for the entire period of her couples counselling work. She explained that the basis of most men's decipherment of their spouses' denial of sex as an abusive behaviour is that the rejection often lacks conciliatory offers of sex or any other means of affection in the near future. Conciliatory offers can give a man who is facing rejection the hope of an occasional better affectionate treatment at a specified or unspecified time (Hunter-Murray, 2016).

Denial or withholding of sex by women is a topical but very controversial issue in Zimbabwe, to such an extent that it has found its way in Christian couples-church sermons – see Amai-Chitau (2014); & Amai-Gunguwo (2016), where pastors and church elders teach about the benefits of communicated lovemaking between spouses and the dangers of withholding or denying of sex within marriages. Such preachers use bible teachings which emphasise on the merits of a healthy sex life in the context of a marriage. Feldhahn (2017) and Munroe (2017), as supporters of frequent and regular sex between spouses, claim that it is a need rather than a want among men, while Holleman (1969) claims that among Zimbabwean Shona people, sex between married people is a customary practice, denial of which has dire consequences that can include divorce.

It is noteworthy that some feminists such as Du Plessis & Maree (2009) however, do not accept that when women deny men sex they will be abusing them. They argue, rather, that such perceptions are based on a model of sexuality that reflects and promotes the interests of men and defines sex in male-terms, thereby facilitating the sexual-political control of women by men (Du Plessis & Maree, 2009). Women cannot be labelled powerful simply because they use their bodies for bargaining.

4.3.2.2 Misattributed or falsified paternity and paternity fraud

As noted in Chapter 3, among the key markers of male identity among Zimbabwean men is one's ability to sire children. In other words, paternity is very important to a Zimbabwean man's identity even though it is not indispensable. Be that as it may, it is categorically understood and held that a man's paternity can only be confirmed by either the woman (child's mother) or, in recent times, through the use of technologies such as the conducting of DNA

paternity tests. The former is premised on what Kaebnick (2004:p.49) refers to as a "marital presumption" or "presumption of legitimacy", which is essentially an unquestionable assumption that a man married to a woman or one identified by a woman as the father of her child, is indeed the biological father of the child. This presumption is culturally upheld and accepted without question unless there is a physical unfeasibility such as the man's absence at the time of conception, impotence or sterility (Kaebnick, 2004). This assumption entangles men into paternity and fatherhood just by mere claims from women and, in the absence of a DNA test, is prone to manipulation and abuse by the same women whom it empowers, resulting in misattributed paternity and other abuses in many cases.

Misattributed paternity, paternity discrepancy or fraud occurs when a woman misidentifies a man as the biological father of her child when she knows or suspects the non-existence of genetic links between her child and the identified man (Preller, 2011). Reasons which are sometimes proffered for such women's behaviour include poverty (for economic or financial benefit), to spite or revenge the respective men, fear of revealing incestuous relations, (Masakadza, 2018) and sometimes no reasons are given at all. Nonetheless, some of the men found on the receiving end of such behaviour feel abused by such misattribution which, according to one victim from Harare, is characterised *"malice and deceit."* In this study, misattributed paternity featured prominently as more than ten victims indicated that they, at some point in their respective lives, unwittingly 'fathered' and raised children that were not naturally theirs. As one of the victims, Mr SS – a 45 years old victim form Harare, indicated, *"fathering a child who is not biologically your own is not a problem, but doing so under false pretences is."*

Due to the privacy with which the phenomenon of misattributed paternity is shrouded, it is generally difficult to get reliable statistical estimates of men who fall victim to it. For example, Henry (2006) states that in the USA, the lowest estimates are in the tens of thousands, while in South Africa, Preller (2011) avers that while paternity misattribution is assumed to be widespread, no estimates can be established. The same is the situation in Zimbabwe, with some further compounding factors being the inaccessibility of DNA paternity testing technology due to the costs involved. Most of the participants herein narrated the difficulties with which they grappled to raise the test fees. In a Facebook post by a genetics company called Global DNA Zimbabwe[8], it was revealed that for the period of 16 months ending in May 2018, more than 70% of the men that managed to raise their tests fees had their results come out negative, i.e. they were not the biological fathers of their children. An assumption is made therefore that scores of men in Zimbabwe may be in the same situation, but unable to raise the required funds to have the tests conducted.

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[8] Global DNA Zimbabwe Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/GlobalDNAGlobally/?ref=br_rs Accessed on 14 August 2019

The following case summaries demonstrate the experiences of some of the cases published on the Global DNA Zimbabwe Facebook page[9] of men who self-identified as paternity misattribution victims after DNA test results revealed that they were not the biological fathers of some of their children:

4.3.2.2.1 Cases summaries of self-identified victims of misattributed paternity

A young man whose mother misidentified a man as his father before she died when he was 11 years old, only discovered the discrepancy 14 years later when he went out searching for the alleged father. His emotional desire to find his paternal family and belong with them led to the 'startling' and sad discovery. **PF0512 -a male victim (aged 25 years) from Harare**

A man whose wife had an affair with her boss which resulted in a child, was misidentified as the father by his wife. The discrepancy came out when the said boss revealed the affair, after four years, to the alleged father who then took a test and it confirmed no genetic links between him and the child. **PF2711 -a male victim (aged 34 years) from Harare**

A paternity test was conducted after five years, at the instance of the alleged father's family who had been bailing him out whenever he was detained for defaulting in child-support payments. When the results came out negative, the man could not hold his tears back, reflecting on the harassment he endured at the hands of law enforcement agents and the time he spent in prison each time he was detained. **PF2011 -a male victim (aged 45 years) from Harare**

Despite the differences in the above-mentioned cases, a common thread that runs through all of them centres on the perceived deception with which they were treated by their female intimate partners, resulting in psychological or emotional harm and/or financial loss. It should also be noted that apart from the alleged fathers there are other victims of misattributed paternity who include children –as in case number PF0512 above, 'real' or biological fathers and their families –in case number PF2711 above as well as the families of the alleged fathers – in case number PF2011.

From the researcher's personal observation of live broadcasts of the paternity results[10], reactions by the targets of paternity misattribution depended on their expectations. When the DNA paternity results confirmed certain suspicions, i.e. that one was not the biological father of the child he was financially supporting, those results will be received with joy and relief. Such relief and joy, nonetheless, did not *'wash away the harm already suffered,'* as one victim pointed out in a live broadcast[11] of his DNA paternity results. For some victims a negative test

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[9] Ibid

[10] Ibid

[11] Ibid

result, i.e. that one is not the biological father, worsened the emotional torture. This was the case especially among those who were still married or living together with the perpetrators. Established bonds and emotional attachment to children was one reason often cited by victims as a cause for agony. Although the law[12] provides for financial compensation in the event that test results disconfirm the paternity of one who was providing financial support to the child, some victims felt that they lost out because care and love are unquantifiable, and no financial value can be attached to them. One participant had this to say:

> *I know then that the law provides that if it is then proven that the child is not yours, you will be compensated, but there are other issues which are beyond compensation, they cannot be compensated because, what of the love that I invested from birth right up to University, right... I mean thinking that it is my child, you know how love flows naturally, when you know that it is your child, you don't have to be told to be affectionate, it comes naturally that you love your son, your daughter then after 20 years you are told that the child is not yours, I think that is abuse of the worst kind to humans.* **Mr TK-a male victim (aged 67 years), Harare**

In this excerpt Mr TK makes reference to phrases like, the *'love that'* he *'invested'* and *'abuse of the worst kind to humans'* as an indication of the sentimental implications of misattributed paternity. As such others would go for counselling to help them adjust to such *'a life changing revelation,'* to use the words of one victim form Kwekwe.

Apart from emotional and economic harm, some participants stated that they sustained psychological damage due to their doubted social identity. Negative results often raise the question regarding one's potency which in itself leads to the question of the man's identity as noted in Chapter 3 above. The excerpts below provide a snippet of what goes on in the minds of men who discover paternity discrepancy.

> *Even until now, I also ask myself the question of whether I am a man or not, because I hear other people telling me that I am a loser, ... So, when I am alone, I find it very difficult to answer such questions.* **Interview –Mr MDN-a male victim (aged 55 years), Harare**

> *I at some point doubted myself and there is a situation where one doubts himself ..., and say, did I satisfy this woman? But how did we come to this situation? But the children look like me...* **Interview- Mr NK -a male victim (aged 70 years), Kwekwe**

The above excerpts from interviews with Mr MDN and Mr NK are characterised by confusion, self-doubt, dented self-esteem, anxiety, questioning self-identity as a man and questions whose answers cannot be found or provided. Such are typical psychological traumas experienced by men who find themselves in the same situation (Bailey, 2018). This is so primarily because, as

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[12] Maintenance Act [Chapter 5:09] 51 of 1971

noted earlier, male identity in Zimbabwe is closely linked to child-bearing, and only women –
in the absence of a paternity test can provide confirmation to such ability by men.

Some participants raised questions regarding men's reproductive rights and the possibility of
them being violated through paternity misattribution. Such sentiments also find expression in
Silvers (2014:p.53), who highlights the generally acceptable disregard of men's reproductive
rights through the "marital presumption" (Kaebnick, 2004:p.49) and the general disregard for
acknowledging paternity misattribution as a crime or form of abuse. Paternity fraud cases
expose the ever-existing reality that men play the father role on a putative basis. A mere claim
by a woman that one is the father of her child automatically qualifies one the "father" label and
if that woman decides to be malicious and abuse that power of identification then the man will
suffer. His suffering is so only because he is a man (Cannold, 2008). This is a clear illustration
of men's vulnerability when it comes their reproductive rights as compared to women, who
wield reproductive power which they use to identify the fathers of their children.

Some feminist critics, such as Draper (2007), object to paternity testing and the recognition of
paternity fraud as a form of abuse, arguing that the phenomena are meant to demonise women
(Turney, 2005; Draper, 2007) and trivialise the broad outlook of fatherhood by only
concentrating on paternity while disregarding the interests of children (Kaebnick, 2004). To
this end they call for restricted access and use of paternity tests. The findings in this study,
however, run parallel to such perceptions of paternity tests and misattributed paternity.
Participants noted that it is in the interest of every family member, children included, to know
where they belong. Nduna et. al. (2011) note that African families whose patrilineal descent is
still intact value kin connections and new members are received and acknowledged by
ancestors. Violation of such ancestral ties has serious implications like madness or delinquency
of the involved child (Gelfand, 1992). It thus seems that the contention that paternity tests and
the subsequent discovery of paternity misattribution amounts to disregarding the interests of
the child does not hold in some African contexts. It only serves to perpetuate the violation of
men's reproductive rights through misrepresentation by mothers at the detriment of putative
and biological fathers and even the children themselves (Preller, 2011).

4.3.2.3 Alienation of loved ones

Families are relationship networks whose foundation and binding force is love and sometimes
blood. Thus, family members are expected to give and receive love amongst one another. The
estrangement of any family member causes discomfort and strife. The effects are more
damaging if such estrangement results from machinations by other family members. Silvers
(2014:p.98) notes that as a result of their control on children, parents may maliciously scheme
to influence the children's perception against any other family member they do not get along
with. She further notes that such influence may also be maliciously used to manipulate
children's perception of and to rebuff the other loving parent (Silvers, 2014). Many men in this
study lamented that their spouses and partners isolated them from their children, parents,

siblings, friends, and/or extended family members through behaviours such as lying and exaggerating their flaws, making their children think that they do not care about them, distorting the reality to the children and other family members by pretending to be the victim, forcing children to lie about their father and/or framing false accusations against them or other family members resulting in mistrust and serious family rifts.

One victim from Harare, Mr GW, stated that his abusive former wife attempted to block their son from taking the drink that he had bought for them. She shouted that, *'usatore drink iroro mwanangu, unourayiwa, ko kana riine chefu?'* i.e. lit. *'don't take that drink my child, you may get killed, what if it is poisoned?'* to which members of the police and the public who were present and heard it responded with reprimand, noting that such behaviour would negatively impact on the children and their perception of their father. He further noted that there was no reason for suspecting that he would want to kill his children. Her behaviour was rather an act of malice meant to keep the children away from him and make them see him as their enemy. In another case, Mr RR, a victim from Kwekwe, indicated that his wife accused him of having an affair with his brother's wife which never happened. As a result, his relationship with his brother was severely threatened and the family had doubts raised about him. The accusations also affected his credibility even though it was later proven to be untrue. Instances where children are influenced against their parents resulting in their alienation and estrangement bring with them distress and emotional harm to the parent-child relationship, while concocted lies against family members cause distrust. These behaviors go against the love bond and affection that families operate in and are meant to punish men by women. Khunou (2006) acknowledges that men and women in intimate relationships may wield different forms of power. Whereas men may be dominant in terms of economic or financial power, women may on the other hand be dominant in terms of relational power. Thus, the manipulation of children to alienate their father shows the inherent relational power that mothers have on their children.

4.3.2.4 False accusations of sexual and other forms of abuse

Silvers (2014) considers men who are falsely accused of sexually abusing their children as being sexually abused themselves. Her justification in categorising them as such is that the accusations portray the men as sexually-perverted and hence they negatively affect the men's sexual lives (Silvers, 2014). Victims of false sexual abuse accusations, however, are regarded in this study as targets of emotional and psychological abuse. This is because they suffer more affective and mental torture than they are harmed sexually. Apparently, as reported by participants in this study, there are many purposive motivations prompting women to contrive allegations against men. It could be children's custody issues, the fact that they want to cover-up for their own mistakes or misbehaviour while some do it to find justification for divorce because they may have found love elsewhere.

False allegations of sexual assault, rape or sodomy among others against men are not uncommon across the world –see also, in the USA[13] and in South Africa[14]. Men who find themselves in that situation are usually blindsided by the accusations. They may be caught up in a psychological-self-debate whereby they will be asking themselves questions, the answers to which they cannot provide (Lien & Lorentzen, 2019). This was the case for Mr NK, whose wife accused him of raping their only daughter resulting in the birth of a child before further accusing him of sodomising their last-born son. According to Mr NK, he could not understand why his wife had decided to lie against him, so he kept asking himself, '*Why does she say things like that? Why is she trying to destroy me?*' He further noted that the false accusations she made were meant to deflect attention from her ongoing infidelity and use of political connections to victimise him. In his case both allegations stuck and were to only be cleared in court with the help of DNA tests, with respect to the first allegation – which proved that he did not father her daughter's child as had been alleged. The continued vehement denial by his youngest son and the doctor's report dispelling anal penetration also cleared Mr NK of any sodomy charges (second allegations). The allegations, as Mr NK asserted, stuck because of the common patriarchal myths that deny men's vulnerability while only acknowledging that of women and children. Yet abusive women often find safe havens in such myths and toxic patriarchal stereotypes which they manipulate and turn against men (Hamilton, 2019). In Mr NK's case the aforesaid allegations not only resulted in his estrangement from his children, who were divided between them as parents, and psychological trauma, but also caused grave damage to his reputation as a clergy man. He also suffered long periods of incarceration during the course of both trials, with the shortest one lasting for five months.

4.3.2.5 Sexual Infidelity

Suspicions of infidelity between spouses are among the major sources of anger, distress, mistrust (Gov-Zimbabwe, 2012b; Nemeth et. al., 2012) and even self-doubt among men who would resort to questioning their own potency and therefore their identity as noted above. The consequences are even graver when such suspicions are confirmed (Silvers, 2014). In this study more than half of the interviewed men reported having suspicions of their spouses' infidelity, while five of them had such suspicions confirmed. MCS-PTF, a victim from Harare (aged 48 years), had this to say: '*...she confessed to having an affair after I had quizzed her regarding her unexplained overnight disappearance from home… we had been together for 8 years and with 4 children.*' For Mr MD, a victim from Harare, during the time when his wife was denying him sex, she was seeing someone else and he at one point caught them red-handed in his house. His description of how he felt is 'beyond anger and pain.' He noted that he felt as if he had lost his mind. At work, he could not concentrate to the extent that he even failed an interview for

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[13] Lawrence McKinney-https://edition.cnn.com/2018/03/23/us/lawrence-mckinney-exoneration-trnd/index.html Accessed on 31 January 2019

[14] Wrongfully accused prisoner released - 14 years later https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1eMl4kRaJYk Accessed on 22 August 2018

promotion, which according to him appeared not to be difficult. More so he felt estranged from his family (wife and children). He had this to say about the way he was affected by his wife's sexual infidelity:

> *Even at work I began having problems of concentration, I could not concentrate and work well as I used to. I remember that there was an interview that happened at work during the same time and I failed that interview which I perceived as not difficult at all I think I failed it because of my wife's infidelity. I was not settled, and my mind was not stable. I was only thinking about it…It was beyond anger and pain to the extent that I lost my mind and I could even talk to myself sometimes. Because I myself was wondering where I was getting it wrong to deserve such treatment from the person I loved as my wife.* **Interview-Mr MD-a male victim of IPA (49 years old), Harare**

Some feminist researchers like Nemeth et. al. (2012) aver that infidelity concerns are mere forms of jealousy which are meant to justify IPA against women by men. For Kambarami (2006), another feminist writer, women deserve the same 'sexual freedoms' that men enjoy. She further notes that men in intimate relationships cheat too and culture somehow condones their cheating while failing to tolerate women's infidelity, thereby, restricting their sexual freedom. According to Kambarami (2006), therefore, sexual infidelity by women is an expression of sexual freedom. Whether one agrees with Kambarami (2006) or not, the reality of sexual infidelity among intimately involved people is that it negatively affects both men and women regardless of who has done it. It causes distrust and may exacerbate IPA (Nemeth et. al., 2012).

4.3.2.6 Verbal insults

Verbal insults were in this study identified as another avenue through which women abuse men. Due to their nature of intersecting with other abusive acts, verbal insults are not limited in any way to a particular subject or phenomenon about men. It was revealed that women can verbally insult men in any way and for anything from among others; their physical appearance –including the appearance of their genitalia, their sexual performance or virility as earlier noted, to their potency or fertility –through casting paternity doubt, as in the case of PF2708, a male victim of paternity fraud, whose wife told him that *'vana havasi vako ava' ('these are not your children')* after they had been together for 18 years, with PF2708 believing that the two children they had were his too. Such comments or verbal insults by women or mothers who are intimately involved with the men bear strong meanings and messages because they, the mothers, are the people who society gives legitimacy to have such intimate knowledge about the men, due to their proximity to the respective men. Therefore, their word is often unquestioned. It is considered as is, even if it is not true but only meant to malign the targeted men. The case of a prominent Zimbabwean Sungura musician, whose estranged wife publicly claimed that he had a *'kadora'* i.e. small penis, is an example. The case received a lot of traditional and social media attention, with people expressing different views (Anonymous, 2014; Ndlovu, 2014; Sibanda, 2015). Some condemned the wife's behaviour while others

supported her utterances by arguing that 'real men' need to have big genitalia (Sibanda, 2015). Key informants from church, family counselling and men's organizations all reported that verbal abuse reports were the highest among all the abuses reported by men. This *inter alia* illustrates that; women have the ability to inflict harm and pain on men by using their verbal capabilities.

4.3.4 Physical abuse

Among the various types of IPA, physical abuse is the one that is given the most research attention due to its easy recognisability (Silvers, 2014; Merz, 2016). It is any form of behaviour that threatens one's physical integrity, although it does not always leave marks (Merz, 2016). Silvers (2014) mentions that many people think that IPA or domestic violence is only physical. This way of conceptualizing IPA is problematic and has resulted in large proportions of studies concluding, therefore, that men cannot be abused by women because of their size and physical strength (Merz, 2016; Lien & Lorentzen, 2019). As noted by Winstok & Straus (2016), many studies on domestic violence make comparisons between men and women regarding the gravity, frequency or prevalence of attacks on each side. Although different conclusions can be drawn from such comparisons, the unchangeable reality is that men can be physically abused by their female acquaintances and such behaviour has debilitating implications on the men, their children and the abusive women too (Silvers, 2014).

Although in Zimbabwe, physical abuse is generally associated with abuse of women by men (Mhaka-Mutepfa, 2009; Chuma & Chazovachii, 2012), participants in this study confirmed being struck when they were unsuspecting, kidnapped by people whose help to do so was solicited by their spouse, hit with open hands, doused with either hot or cold liquids e.g. water and cooking oil to cause harm, threatened with attacks or having a loved one attacked and forced out of the house. Two cases of murder by a female intimate partner were also dealt with by the High Court in Harare and were published via media during the time of the study and hence are alluded to in this section. Below are the extracts from some of the statements by men who were physically abused.

> *After I confronted her regarding her infidelity, she hit me in the head and on my legs using a hoe and as a result I spent two months in hospital unable to walk. She also cut my middle right hand finger during the beating (he has a visibly missing right-hand middle finger and some big scars in the head).* **Interview MCS-PTF-a victim (aged 48 years), Harare**

> *My former wife doused me with hot water after I had quizzed her about the man, she had allegedly done laundry for, who had come in the early hours of the day to collect the said laundry and confirmed the affair to me. Realising that I had discovered her secret affair, she did not answer my questions but instead took a pot on the stove with boiling water and poured it on me before fleeing the scene together with her lover.*

(There are visible scars on his chest and neck which may be understood as water burns). **Interview MCS-TTK: -a victim (aged 46 years), Harare**

Figure 4.3 Interview excerpts from Mr NK -a male victim from Kwekwe

It can be noted in the above excerpts that there are numerous ways in which women may administer physical harm on men and the seriousness of injuries may vary depending on the severity of force used. While MCS-PTF, a male victim, in the excerpt above reported that he was hit with an object, i.e. *'a hoe'* resulting in him losing a finger and failing to walk for a considerable period of time, MCS-TTK was doused hot water, leaving visibly huge scars on his chest which any lay person who sees them attribute to serious wounds. Yet Mr NK had his lawyer on rape and sodomy cases, which were fabricated by his wife, threatened, leading to his withdrawal of service to him. Additionally, and more interestingly, after he was thrown out of their matrimonial house and was at that time staying at a rented apartment alone, he was kidnapped by men who claimed to have political connections with his estranged wife, only to be saved by an unknown figure who appeared from an opposite direction, leading to the kidnappers dropping him unconscious and fleeing the scene. It can be noted from these accounts that these assaults, besides having serious implications, were not isolated but connected to other forms of abuse which severally progressed to become physical.

For MCS-PTF and MCS-TTK, physical abuse was linked to their wives' sexual infidelity, whereas for Mr NK it was connected to false accusations levelled against him. This validates a claim by Silvers (2014) that different forms of IPA intersect, overlap and are never mutually exclusive. Furthermore, there are cases where IPA against men result in death, either through suicide (Adinkrah, 2012) or mariticides, as Adinkrah (2007) reports how some Ghanaian women kill their husbands after finding new lovers. Statistics on male suicides or mariticides

are non-existent in Zimbabwe. However, during the course of this study the High Court in Harare handed down two reported murder judgements in unrelated cases, of which the respective accused women were found guilty of murdering their intimate partners, e.g. the Sweswe case[15]. Of theoretical interest is the finding emanating herein that women can also use physical force or power to punish, dominate and therefore, abuse men in contrast to the dominant structural-feminist contention that they are passive victims of IPA by men who are always dominant. This study illustrates that in the event that they are not able or willing to use such physical power, women can also solicit the help of others to attack their abuse target as in the case of Mr NK above. Financial, legal and spiritual abuses as reported by the participants form the subject of discussion in the following section.

4.3.5 Financial and legal abuses against men

Although these forms of abuse are noted herein, fewer participants reported having experienced such, rendering them less common than those discussed above. As such, they are jointly discussed in this section.

Financial abuse

While literature reports that men financially abuse their wives by limiting or blocking their income generating opportunities (Sanders, 2015), women may engage in some behaviors which have similar consequences. Financial abuse, which is also referred to as economic abuse, comprises of behaviours that are aimed at inflicting financial loss on the target (Silvers, 2014). Such behaviours may include, but are not limited to, withholding economic resources such as money or credit cards; stealing from or defrauding a partner of money or assets; exploiting the intimate partner's resources for personal gain; preventing the spouse or intimate partner from working or choosing an occupation as well as withholding property and other economic resources belonging to the target in an effort to deny him/her enjoyment thereof (De Benedictus & Jaffe, 2004).

Men in this study indicated that they were financially abused through their partners' unreasonable demands, with financial implications reaching beyond their means, controlling and restricting their access to family income as well as stealing from their or family resources. In an interview with Mr GW, a self-employed car-parts-dealer and victim form Harare, he indicated that he felt abused when his divorced wife made *'unreasonable'* demands for a change of their children's school to the one he stated had fees that were far beyond his means and so he felt the change was financially unfeasible. The demand was followed by threats of a court application for rescission of a previous child-custody judgement in his favour. Mr GW's account confirms Silvers' (2014:p.58) contention that women sometimes take advantage of traditional patriarchal gender roles to abuse men. In this instance Mr GW's former wife manipulated the stereotypical traditional men's role as 'provider' by demanding that he make

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[15] *S v Sweswe* July 2018

financially unreasonable changes in regard to their children's school, which had adverse financial implications on his part. Failure to comply with the demand meant that he would possibly lose custody of his children. Such a demand does not only imply financial harm, but also emotional and psychological torture on Mr GW, who faced the imminent threat of losing the custody of his children. In an unrelated incident, the same former-wife of Mr GW fraudulently sold a family boat without his consent and lied to him that it was stolen, only for him to be told by the buyer that he had bought it from his former-wife. Her behaviour was not only tantamount to stealing but also deprived Mr GW of economically benefiting from the family boat. Warmling et. al. (2017) reported that financial and economic abuse is likely to be experienced by elderly men, however this study found that young and middle-aged men may also fall victims to this type of abuse.

Legal abuse

'Even though I had never been at all abusive or threatening to my wife (or anyone else), she lied and said she was scared of me, so she could get a restraining order against me. That meant I could not go back to the house for my tools, or documents or anything.' Adapted from Silvers (2014:p.87).

The above quotation is adapted from Silvers (2014:p.87) and came from a participant in her study on abused men in the USA. It highlights the nature of legal abuse and its consequences on the target. This form of abuse is gaining recognition among researchers in both the Global North see, (Cook, 2009; Hines et. al., 2015; Morgan & Wells, 2016; Shum-Pearce, 2016) and South, see Khunou (2006:p.274), who refers to this form of frustration among men as "gender assumptions of the law." (Hines et. al., 2015) refer to this form of abuse as "legal and administrative aggression" and it basically entails misuse of the legal system by abusers to punish the target through sometimes making misrepresentations to law enforcement and judicial authorities (Cook, 2009; Shum-Pearce, 2016).

Some men in this study stated that their spouses manipulated the justice system by finding their way through misrepresentation to some of the actors within Zimbabwe's legal system (the police, prosecutors, magistrates or judges). Such misrepresentation took the form of falsified victimhood or obtaining child support by fraudulent means, such as misattributed paternity. Considering that this (misattributed paternity) has already been discussed in the preceding sections, the focus here is on falsified victimhood. Mr DN, a male victim from Harare, pointed out that, among other abusive acts by his former wife was one instance where, after being summoned to the nearest police station following a physical abuse report by him, she misrepresented that she had not assaulted him. She claimed, instead, that he had beaten her, and the police believed her regardless of the 'visible scratches and wounds' on his face and body, which to him were evidence enough to support his case. The police then ordered them to return home and resolve their issues without opening any criminal physical abuse case. This may amount to legal abuse because the now-former-wife of Mr DN used the legal system, as

represented by the police, as an instrument for controlling and punishing him (Hines et. al., 2015). The system that is meant to benefit genuine victims of IPA is then abused by abusive wives who play the 'victim card' (Silvers, 2014:p.87), banking for instance on the fact that, in Zimbabwe women's claims of victimhood are usually listened to and believed even in the absence of evidence or where there is evidence to the contrary, as noted by Mr DN.

There are certain benefits that are also associated with victimhood among women in Zimbabwe. These include sympathy among judicial players, free legal representation by lawyers from organizations such as Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association (ZWLA), Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR), Msasa Project and many other women's organizations, and yet no such services exist for men. Some women then manipulate such structures of the justice system knowing that they would benefit from free legal cover and thus have nothing to lose even when they misrepresent. Such misrepresentation is not only an abuse of the legal system as a whole but also that of the men and other proximate victims, such as children, who find themselves at the receiving end.

4.3.6 Proximate abuse

A relatively unknown dimension of IPA but with equally grave consequences is the proximate, (Ferrales et. al., 2016) or unintended abuse (Rosenbaum & O'Leary, 1981; Hershorn & Rosenbaum, 1985). As previously noted, this dimension of abuse is experienced by those people in the same occurring environment or who are close to the perpetrator or target of abuse even though they may not necessarily be the primary targets. It may, therefore, be understood as abuse experienced as a ripple consequence of IPA. It does not take any particular form, thus it can be verbal, emotional, financial, or any other form and has no ideal victims, although it is usually experienced by children and their friends; family members and friends; co-workers and even neighbours due to their proximity to and witnessing of abusive events, (Silvers, 2014; Ferrales et. al., 2016). This type of abuse emerged strongly during this study.

Participants and key informants all noted that children are the major recipients of proximate abuse, although other family members such as mothers-in-law, siblings, landlords and neighbours of the abuse target were also mentioned. Denial of food, denial of father's identity of and access to their father; coercion to enter early-childhood marriages; abandonment at very tender ages resulting in some dying; being beaten and ill-treated to the extent of leaving home to live on the streets as well as exposure to their parents' nudity during violent scuffles, were the prominent abusive experiences suffered by children as a result of their step- or mothers' actions as reported by participants in this study. Other family members reportedly endured, among others, financial losses incurred through assisting victims of paternity fraud in child-support and bailing them out when they were apprehended as already noted above; emotional loss through losing children with whom a bond would have been established in cases of discovered paternity fraud; verbal insults and false accusations. Whereas neighbours and landlords were reportedly psycho-emotionally abused through being called in as witnesses at

courts; refraining women from beating their husbands up and being exposed to noise and nudity during nasty scuffles.

The impact of such experiences, as noted above even after their occurrence, is severe and long-lasting, (Merz, 2016). The reality is that proximate abuse is seldom if ever prosecuted. In fact, in Zimbabwe it is not even legally or socially regarded as harmful or offensive, despite it having grievous consequences. Acknowledging it, as Carpenter (2006) notes, is key to a more expansive conceptualization of IPA and such acknowledgement would provide significant contributions to the way it is responded to (Callaghan et. al., 2018). An inference from the above evidence is that women are not only capable of abusing their male intimate partners, but many other people regardless of their gender. This therefore confirms the contention that any party to an intimate relationship, regardless of their gender, can embody power to control others and power is not stable and unchallenged, rather it is continuously contested and unstable (Hollway, 1984). Such a conceptualization of power within intimate relationships between men and women is key to men's interpretation and sense making of IPA therein.

4.4 Chapter overview and conclusion

This chapter has shown that men in Zimbabwe are abused by women in numerous ways and such abusive acts may or may not be gendered, retaliatory or mutual. It further depicts that, although power and control exertion are central to abusive behaviours by women, some motives are personal and individual. The noted physically, sexually, psycho-emotionally, verbally and financially abusive behaviours among others can be best described as multi-sourced as they are informed by a plethora of motives which, according to participants, may include punishing or controlling them.

It also emerged that the abuses are not mutually exclusive. Rather, they overlap and intersect with each other thereby compounding their impact on the abuse target. Similarly, no single trend or pattern of abuse occurrence is observable across all men given that the abusive acts suffered are not limited to only one form, neither do they occur in a single or uniform manner across participants. For some, abuse occurs continuously as in intimate terrorism –to use Johnson's (2005) terminology, while for others, on an erratic basis, and further, others reported abuse as a once off non-recurrent event.

A notable observation is that all of the identified forms of abuse have an emotional impact on the targets and although men are physically abused by women, they suffer more from subtle forms of abuse such as denial of sex, manipulation, misattributed paternity (paternity fraud) and verbal abuse, which by their nature are covert and difficult to prosecute, if ever they are criminal acts in terms of Zimbabwean law. An inference from such an observation is that men can be abused by women in their intimate relationships and such abuse experiences denote men's occasional embodiment of subservient positions as opposed to positions of power. This thereby provides support for the post-structural feminist contention that intimate relationships

are characterised by multiple power centres whose occupation is not necessarily determined by gender but also by the individual's access to political, reproductive, relational, coercive, reward and patriarchal power bases among others.

CHAPTER

5 MEANINGS OF IPA AMONG ABUSED MEN

5.1 Introduction

Although the shortest, this chapter runs at the core of the entire study as it delves into men's meaning or sense-making of their experiences of abuse. It presents male victims' personal reflections, comprehensions, perceptions and views of being abused as men. These perceptions are also interrogated using the post-structural feminist approach to give them a nuanced interpretation. Personal or idiosyncratic and structural factors are proffered as possible determinants of the noted perceptions among men. As the chapter advances the notion of men's vulnerability, which is already noted in previous chapters, it also underpins the succeeding chapter which looks at men's responses to perceived abuse.

5.2 What does it mean to be an abused man?

According to Silvers (2014:p.19), the major challenge for male targets of abuse is that of comprehending or understanding the circumstances within which they find themselves. Questions regarding whether their experiences fit the 'abuse tag' occupy the greater part of their consciousness, that is, whether it is normal or abnormal, and if abnormal, then what actions should be taken to address the abnormality. It is the premise of interpretive phenomenology that meaning making is both a product and a reflection of its context. In other words, the way in which men interpret or comprehend their lived experiences of abuse is a direct result of the socio-cultural, economic, political, legal and religious environment within which they live.

The prevailing perceptions on abuse of men among Zimbabweans have a great bearing on the way the men themselves view their IPA experiences. Such abuse is often met with shock and bewilderment by the targets due to cultural expectations surrounding male and female genders. For instance, men are expected to be strong, while women are perceived as considerate and nurturing. Their abusive behaviour would therefore be unfathomable. Both men and women are culturally socialized not to be on the lookout for abusive women. No room is given to and for discussion of male abuse issues in the media or social circles. The 'man-law' as referred to by Silvers (2014:p.175) tends to isolate men as it requires them not to seek help or speak about their issues lest they be perceived as weak or woman-like. Men are judged more negatively than women if they default or are suspected of having defaulted on fulfilling cultural expectations such as being protective of their families and of themselves. Abused men's interpretation of their IPA experiences is also dependent upon other idiosyncratic aspects as the degree, frequency and severity of abuse, the level of entrapment, the phase of the relationship the couple is in, one's religious background and even level of education. Targets of abuse also have different perceptions (feelings and reactions) of such abuse based on the

stage at which they are in the abusive relationship. That is, whether it is just beginning; they are already enduring the abuse –but they have not had a full understanding of it; they have just had a full appreciation of their real situation of abuse and are struggling to make things better; or they are recovering from the aftermath of the abuse – as the relationship either ends, or it improves. These aspects are delineated in the ensuing discussions.

5.2.1 Perceptions of abuse based on gendered expectations

5.2.1.1 An expression of passive or indirect power by women

According to accounts given by the men who experienced IPA, female perpetrators can use abusive acts which are not easily recognised by outsiders. The only person or people to know of such abuse will be the ones closely related to the couple or only the abused partner. Forms of abuse such as manipulation, child alienation, misattributed paternity, economic abuse and other behaviours that affect the target's psycho-emotional wellbeing are largely invisible and often go unnoticed. Thus, they become passive or indirect as opposed to manifest and direct forms such as physical and sometimes verbal abuse.

Women's power in relation to men and its expression in heterosexual relationships has always been denied in some sections of feminist literature (White & Kowalski, 1994; McHugh et. al., 2005). However, it is acknowledged in other feminist writings, especially among black feminists. For instance Hooks (2000:p.61) uses the concept of "patriarchal violence" to refer *inter alia* to women's use of violence against men as an exertion of power. Similarly, Owomoyela (2002:p.93) hinted on how Zimbabwean women exercise invisible power by "calling the shots...behind-the-scenes". There is also a great deal of research covering the subject of women's power, (Hollway, 1984; Howard et. al., 1986; Kandiyoti, 1988; Lorde, 2012; Pizzey, 2015; Lien & Lorentzen, 2019) with findings that confirm different power positions and strategies which women embody to either challenge or domineer men in heterosexual intimate relationships. Participants in this study interpret their spouses' abuse, especially the behaviours that result in emotional harm as discussed in Chapter 4, as exercises of subtle and indirect power to control and/or punish them. They all acknowledged that their female partners are not without power and such power is not always directly expressed. Rather, in line with Falbo and Peplau (1980); Hollway (1984) and Howard et al (1986) assertions, such power is often enveloped in subtle and vague behaviours that are rarely –at face value recognised as power-exhibiting acts.

Most of the abusive behaviours by women discussed in Chapter 4 are largely covert. Indirect and subtle forms of abuse like paternity fraud, prolonged withholding of sex and use of sex as a manipulation tool are often associated with naivety (Silvers, 2014). The findings herein, however, challenge the harmlessness of such behaviours by women, warranting a contention that they represent elusive but harmful means by which women exert their power in intimate relationships. Based on the findings in Chapter 4 it can be concluded that abuse and violence

cannot be reduced to only those physical acts that leave obvious scars. It is evident that it is sometimes cloistered under seemingly benign but prejudicial behaviours such as misattributed paternity. This study establishes that abuse herein is portrayed as multifaceted and not only limited to the physical in its form, effect or scope. The study further illustrates that acts by women such as denial of sex, alienation of children and false accusations –as examples, are an exertion of power to control and punish men, emotionally and psychologically, despite having no physical force used. Excerpts below from abused men and key informants.

> *… from my teenage to manhood I never thought such an experience (victimisation) would come from a woman, … I used to take a woman as a mother, and as a wife who is loving and able to give counsel, but in this case, women are no longer qualified to be what we thought, they are powerful, and they may use that power to victimise us.*
> **Interview- Mr NK -a male victim (aged 70 years), Kwekwe**

> *So they know where to control men, the woman knows where power is , she does not work on the physical, she will not be big and all that, but when the man is vulnerable, yes that's when she strikes, and the moment she starts from there, whatever he does outside that intimate place does not matter, she is just going to continue to abuse him.*
> **Key informant interview (BISH) a pastor and church founder from Harare**

As noted above, the most common abuse reportedly used for manipulation by women is denial of sex. Denial of sex can be understood as a form of coercion women use in marriages, which is characterised by emotional withdrawal (Kipnis, 1976), making the respective men who need sex miserable (Hamilton, 2019). The common concept used to refer to such behaviour is 'sex strike'. Sex strikes are widely accepted across the world and have historically been used by women to exercise their power and have their voices heard. Typical examples are the Greek play Lysistrata, whereby women teamed up to bring about the end of the Peloponnesian War and the relatively recent sex strike to end Liberia's civil war (Shaw, 2017). In Zimbabwe, sex strikes have expressions in both private and public spheres (Medzani, 2014). One female parliamentarian on various occasions called for women to withhold sex to coerce men to behave in a particular way. The latest being in the 2013 Constitutional Referendum, where she campaigned for a sex strike to encourage men to vote for the new Constitution (Mhofu, 2013). This is a clear illustration of how women may assert their power either in the domestic or public-political arena. It is a clear contrast to commonly held notions of femininity that women are not assertive. It may also be understood as an indirect and covert form of sexual control of men by women. It is, however, an abusive form of exertion of power, particularly at an individual or domestic level in marriages (Silvers, 2014).

Abused men seemed convinced that the abusive behaviours by their partners amount to the exercise of power over them (abused men). If one is to go by that conceptualisation of women-perpetrated abuse, it becomes crucial to examine women's power in the context of intimate relationships. Questions that arise and become pertinent revolve around whether, such actions

as denial of sex or use of sex as a means of manipulation can be understood as evidence of women's power. Feminst literature have projected women as having agency, however, within the constraints of patriarchy (Kandiyoti, 1988; Jungar & Oinas, 2011; McNay, 2018). There also is evidence that women's bodies are constantly under men's surveillance in patriarchal contexts, the world over (Du Plessis & Maree, 2009). Labelling those women who choose to bargain with their bodies as powerful, may not give the clear and full depiction of the dynamics in heterosexual intimate relationships. Jungar & Oinas (2011) consider women's agency as a political struggle where they challenge their victimhood. Kandiyoti (1988) uses the phrase, 'bargaining with patriarchy' to refer to the strategies by which women resist and navigate the constraints posed by patriarchy. Although these explanations may be informative in the conception of women's agency and power, they may not be sufficient in capturing the essence of women's use of violence in their intimate relationships with men. This is so primarily because the noted explanations are based on the assumption that women are victims and their actions always follow a pattern of resistance. The reality of relations between men and women as reported by participants in this study is that women are not always victims of men's oppression. They sometimes abuse men even without having been abused by men themselves. More so, their individual actions in intimate relationships with men cannot always be interpreted as resistance to patriarchy as they are often uncoordinated, and relationship based.

5.2.1.2 A factor driving questioned identity among men

Vulnerability of any kind amongst men is met with serious disapproval because it challenges dominant or hegemonic versions of being a man across Zimbabwe (Skovdal et. al., 2011). As such, the abuse of men by women is widely unacknowledged and stigmatised. The first reaction that the participants in this study noted when they decided to open-up about or report their abuse experiences, is disbelief, from the society as represented by families, supposed helpers and state agents –as is noted in the succeeding chapter. However, in the face of overwhelming and undeniable evidence, the same society then finds it necessary to come up with labels that differentiate such men from other men, such as, *'akadyiswa'* he is 'bewitched through love portion', 'a wimp,' or he is 'weak' and sometimes suspected of being homosexual. These socially reinforced conceptualisations of abused men not only deny the legitimacy of men's vulnerability, as earlier noted, but fundamentally perpetuate the construction of toxic masculine identities based on dominance and unsustainable stoicism (Josolyn, 2011). Thus, this brings into question the identity of men who fall victims to abuse perpetrated by women.

Participants herein reported experiencing identity confusion through self-doubt, dented or lowered self-esteem as well as questioning their self-identity as men. The excerpts below capture the sentiments expressed by many participants who reported psychological trauma through self-questioning.

> *I feel like I lost my honour, dignity and respect that I had before, among my neighbours, relatives, children and even at church as a preacher and pastor, I find that I lost a lot*

as a result of the abuse. I at times imagine how the congregants view me as I preach to them and what they think about me, or whether they even take me seriously or they see me as useless. ...so that places me in a very difficult situation and it explains why I had to endure a lengthy period of 15 years being subjected to abuse. Everyone at church knows my case and it troubles me to imagine what they think about me. Even my children, it is still very difficult for me to imagine and understand whether they really understand and accept that I divorced their mother and whether they appreciate it as I do or whether they acknowledge that their mother was really abusive. Do they still consider me as their father? **Interview –Mr DN: a male victim from Harare**

Even until now, I also ask myself the question of whether I am a man or not, because I hear other people telling me that 'ndakadyiswa'- I am bewitched. So, when I am alone, I find it very difficult to answer such questions. **Interview –Mr MD: a male victim from Harare**

That made me to think and think deeply about myself and I kept on asking myself, whether, I am able to satisfy her, whether I am playing my role as her husband well, and whether I am the man that I ought to be. **Interview –Mr MH- a male victim from Harare**

I at some point doubted myself and there is a situation where one doubts himself or so, and say, did I satisfy this woman? But how did we come to this situation? And the children look like me in all ways, but where did I lack the satisfaction? You try, and search and you will come up with nothing. **Interview- Mr NK -a male victim (aged 70 years) from Kwekwe**

In an attempt to make sense of their victimisation, Mr MD and Mr DN use the art of position switching, whereby they put themselves in the position of other people who know about their experiences, they then try to reflect on themselves through the eyes of those people who are aware of their abuse. The use of such a sense-making technique by the participants is indicative of three meanings. Firstly, it denotes that abused men are aware of the context within which they live and the expectations of men therein. Secondly, it shows that they derive a sense of wellbeing from their identities as men. Lastly and most importantly, it indicates that women form a crucial part of men's identity formation and their position of power entails that they can withdraw or render their input in the process, as already noted in Chapter three. The implications of withdrawal of such input would be men's questioned identity. Excerpts by Mr NK and Mr MH above are indicative of them questioning their identity. Further examples of associated forms of abuse are humiliating comments about men's genitalia and the downplaying of their sexual performance by women. Such comments cast doubt on the respective men's masculinity and may even result in his identity being questioned by relatives as noted by BUSTOP-TV (2018). They may attempt to disassociate themselves from the 'unmanly' male victim of abuse (BUSTOP-TV, 2018). A participant who was a victim of misattributed paternity had this to say:

When the paternity results came and they showed that I was not the father of our two children, I was shuttered…I started asking myself if I can even have children. Am I a man enough to have children of my own? **PF2407 -a male victim (aged 39 years) from Harare**

In this excerpt the participant gave emphasis to his identity as a man and how it is attached to his ability to have children of his 'own'. He perceived having no biological children as a reason to have his identy questioned. As noted in chapter 3, such a conceptualisation borders on rigid and traditional notions of gender identity. It additionally denotes that identity construction among men is not a unitary but negotiated endeavour.

Until such a time the society is ready to embrace vulnerability as an inherent aspect of male identity, men who are targets of abuse by women will have their identities questioned within their communities, while they also doubt self-identity (Shum-Pearce, 2016). Of note and of profound importance is the role played by women in such identity confusion among abused men. Women are depicted as having unacknowledged power to confer or rescind masculinity on men, and therefore they may use such power to abuse men through behaviours which render abused men's identity questionable.

5.2.1.3 Trampled reproductive rights

Silvers (2014:p.180) posits that abuse of any type is a violation of human rights. The Zimbabwean Constitution provides for the rights to personal liberty, human dignity and freedom from torture, inhumane and degrading treatment of every citizen. It further provides for rights of specific groups as women and children but does not in the same way provide for specific rights of men, as noted by one participant. All participants who were victims of misattributed paternity stated that they had their reproductive rights and rights to know the truth violated by their spouses. As already noted herein, in the absence of DNA paternity tests, the mother's word regarding her child's father is considered true and unquestionable. Through this matrimonial assumption, men are trapped into financially, emotionally and psychologically supporting children that are biologically not theirs by abusive women. Thus, incurring economic losses and suffering psychological trauma upon revelation of the truth.

The argument proffered by O'Brien cited in Brittan (1989:p.119) is that men are alienated from the birth process and as a result their role in reproduction is tenuous. Instead, women are in charge of the whole reproductive process in that they are the ones that conceive and carry the foetus for a period of almost a year and they are the ones that know who the real father of the child is. Men only come in after the child's birth and they can be involved only as much as and as far as the mother of the child wishes. It is at the mother's word that the father acquires a role in the life of the child, as previously noted. The implication of which is the full recognition of mothers' reproductive power while fathers' reproductive rights remain in mothers' hands, who can give or withhold such, thereby depicting fathers' vulnerability. Abusive women, therefore, using their reproductive power, capitalise on such vulnerability to trample men's rights to know

whether they are fathers or not. However, such rights are not constitutionally recognised, and neither are the abusive acts of misattributed paternity legally defined as crimes in Zimbabwe. Thus, men as fathers who find themselves in this situation do not have any legal avenues of recourse. Such a situation, for fathers is characterised by powerlessness, not only because of the violation of their reproductive rights but also because such rights are not legally recognised. It must be noted, however, that some participants interpret abusive acts of their female partners not in terms of power but as a spiritual warfare instead.

5.2.1.4 Abuse as an act of provocation

Among the several conceptualisations of IPA noted, some men viewed it as a means by which women incite responses from them. Two participants reported that after they instituted divorce proceedings, their wives would unexpectedly act violently and without explanation for such behaviour, even when they were not physically endowed. One of these men noted that he later discovered the reason behind his wife's violent behaviour during a divorce court hearing, where she confessed to having provoked her husband (the participant) to retaliate, so that she could use such evidence of him retaliating to portray him as unfit for the custody of their children. He stated that:

> *... my wife was being advised to harass me so that I can beat her. So, with all that was happening to me (victimisation), Varume Svinurai gave me advice, to calm down and instead apply for protection order. I was advised not to be emotional or violent even when frustrated.* **Interview-Mr DN-a male victim of IPA (47 years old), Harare**

Provocation is a well-recognised criminal defence strategy in many jurisdictions the world over, despite the heavy criticism it is often subjected to, especially by such feminist writers as Pavlou & Knowles (2001), Kern et. al. (2007) and O'Reilly (2017), who contend that there can be no excuse for abuse. It has also had expression within Zimbabwe's criminal justice system. Of particular interest is the Harare High Court judgment in the *State versus Nsoro*[16] case, in which the judge noted that provocation on the part of the deceased, who was the accused's husband, was considered as a mitigatory factor in coming up with an appropriate sentence. It is interesting to note that, in this study, although provocation is raised by participants, they do so from the perspective of the victim and not as a form of defence. Provocation in this case is employed to explain abusive acts by women, that are considered by men, as means to elicit their hash response, which would then lead to their (the men's) arrest, detention or incarceration. Thereby confirming the dominant stereotype that men are abusers and women are victims. In other words, men perceive women's abusive behaviour as attempts to entrap them into retaliation. This is well captured in the excerpt above from Mr DN.

Research also confirms the use of abusive behaviours by women in an attempt to incite their victims (Hines et. al., 2015; Morgan & Wells, 2016). In their study on legal and administrative

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[16] *S v Nsoro 2016* HH 190-16

aggression by women, Hines et. al. (2015) averred that abusive women may goad their victims into responding with the intention of involving the justice system. The provocation may in some cases take the form of false accusations of abuse or other forms of criminality (Morgan & Wells, 2016). Such provocation, as some abused men claimed, needs to be resisted if men are to avoid arrest and subsequent incarceration. However, such resistance is not always guaranteed, given that some men do retaliate and exacerbate the abuse. Most participants in this study who sought help at men's organisations did not retaliate. They cited the advice they were given by a men's support organisation on how to deal with abusive wives in non-violent or non-abusive ways and how to exploit the existing legal framework in Zimbabwe as the primary reason for their non-retaliation. One male victim from Harare had this to say: "I did not retaliate because I was receiving counselling from Varume Svinurai…"

An inference that can be drawn from men's conception of their spouse's abuse as provocation, is that women have the capacity and ability to instigate abuse towards their male spouses and provocation can be one among many motivating or causative factors.

5.2.1.5 Section summary

The question arising from the above-noted gender-based meanings of abuse by mean is whether the study participants (abused men) identify with democratised forms of masculinity or they epitomise hybridised forms hegemonic masculinity. It would seem that due to their emphasis on power dynamics in their relationships with women and how abuse result in their identities being questioned, they view themselves as embodying traditional forms of hegemonic masculinities. This is regardless of the evidence of their vulnerability to abuse and the possible shifts in gender roles noted in chapter 3. The endeavour by abused men to use gender as the key aspect in making sense of their victimisation may be perceived as the reconfiguration of hegemonic masculinity rather than transformation. Madrid (2017) defines reconfigured masculinities as those that adapt to a new situations, but without challenging inequitable gender relations. The conditions for being a providing-head-of-household in Zimbabwe as noted in chapter 3 have dramatically shifted and this is the trend worldwide (Muzvidziwa, 2002; 2013). Women are in large numbers becoming breadwinners in their households and thus, having a claim to household headship (Muzvidziwa, 2002; 2013). Such changes give a sense of a shift in gender roles and as such in masculine and feminine identities. However, it is difficult to clearly understand whether abused men view their victimisation through IPA as indicative of the redefinition of masculinity given the meanings they attach to it. Even though they acknowledge their vulnerability, they maintain and still want to identify with traditional culturally defined standards of invincibility. Thus, caution should be exercised when delineating on the question of whether these shifts entail a challenge to inequitable gender relations.

5.2.2 Perceptions based on idiosyncratic and other structural factors

5.2.2.1 IPA as a spiritual warfare

Zimbabwe's Constitution is not prescriptive of religious choices. Nonetheless, the majority of the population identify as Christians (Chitando, 2005). In this study, all participants stated that they belong to the Christian religion, with some (both abused men and key informants) identifying themselves as pastors or church elders in their respective denominations. It is likely therefore, the primary explanation of their conceptualisation of their experiences of abuse as a spiritual battle. The perception of abuse perpetrated by their female partners as resulting from demon possession, and thus a spiritual warfare, emerged from almost all the interviews conducted with abused men. Moss (2019), however, disputes such conceptions of abuse, contending that when developmental, psychological, spiritual or mental illness factors are involved there is still personal choice (Moss, 2019). That is, an abusive person may be allowing themselves to be controlled by a spirit of anger, violence, or even murder. She further contends that it takes the abuser (him or herself) to make a choice and take initiative to change the abusive behaviour, while at the same time sceptically arguing that, if a case of spiritual possession is suspected, then the abuse can and must be exorcised. Indeed, some participants thought they could exorcise abusive behaviour out of their spouses and, as such, they stayed longer in those abusive relationships, hoping for success in ejecting the demons. The excerpt below captures men's spiritual interpretations of their victimisation.

> *But my observation was that she was demon possessed because at times the demons would manifest, during our family prayer time. There were many demons that manifested in her including one person who was murdered by her grandfather. So, I would pray and cast those demons and she would regain her normalcy. That is the reason why I would not beat her back because I felt I would be fighting those spirits and not the person I stayed with (my wife), that is also the reason why it took me so long to divorce her, I thought we would manage to cast the demons away for good.*
> **Interview –Mr DN- a male victim from Harare**

The most important part of the attribution of their partners' abusive behaviour to demons is that it relieves them (the partners) of personal responsibility for their actions and consequences thereof. This therefore clearly demonstrates that the participants were not only bent on accusing women of abuse but are determined to find a lasting solution to the problem, so that they would lead normal lives with their wives and families. The apprehension by abused men of their victimisation as a spiritual battle further illustrates that sources of abusive behaviour in intimate relationships are multiple and cannot only be understood in terms of gender and gender relations as structural feminists would contend. Despite it being relative and highly controversial, participants employed spirituality to explain their spouses' abusive behaviours.

5.2.2.3 A consequence of negative personality traits

A number of participants explained the abuse they were subjected to as a function of mental and negative personality traits such as aggression and temperament on the part of their partners. One participant stated that his former wife's 'unreasonable and unexplained physical and verbal aggression even towards the children' was a sign of negative personality traits. Most of such perceptions by men in this study were merely suspicions which were not supported by any scientific diagnosis. However, negative personality traits as aggression have historically been associated with violence in intimate relationships (Ross & Babcock, 2009).

Although negative personality traits are largely understood to be consequent to IPA victimisation, some studies have contended that they may also be risk factors for IPA. Goldenson et. al. (2007), in a study on female IPA offenders, noted that antisocial personality traits were major factors determining their violent behaviour, while Ross & Babcock (2009) reported similar findings in a study on male IPA offenders. Thus, despite the participants' perceptions of their partners' behaviour being solely based on suspicion, scientific evidence elsewhere shows that it is a possibility. Nonetheless, such perceptions are based on the participants' personal assessment and knowledge of their respective relationships. They are not informed by structural forces of culture or religion. Furthermore, perceiving IPA as a function of individuals involved and their varied attributes, as opposed to viewing it as resulting from structural patriarchal dominance by men, reflects the multiplicity of possible explanations to the phenomenon. This concomitantly upholds the post-structural perspective of multiple and nuanced realities of IPA.

5.2.2.4 Section summary

It is of great importance to note that the abused men adopted gendered interpretations of women-perpetrated IPA against them by perceiving women as having power which they can *inter alia* use to victimise them. Nonetheless, they further identify other aspects such as spiritual and personality forces as playing a critical role in their perception of female-perpetrated abuse. These forces as reported by abused men, play a crucial role in understanding women's agency and abusive actions. They show that abusive acts are multi-sourced. Although, IPA can result from gendered power by women over men, it can also emanate from spiritual possessions and negative personality traits. This assertions supports the post-structural perspective on IPA that it can be conceptualised in nuanced ways and it does not result from a single patterned form of behaviour.

5.3 Chapter overview and conclusion

Meanings of IPA among male victims in Zimbabwe were as diverse as the participants in the study. Such diverse meanings are categorised and grouped under the following labels: IPA as an expression of passive power by women; a factor driving questioned identity among men; an epitome of trampled reproductive rights; a spiritual warfare; an act of provocation and a

consequence of negative personality traits. Despite the inherent multiplicity of meanings derived by male victims from their IPA experiences, the perceptions which stood out are that IPA is an expression of women's power through both direct and indirect ways and that women-perpetrated IPA is a basis for victims' questioned identity (masculinity). Apart from denoting the nuances that characterise comprehension, these meanings by abused men show that men understand themselves to embody subservient positions in relation to those of their intimate partners in some situations.

The meanings derived by male victims of IPA from their victimisation are based on both structural and idiosyncratic aspects. The former includes such phenomena as the cultural context within which the abuses take place and religious values. The idiosyncratic aspects informing IPA victims' meaning making are epitomised by each man's conception of their position in their heterosexual relationships, or their personal attributes such as their intellectual capacity or their appreciation of the law. It is noted in this study that those men who perceive their partners' abuse as provocation, signs of personality disorder or violation of human rights, have their perceptions based on their personal assessment of perpetrators and their personal capabilities to comprehend what constitutes a human right. It is unlike those who perceive IPA experiences as a challenge to their identities as men or a sign of spiritual possession, which are perceptions based on the structural influences of religion and culture respectively. It is important as a concluding remark that some linkages can be drawn from such sense making by the participants and the strategies they adopted in response to the abuse. This forms the crux and captures the essence of the next chapter.

CHAPTER

6 COPING MECHANISIMS AND HELP-SEEKING BEHAVIOUR AMONG ABUSED MEN

6.1 Introduction

Following the foregoing discussions on the various abuse experiences among men in Zimbabwe and the derived meanings thereof, this chapter explores the ways in which the men deal with such abuse. In so doing the chapter further advances the theoretical argument held in this study that male identity can also symbolise vulnerability and that men may embody powerlessness in their intimate relationships with women. The said vulnerability is portrayed in their choices of response and the available remedial mechanisms for them, which in this study are categorised into state and non-state provided, as well as primary and secondary coping options.

The chapter begins with an overview of the legislative, policy and institutional frameworks that can support IPA victims in Zimbabwe. This is followed by a section that discusses abused men's help seeking behaviour and the coping mechanisms they employ given the available frameworks. The support needs of abused men in Zimbabwe are then discussed before the chapter ends with the concluding section.

6.2 Legislative, policy and institutional framework

6.2.1 Legislative framework

Legislation is a broad concept which refers to laws and statutes that are systematically adopted by national parliaments in a procedure called legislative process (Van Niekerk et. al., 2015). For the purposes of this study, the legislative framework is thus broadly defined to include institutions involved in the enforcement of laws and statutes, which are the courts.

Constitution of the Republic of Zimbabwe, 2013

The Constitution, as the supreme law of a country, functions as the blueprint for all laws, government policies and programmes. It contains the principles upon which the entire nation is established and any conduct or structure that is inconsistent with it is invalid. Thus, it can be held that the Constitution is the cornerstone of the legal, policy and institutional frameworks for addressing IPA and the protection of victims. Zimbabwe's current Constitution, which was adopted in 2013, provides for the protection of the rights of all citizens, but specifically also the rights of women and children. It further provides for the equality of humanity, which

includes gender equality as one among other fundamental rights, while it also abolishes the death penalty (capital punishment) for all women[17].

The Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act 23 of 2004

This legislation is a consolidated version of all criminal laws in Zimbabwe. It therefore covers criminal law in its broad sense. However, of interest in this study is Part 3[18] of this Act, which criminalises rape by men against women –including marital rape and the deliberate transmission of HIV among other behaviours. It further creates an offence of sex with minors but does not provide a criminal definition of the rape of adult men by either women or other men. This is a gap in the scope of sexual gender-based violence behaviours which the Act covers.

The Domestic Violence Act 2007 (DVA)

The objective of this Act is to provide for the protection and remedies to the victims of domestic violence. In terms of Section 3 of the DVA, domestic violence refers to "any unlawful act, omission or behaviour which results in death or the direct infliction of physical, sexual or mental injury to any complainant by a respondent"[19] and it includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional, verbal and psychological abuse, economic abuse, intimidation, harassment, stalking and damage to property (IFRC, 2017). Despite having a broad definition of domestic violence, the DVA does not recognise non-physical forms of abuse such as infidelity and other forms of psycho-emotional, economic and verbal abuse as crimes. These are regarded as delicts or wrongful acts that can only be addressed through lawsuits, or by way of seeking peace and protection (restraining) orders from courts using the civil division and not through prosecuting the offenders.

Criminal and civil sub-systems

Zimbabwe's legal system is two-pronged, encompassing the criminal and civil sub-systems, both of which deal with domestic violence or IPA in different ways. Victims, complainants or survivors of abuse can either choose to go the criminal sub-system route, in which case they have to make reports to police, or the civil route where they are required to make lawsuit applications directly to the courts nearest to them. They may also make use of the two sub-systems successively.

The main players dealing with IPA and domestic violence in the criminal justice system are the police, the National Prosecuting Authority through public prosecutors stationed at all criminal courts across the country, and the judiciary, represented by magistrates and judges who are found in Zimbabwe's lower and higher courts respectively. In terms of the DVA, the police are empowered to receive reports on domestic violence or IPA matters, to investigate

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[17] The Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment 20 Act of 2013 *Section 3*

[18] Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act [Chapter 9:23] 23 of 2004 Sections 61-87

[19] Domestic Violence [Chapter 5:16] Act 14 of 2006 *Section 3*

and arrest suspects, and thereafter hand the cases over to the prosecuting authorities who would then present the cases before the courts.

The police are further instrumental in the gathering of all statistical data on IPA. However, during data collection for this study the researcher noted that none of the visited police stations had any statistical information on IPA against men. IPA cases involving male victims were treated and recorded just like any other crime. While IPA cases involving female victims were recorded in a separate database, those involving the abuse of men were filed in the same database as every other criminal case. This made it difficult for the researcher to have a statistical appreciation of the occurrence of abuse against men based on police data.

Additionally, the DVA mandates the courts to preside over criminal IPA cases when presented by police and pronounce sentences upon conviction of offenders *inter alia*[20]. In the civil sub-system, the police have very little involvement in cases of IPA, as complainants and respondents present their cases for the attention of the courts. As one High Court-Harare judge noted in the *S v Chiteure*[21] case and as noted above, the DVA empowers the courts in this sub-system to issue, *inter alia*, peace and protection orders meant to protect complainants from further harm, discomfort, and inconvenience of any form. Upon being granted by the court, such orders outline specific prohibitive instructions that the perpetrator is expected to adhere to, such as avoiding contact or interaction with the complainant and refraining from disturbing or occupying the same space as them (Memo, 2014). Any breach of such prohibitive measures can result in the arrest of the perpetrator. In case of any changes in the circumstances, the protection order may be revoked, varied and/or extended through an application by the complainant to the court. However, in Zimbabwe restrictive orders cannot be extended beyond five years[22]. This may pose a financial challenge to victims of IPA who are required to re-apply to the court for another order if circumstances or threats of abuse still persist.

Legislative framework: Overview

The foregoing is a representation of the legislative framework on IPA in Zimbabwe. Nonetheless, the identified legislations are not without limitations or gaps when one considers the protection they offer to men in general and male victims of IPA in particular (IFRC, 2017). Firstly, although the Constitution is penned in an inclusive language, it does not provide the same protection to men as it does to other demographic groups such as women. For instance, as is already noted previously, the Constitution unconditionally outlaws the death penalty for women while all men above the age of 21 years may, upon conviction of certain offenses, face capital punishment[23]. Women's and children's rights are clearly stated, whilst there is no mention of those pertaining to men. Secondly, as stated above, the crime of rape is narrowly

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[20] Domestic Violence [Chapter 5:16] Act 14 of 2006 *Section 3*

[21] *S v Chiteure* HH 423/16

[22] Domestic Violence [Chapter 5:16] Act 14 of 2006 *Section 14*

[23] The Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment 20 Act of 2013 *Section 3*

defined in the respective law[24] to only include forced vaginal penetration, to the exclusion of other forms of sexual penetration. This definition systematically excludes forced anal penetration which constitutes rape in other parts of the Southern African region such as South Africa[25]. In Zimbabwe it is rather conceptualised as indecent assault, which is a less serious offence compared to rape. As a consequence, male victims of such abusive behaviours are systematically excluded from seeking remedies commensurate with the seriousness of their victimization. Lastly, in the same manner, the DVA narrowly defines what constitutes criminal acts between intimate partners. Such behaviors such as emotional abuse, which are left out of its definition of crime, are the ones that men are most likely to be exposed to. Consequently, victims of such acts are limited to the civil options of redress, which often demand financial resources through legal assistance.

It can thus be inferred that overall, the extant legislative framework in Zimbabwe provides male victims with limited remedial options when compared to other demographic groups, thereby making abused men invisible. This inference, despite being made in a study done in a different context, is in line with a conclusion made by Van Niekerk et. al. (2015) in their study on South African national legislative instruments on violence and vulnerable populations, in which they stated that although the legislative framework in South Africa correctly prioritizes the protection of vulnerable groups such as women and children, it had "near absent recognition" of male victims and men's vulnerability (Van Niekerk et. al., 2015:p.1).

6.2.2 Policy framework

Zimbabwe has, in the past decades after its independence, developed a number of policies as strategies and efforts aimed at addressing IPA and gender inequality. Key among these are the Public Sector Gender Policy of 2004, the National Gender Based Violence Strategy of 2012, and the National Gender Policy 2013-2017 (IFRC, 2017). Although each of these policies had various specific objectives and sets of programmes, interest in this study centres on their overall focus on gender and gender-based violence.

The National Gender Policy (NGP) 2004

Among others, the NGP was aimed at mainstreaming gender in all sectors of the economy, (Gov-Zimbabwe, 2012a). Gender mainstreaming refers to the consideration of interests of different gender groups (men and women) when policies are formulated and how such policies impact on people of different genders (SIDA, 2015). This aim of the NGP resulted in the formulation of sub-policies targeting specific sectors. For instance, the Public Sector Gender Policy of 2004, which primarily focused on promoting equal opportunities in decision making

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[24] Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act [Chapter 9:23] 23 of 2004 *Sections 61-87*

[25] Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act 32 of 2007 *Chapter 2* (South Africa)

and advancement for men and women employed in the public sector (Chabaya et. al., 2009; Mhlanga, 2016).

The NGP further aimed at the initiation of programmes that are not tolerant to any form of GBV; supporting evidence-based research and documentation of IPA; encouraging open platforms for GBV discussions and strengthening institutional capacity of dealing with GBV cases through the provision of care and support services for victims and rehabilitation services for perpetrators (Gov-Zimbabwe, 2012a). For the achievement of these objectives, the Zimbabwean government through the Ministry of Women, designed a strategy code named the National Gender Based Violence Strategy of 2012.

The National Gender Based Violence Strategy of 2012
This strategy was crafted with the realisation of the importance of increased awareness-raising regarding laws that protect against GBV and encouraging men to make use of such laws through reporting cases of abuse (Gov-Zimbabwe, 2012b). The primary purpose of this strategy was to provide stakeholders with guidelines pertaining to where greater effort and resources are allocated so as to systematically mainstream relevant actions to address GBV. Some key guiding principles were identified. Firstly, Cultural Sensitivity: A culturally sensitive approach would target the harmful cultural practices which perpetuate GBV and hinder reporting, but it would also be evidence-based and respectfully undertaken (Gov-Zimbabwe, 2012b). Secondly, employing a Rights-Based Approach: This, as envisioned, places GBV within the broader framework of human rights and justice to challenge cultural norms and empower individuals and communities for the promotion of social change (Gov-Zimbabwe, 2012b:p.9). Lastly, Non-discrimination: Ensuring non-discrimination in interactions with victims and in service provision (Gov-Zimbabwe, 2012b). This principle is based on the realisation that victims or survivors of abuse often suffer discrimination through disbelief when they seek help.

It is important to note that the presented policies and strategies are a local manifestation of Zimbabwe's membership to and ratification of a number of international treaties such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1991), the Solemn Declaration on Gender and Equality in Africa 2004 and the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development of 2008 (IFRC, 2017).

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
CEDAW was adopted by the United Nations general Assembly in 1979 and is described by Men-Engage (2015) as the international bill of rights for women. As an international treaty, CEDAW provides a foundation for individual country's actions and initiatives to end discrimination of women in all spheres, i.e. economic, political and socio-cultural. It is also recognized as the first international agreement to champion the importance of transforming socio-cultural gender norms and to include expressions on the equal responsibilities between

men and women in family life (Men-Engage, 2015). In terms of Article 5[26], states must take measures "to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices, customary and all other practices, which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women" (Men-Engage, 2015).

Solemn Declaration on Gender and Equality in Africa (SDGEA) 2004

The SDGEA is a call for African Union (AU) member states' continual action toward achieving gender equality and reinforcing their commitment to international and regional women's rights instruments (FAS, 2016). It basically entails a reaffirmation by member states in terms of Article 4 (l) of the Constitutive Act of the African Union[27] to engage in sustained campaigns against gender-based violence against women and girls and bolster legal frameworks which will protect women and transform behaviour across African societies (FAS, 2016).

SADC Protocol on Gender and Development of 2008

At a regional level, Zimbabwe is a signatory to SADC Protocol on Gender and Development. The objectives of the Protocol are, among others, to provide for the empowerment of women as well as to achieve gender equality and equity through the development and implementation of gender responsive legislation, policies, programmes and projects (SADC, 2012). It also seeks to harmonise the various international, continental and regional gender equality instruments that SADC Member States have subscribed to such as the above-mentioned CEDAW[28].

Policy framework: Overview

Whether the objectives of these policies have been achieved or not, is of no interest herein. Rather, the mere fact that such action plans existed or still exist suffices as a representation of Zimbabwe's policy framework. It is however, important to note, as posited by IFRC (2017), that Zimbabwe's policy framework on IPA almost always treats and portrays gender and particularly gender-based violence as a women's issue. Thus, a gap exists in the policy framework for the acknowledgement that men can also be targets of violence and abuse in their intimate relations with women. A limited conceptualisation of IPA offenders and the neglect or failure to recognise male victims of such abuse denotes a shortcoming in the scope of the policy on vulnerability (Van Niekerk et. al., 2015).

6.2.3 Institutional framework

State institutions

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[26] Article 5 of CEDAW *https://treaties.un.org/doc/Treaties/1981/09/19810903%2005-18%20AM/Ch_IV_8p.pdf*

[27] Constitutive Act of the African Union Article 4 (1) *https://au.int/sites/default/files/pages/34873-file-constitutiveact_en.pdf*

[28] https://www.sadc.int/issues/gender/

The state, through its various Ministries, departments and agencies, is the main player in both preventive and corrective initiatives on IPA and its various manifestations. The relevant ministries are:

Education ministries

Zimbabwe's education sector is under the ambit of the ministries of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) and that of the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development (MHTE). As part of their mandate to educate young and old students who enrol in both private and public education institutions in Zimbabwe, the ministries are required to monitor and ensure compliance with the requirements of the Zimbabwe National Gender Policy on GBV as previously noted (Gov-Zimbabwe, 2012a). The policy stipulates, among other things, that as a preventive measure against GBV, educational institutions should integrate GBV issues in their curricula at all levels (Gov-Zimbabwe, 2012a). This policy is in line with the general realisation among various stakeholders on GBV and IPA matters that educational programmes are pivotal in equipping young people with skills for detecting and avoiding the risk of sexual and other forms of abuse, seeking help and reporting the abuse (Kenny & Wurtele, 2012; Gwirayi, 2013; UNICEF, 2014; Mantula & Saloojee, 2016). According to (Mantula & Saloojee, 2016), national guidelines have been provided for the delivery of age-appropriate abuse and GBV education from early childhood development through tertiary education. Teachers, educators and lecturers are charged with implementing the curricula integration within such guidelines (Gov-Zimbabwe, 2012a; UNESCO, n.d.).

It cannot be confirmed in this study whether schools and tertiary colleges indeed integrate GBV content in their curricula as that is not the study's objective. It suffices to say that it is a requirement for all educational institutions in terms of the ZNGP (Gov-Zimbabwe, 2012b). Benefits associated with such integration nonetheless include increased community awareness on gender rights, GBV responsive laws, mechanisms and services and the creation of an enabling environment for non-tolerance of GBV, especially through its grave consequences that are exposed (Gov-Zimbabwe, 2012b; UNICEF, 2014; Mantula & Saloojee, 2016).

Ministry of Women, Community and Small Enterprises Development (MWCSD)

Among other responsibilities, the MWCSD makes policy and strategy proposals on gender and women's issues at a national government level, either in parliament or in the cabinet. For instance, those responsible may make policy proposals on gender equality, gender mainstreaming as well as gender-based violence, such as the Zimbabwe National Gender Policy of 2004 and 2012, as noted above. The ministry further monitors compliance with such policies among state and non-state institutions nationwide. Through Gender Officers, who are stationed at every district office across the country, the MWCSD conducts awareness and training workshops with state and non-state actors on GBV. The same officers collate statistics from police, courts and other players on IPA and other forms GBV. Lastly, Gender Officers also assist victims of GBV who approach them with filing police reports and making referrals

for further assistance such as counselling and shelter. However, as the name suggests, the ministry focuses on women's issues and men rarely, if ever, get any attention through it. A key informant from a men's support organization had this to say about the ministry:

> *We are a stakeholder on gender issues in the Ministry of Women. But the government reluctantly recognizes us. We are still pushing for more space as we in some cases are left out. We had to fight for recognition by the ministry, they had rejected us saying they are a women's ministry.* **Key informant–Mr TND -Varume Svinurai– (an organization that supports abused men), Harare**

Ministry of Health and Child Welfare (MHCW)

Through health care workers such as medical doctors, nurses, psychiatrists, pharmacists, dentists and counsellors among others, the MHCW provides medical and mental health services to victims of IPA. These services are provided through public health institutions such as hospitals, clinics and trauma and rehabilitation centres across the country. The MHCW, as a matter of practice, does not attend to persons with serious bodily injuries without a police report. Thus, victims of IPA in most cases avoid seeking medical attention in public health institutions, especially if they do not want the perpetrator(s) to be arrested. One male victim of physical abuse in this study indicated that:

> *If I were to go to the hospital for medication, she would have been arrested and I did not want that. I thought we would talk the matter, and have it solved between ourselves. I then decided not to go and instead sought traditional medical help and the wounds eventually healed. Interview –***Mr TTK (A male victim from Harare)**

Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs (MJLPA)

The MJLPA deals with legal matters pertaining to IPA through the police, courts, prosecution and correctional services departments. Such matters are either treated as criminal or civil matters with corresponding sanctions as already noted above. Although the police department falls under a different ministry[29], it works in collaboration with aforementioned departments falling under the justice portfolio. Such collaboration is manifest in the establishment of Victim Friendly Units (VFUs) in designated police stations and courts (Chikwiri & Lemmer, 2014). The VFUs are designed to enable victims of crime –inclusive of GBV, to give their evidence in an empathetic context with victim-sensitive mechanisms (Mantula & Saloojee, 2016). These facilities are, however, in practice mainly used by children (Mantula & Saloojee, 2016) and it is an exception, rather than rule, to have adult men or women using them.

Zimbabwe Gender Commission

The constitutionally sanctioned *Zimbabwe Gender Commission*, which was established in terms of Section 246 of the Constitution[30], is another important state institution that deals with

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[29] http://www.zim.gov.zw/government-ministries/ministry-home-affairs

[30] The Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment 20 Act of 2013 *Section 246*

IPA issues. It has, as its broad mandate, the overseeing of gender issues, the securing of proper redress where gender discrimination, inequality and any other violation or rights relating to gender manifest themselves. This specifically includes making prosecution recommendations and providing advice to private and public institutions regarding the attainment of gender parity (Zimbabwe-Gov, 2013).

Anti-Domestic Violence Council (ADVC)

Additionally, Zimbabwe has an *Anti-Domestic Violence Council (ADVC),* which was established in terms of Section 16 of the DVA[31] and has been operational since October 2009 (ADVC, 2015). The Council's membership includes relevant government Ministries and departments such as Justice and Legal Affairs, Health and Child Welfare, Education, Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development, Department of Social Services, Zimbabwe Republic Police, Council of Chiefs and faith-based and civil society organisations concerned with the welfare of children and women (ADVC, 2015). According to the latest updates on the council's website[32], its functions *inter alia* are "to keep under constant review the problem of domestic violence in Zimbabwe, to promote research into the problem of domestic violence, to promote the establishment of safe houses as well as to promote provision of support services for complainants where the respondent who was the source of support for the complainant and his or her dependants has been imprisoned. The ADVC has also been tasked with taking all steps to disseminate information and increase awareness of the public on domestic violence" (ADVC, 2015; UN-WOMEN, 2016).

Civil society organisations

While women's organisations are numerous, such as the likes of WCoZ (Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe), Musasa Project, the Women's Action Group and the Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association, men's organisations are a rare case. There are only two relatively well-known men's organisations in Zimbabwe namely, Padare and Varume Svinurai.

Padare/Enkundleni Men's Forum

Padare is an organisation which engages men who perpetrate abuse against women in dialogues as an endeavour to curb IPA against women. It is thus involved in supporting female and not male victims of IPA. In his words, the Programmes manager stated that:

> *Padare believe that men can, will and must change for a society where women and girls are treated as equals. ... We also believe that to do that we need to be capacitating the man, we need to be engaging men within groups because we also believe that we have to dismantle the instruments of patriarchy through engaging men as perpetrators*

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[31] Domestic Violence [Chapter 5:16] Act 14 of 2006 *Section 16*

[32] http://www.advcouncil.org.zw/

*of abuse and also as agents...in terms of reshaping the notions of manhood and masculinity or what it means to be a man. **Key informant -Padare-Mr NG from Harare***

The researcher further noted that some abused men who participated in this study would initially approach Padare for assistance only to be turned away or referred to commercial lawyers for legal assistance for the reason that Padare does not offer support to male victims of IPA. It is for this reason that discussions herein are thus confined to Varume Svinurai.

Varume Svinurai/Vukani Madoda Men's Trust

Varume Svinurai is a Shona phrase which translates to ("Wake up men'). It also known as Vukani Madoda in IsiNdebele. When asked what the name of the organisation means, the Organising Secretary said:

> *...we realised that there were issues that we should deal with as men. Issues of violence in marriages, communities, issues of discrimination in our societies against the very men that we think are abusers and men also have through socialisation been culturally structured to suffering in silence as a sign of manhood. So, we are saying, if you are suffering from abuse, wake up! Speak out so that you can get help. **Key informant - Varume Svinurai- Mr TND from Harare***

The above statement shows that the name of the organisation Varume Svinurai/Vukani Madoda, is a wakeup call for men to feel free to express themselves, report abuse and not suffer in silence. It is the only known registered civil society organisation that provides support to abused men in Zimbabwe.

According to its Organising Secretary (Mr Nzounhenda), the organisation is both membership and client based. This means that apart from providing support to its clients (aggrieved men), the organization also recruits members who are allowed to participate in its internal affairs and assist other men. It is based in Harare, but has membership dotted across the country. Mr Nzounhenda noted that they do not have offices in most parts of the country due to a lack of funding, however they do have people who coordinate the operations of the organisations in Zimbabwe's main urban centres.

The main objectives of Varume Svinurai are to advocate for positive masculinity and fatherhood, to provide counselling to men and their families as well as to assist men who report violence, abuse and or discrimination of any form. With regards to the first noted objective, the organisation actively engages men through education campaigns which are aimed at constructions of male identity that are not based on traditional and rigid gender roles, but that acknowledge that men can be vulnerable in their different relationships with other members of society, including those with women. The organisation also provides family counselling to couples that require such and their main focus is on advising the men on coexistence with women and the need for mutual respect of each partner's rights within intimate relationships. With regards to the last objective, Varume Svinurai is assiduously involved in creating safe

spaces for men to be able to express themselves and air their grievances without anyone judging them to be abusers or weak. The organisation allows and encourages men to be open about their marital or relationship problems whereupon they are provided with advice and counsel. Varume Svinurai's focus on vulnerable men is premised on the contention that they are a constituency that is left out of the mainstream public policy and advocacy. Hence the name Varume Svinurai –calling on men to speak out so that they can be assisted.

When reports of abuse are made, the organisation carries its own investigative work to establish the truth, after which advice and recommendations are given to aggrieved men and in instances of frivolous abuse allegations, Mr Nzounhenda, noted that men are reprimanded. In such instances where men cannot make police reports on their own, Varume Svinurai makes such reports on their behalf. The organisation advocates for men to also make use of the DVA, as it also applies to and is meant to protect them.

In its day-to-day operations, Varume Svinurai works with other stakeholders in domestic violence or IPA issues, such as the police, the media and some women's organizations like *Shamwari Yemwanasikana*. Some women's organizations and researchers such as Minnings (2014), however, regard Varume Svinurai as an architect of the backlash against gender equality in Zimbabwe. Mr Nzounhenda had the following statement as his response to those allegations:

> *We are not enemies of women's group we just chose to focus on a constituency we felt had been left out which is men and their rights. We want a peaceful and violence free society. We want real equality where everybody, men and women alike are empowered to realise their full potential and actualise.* **K Key informant -Varume Svinurai- Mr TN from Harare**

He further noted that people or organisations have a tendency of explaining who they are as an organisation without making efforts to seek those explanations from them. Indeed this was the case with (Minnings, 2014) who wrote about Varume Svinurai and their work without having interviewed anyone from the organisation. She only relied on third person interviews and media publications to come to the conclusion that Varume Svinurai is resistant to the emancipation of women. The researcher also finds her conclusions to be questionable and uninformed as they lack the basic understanding of the work done by Varume Svinurai. In the same interview Mr Nzounhenda additionally intimated that their services are needed, and much sought after by men and they have had notable successes, which he pointed out as the increase in the number of men who consult them, albeit having limited resources.

Varume Svinurai also partner with the other state departments such as the Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, Ministry of Health and Child Welfare, Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community development among others, as noted above. Nonetheless, such relationships sometimes have friction due to the suspicion with which the organisation is

perceived. Mr Nzounhenda noted that they, as an organisation had to fight to be recognised by the Ministry of Women, Gender and Community development as a stakeholder, a status which they had been denied because they are a men's organisation. At an international level, the organisation also has partnerships in Botswana with Genovive (a men's organisation in that country) and has other partnerships in South Africa. They are also the official organisers of International Men's Day in Zimbabwe.

Faith-based organisations

Zimbabwe as a nation does not have constitutional preference of any particular religion. Nonetheless, as postulated by (Ndoro, 2015) a majority of its citizens practice Christianity and some only identify with it when they do not actually practice it. As a corollary, some refer to Zimbabwe as a Christian nation (Ndoro, 2015). To this end, the church is seen as an active body on matrimonial issues because many people resort to it in pursuit of remedial intervention regarding their marital matters.

In this study, two churches, whose names are withheld for confidentiality purposes, participated through their pastors who are involved in couples counselling and often encounter cases of men who report being abused by their wives. As such, they were a source of information for the purposes of this study. It is, however, important to highlight that the church, through its pastors and other leaders, in the same way as the state and other non-state entities, only deal with reported IPA or domestic violence issues and only when they are brought to its attention. The church leaders pray for and provide counselling to their members and other members of the public who may approach them when in troubled relationships, and the objective in most cases is to resolve the matters and save the relationship. Be that as it may, one pastor in this study noted that they may recommend divorce during IPA counselling sessions in cases where there are possibilities of serious harm or potential loss of life. This is more of an exception than the rule for Christian leaders, whose doctrine strongly opposes divorce. Pastors are not otherwise legally mandated to deal with such issues and they can only go so far as offering counselling, referrals and recommendations for further recourse measures, for instance, to courts and legal advisers.

The family institution

The exact definition of family is not unitary (Chirozva et. al., 2007). This is because the concept carries different meanings in different contexts. More so, the functions that a family is expected to perform are dynamic. African traditional families were based on involuntary relations of descent, wide kinship networks and marriage (Gelfand, 1992; Chirozva et. al., 2007; Shaw, 2007). Such relations were often based on duties and obligations among members (Shaw, 2007). In Zimbabwe, as noted by Chirozva et. al. (2007), among the Ndebele and Shona tribes, families were exogamous and followed patrilineal kinship. These patterns are still existent even though there have been other changes to the family.

In a contemporary sociological conception of family, marriage is not an essential element (Chirozva et. al., 2007; Kendall, 2011) and families are becoming more voluntary (Shaw, 2007). Contemporary families include various forms of living patterns and relationships, inclusive of which are single-parent households, cohabiting couples, same-sex couples and multiple generations – grandparent, parent, and child staying together as a family (Chirozva et. al., 2007; Kendall, 2011). In some instances, people choose certain affiliations which they then call families. Such are referred to by sociologists as fictive or elective families (Shaw, 2007). This is despite such families having no state or religious recognition. These emergent and highly individualistic relationships are to some extent, replacing older ideas of familial intimacy and obligation (Shaw, 2007). For the purposes of this study, the family is understood as a relationship in which "people live together with commitment, care for one another, and consider their identity to be significantly attached to the group" (Kendall, 2011:p.348). Some family relations may have a sexual expression or parent–child connections (Kendall, 2011).

Family is central to Zimbabwe's Shona culture (Gelfand, 1992; Chirozva et. al., 2007). Despite some infiltration from the European (British) culture and conceptions of family, extended family relationships still have some significance among Zimbabweans (Owomoyela, 2002; Murambadoro, 2018). For example and as noted by Gelfand (1992), traditionally the term "cousin" in Zimbabwean culture was non-existent. Cousins were referred to and acknowledged as one's brothers and sisters (Gelfand, 1992). Which is now rarely the case, especially in urban spaces.

The factors which contributed to major changes to the family structure and the conceptualisation of the family institution in Zimbabwe are: Firstly, the growing urbanisation and emigration which has seen rising numbers of Zimbabweans moving into towns and neighbouring countries like South Africa, many doing so on a permanent bases (Gelfand, 1992; Mangezvo, 2015). Secondly, Christianity and European colonialism, both of which tampered with the polygynous traditional conception of family (Gelfand, 1992; Chirozva et. al., 2007). Lastly, the globalisation phenomena at large (Gelfand, 1992). Gelfand (1992) and Parpart (2007) nonetheless aver that most Zimbabwean urbanites maintain some contact with rural relatives for social reasons and as a safeguard against old age or unemployment. That is, they maintain the ties with rural relatives just in case life in the cities gets tough that they may want to return to their family home. It is within this context that the family institution's role and contribution in addressing IPA in Zimbabwe is analysed.

Families, regardless of the pattern they take, are characterised by intimacy (Armstrong, 1998; Shaw, 2007). They maintain some form of control among members and in most cases are a source of protection, comfort and companionship (Kendall, 2011). According to Armstrong (1998:p.63), the family –whether nuclear or extended, is the focal point in times of need and for all forms of support, especially emotional support. It is associated with interdependence among individual members as they cooperate in order to acquire the basic necessities of life

which include love and physiological needs such as food and shelter (Chirozva et. al., 2007; Kendall, 2011). Traditionally, the participation of families in resolving couple disputes and IPA was based on social contract and was a matter of obligation. However, nowadays conflicting couples may choose to involve only members of their liking (Chirozva et. al., 2007).

Among the Zimbabwean Shona community, IPA has until recently been treated as a private matter that is resolved through family intervention via family council or tribal courts (Gelfand, 1973; Murambadoro, 2018). The family council *(dare remusha)* comprises of aunts and uncles and other elderly family members. Both maternal and paternal families have their separate councils (Murambadoro, 2018). These structures are not well established in urban settings because such settlements are not based on kinship as is the case in most rural setups. Thus, couples usually resort to their brothers, sisters and their spouses while in some cases contacts are made with those in rural areas (Murambadoro, 2018). Whichever the case may be, these individuals are still considered as family. The family council as an institution has power to counsel, reprimand (Murambadoro, 2018), recommend and facilitate divorce in unresolved matters. Families engage troubled couples through counselling or talking to them (Armstrong, 1998). This process usually involves listening to both parties, identifying the problems and making determinations on which party has wronged the other. The exploration of problems may not be confined to the immediate problems alone but may include other issues between the couple or parties. There are no limitations regarding who can or cannot approach the family council between the conflicting parties. Either the man or the woman can make use of the same institution. It can also be an individual or collective decision.

As noted by Armstrong (1998:p.60), the traditional pre-colonial or pre-urbanised family institution had power which had three main sources, i.e. the dependence of members on family for resources and approval, the traditional power hierarchies within the family and spiritual beliefs. Nonetheless, these power centres are losing their grip on the family through the transition resulting from the noted historical processes. Living apart as a result of migration to urban centres or other countries weakens day-to-day dependence among family members and as a result the power that the family may have on individual members is also weakened (Armstrong, 1998). Factors such as education and access to employment, as postulated by Armstrong (1998), also contribute to the lessening of traditional power as elder family members who historically were endowed with respect due to the hierarchy of age may in fact defer to younger educated and employed family members who may be taking care of them. The family unit, according to Armstrong (1998), has little, other than, emotional and psychological power over individual members in the modern era. In addition to the challenges on the family institution resulting from urbanisation and migration, family-based solutions to IPA may not be effective due to the family's inability or unwillingness to proffer such, since family members at times may have a conflict of interest (Armstrong, 1998).

An overview of the institutional framework

Each of the above-mentioned state institutions have different mandates, but they all contribute to the curbing of IPA. Despite it being the mandate of the state to serve all citizens regardless of their gender, creed, or any other attribute, the Zimbabwean state system, through the noted ministries, departments and agencies whose objectives, visions and mandates are framed in gender inclusive language, focuses primarily on women and children as victims of domestic violence. Thus, abuse of men is given little, if any attention. It is important to note therefore, that services through the noted government departments for men experiencing violence or abuse in intimate relationships are relatively unusual in Zimbabwe. The police and the judiciary featured prominently in this study and for this reason, most of the discussions herein revolve around these two institutions.

Civil society organisations, faith-based organisations and family institutions all play a critical role in preventing and addressing IPA in Zimbabwe. As above-outlined, however, there are various limitations with regards to the scope of and coverage by each of these institutions. Most of them have their mandate focussing specifically on women as victims and men as perpetrators and are represented across the entire country. This study, however, found that the few organisations whose focus is on male victims, such as Varume Svinurai, fail to have their presence in every part of the country due to limited funding, among other reasons. These findings, therefore, indicate the inadequacies within the Zimbabwean institutional frameworks with regards to dealing with IPA among male victims.

6.3 Coping mechanisms and strategies

According to Ferrer (2007:p.567), some of the pertinent questions to a full comprehension of women's experiences of abuse include; "How they appraise the situation, and; what cognitive, emotional, and behavioural efforts they engage to manage the situation?" These questions are also key for understanding IPA experiences among male victims. It is important to have an appreciation of how men respond, resist and/or survive abuse perpetrated by women in a context where they are perceived as empowered and occupying the top levels of the power hierarchy. Methodologically, this study has a limited scope in that it only focused on cases in which the target of abuse took some measure either as remedy or retaliation to perceived abuses. Those that did not take action against the abuse, but had their cases published in various media platforms, are also considered through the use of tele-observation and this means therefore, that unpublished and unreported cases fall outside of the study's ambit.

Coping strategies can broadly be understood as the diversity of thoughts and behaviours employed by people in managing difficult or taxing situations (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). In this enquiry, the IPA that male victims experienced characterise such taxing circumstances. Waldrop & Resick (2004) note that there are various ways of categorising coping mechanisms. To examine abused men's responses to IPA, this study adopts the Sheu & Sedlacek (2004) distinction between primary and secondary forms of coping mechanisms, which itself is based on the Rothbaum et. al. (1982) control model. In terms of this approach, as noted by Sheu &

Sedlacek (2004), primary control coping mechanisms refer to attempts by people experiencing distress to get desired outcomes or gain control by bringing the problematic circumstances in line with their wishes. It involves actions that are meant to directly deal with and change a problem (Weisz et. al., 1994). With reference to IPA, such actions, according to Machado et. al. (2017), include help-seeking and engaging with the abusive partner and these actions are in this study treated as two sub-categories falling under the primary control coping mechanisms. The first sub-category comprises of help-seeking men who sought various forms of assistance from family or friends, the justice system, church and other social support institutions such as Varume Svinurai, while the second sub-category is composed of abused men who engaged their partners (Machado et. al., 2017) through dialoguing and/or who retaliated or attempted to retaliate.

On the other hand, secondary control coping mechanisms involve actions by troubled individuals to bring themselves into line with the taxing situation, without attempting to change it (Sheu & Sedlacek, 2004). These are also referred to as avoidant or adjustive strategies as individuals attempt to alter themselves to be compatible with the problem situation (Weisz et. al., 1994). In keeping with (Lien & Lorentzen, 2019:p.165) conception of men's coping behaviour, secondary coping among men involves "trivialising and under-communicating abuse".

Abused men who in this study resorted to idiosyncratic strategies, which Machado et. al. (2017:p.518) also refer to as 'doing something in isolation' such as; suicide and suicidal thoughts, alcohol abuse, abandoning the matrimonial home and divorce, are discussed under secondary control coping mechanisms. It is however critical to note that these classifications are not mutually exclusive. The choice of one coping mechanism does not preclude the adoption of others. Some victims in this study would attempt primary control mechanisms before subsequently embarking on secondary strategies. In some cases, they would resort to strategies falling under both categories concurrently, as in the case of those who sought counselling at church while also being assisted by their families to resolve the problem.

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6.3.1 Primary coping strategies
<u>**Men's help-seeking behaviour**</u>

Seeking help for IPA is one way in which abused men in this study reacted to the abuse and as Shannon et. al. (2006) note, it is a coping mechanism that relates to the involvement of third parties in an attempt to deal with the problem. This section dissects two leading questions adopted from Machado et. al. (2017:p.514), which are: When seeking help, which sources of help did abused men consult and how did they experience the help-seeking process?

Due to the methodological choices made in this study, as noted above, most of the male victims who participated had taken some steps to find help from external parties. They sought help from formal and informal institutions. The former encompasses the police; courts; family counselling and social support organisations such as Varume Svinurai; as well as their church elders and pastors while the latter comprised consultations made by men within their social networks of friends or at work (Machado et. al., 2017).

Legal recourse

Male victims who opted for legal recourse were limited to either criminal or civil remedies as provided for by the extant legal framework noted above. Criminal remedies sought by participants include the punishment and/or rehabilitation of the offenders through the imposition of prison terms, community service as well as reprimands and cautions by courts. Whereas those who sought help in the civil division of the justice system, as already noted above, had peace and protection orders as well as claims for damages as possible remedies. This section thus delineates abused men's use of and perceptions about the noted criminal and civil justice remedies extracted through interviews.

All participants who were physically abused reported their cases to police. While most of them had their cases taken to court for prosecution, a few noted that the cases ended at the police station. As part of their investigative work, the police in Zimbabwe also offer pseudo-counselling to couples through their Community Relations and Victim Friendly Units found at every police station. All participants who reported their cases to the police, nonetheless, recounted that police officials expressed scepticism and disbelief of their abuse accounts and often acted on counter accusations by their partners while ignoring the men's reports, even when they were the first to be taken. In other instances, as one participant noted, the limited counselling would amount to nothing more than advice for couples to go back home and solve their problems privately with no arrests being made, even in the presence of overwhelming evidence warranting arrest. Some of their statements are noted below.

> *The police from Harare, haaah, they did not handle my case well. I say so because whenever I went there, they would make a joke out of my case, when I was trying to make them understand how serous my case was. In one instance, a female police officer said to me, (ungarohwe nemukadzi akanaka kudai), how could you be beaten by such a beautiful wife? ...because my former wife (anodonhedza musika), is well built.*

> *...whenever we went to police with our case, I would be the one reprimanded by police even when I was the one reporting. I would even be insulted by police.* **Interview-Mr DN-a male victim of IPA (47 years old), Harare**

> *... some police officers did not want the matter to go to court, they did not want to have the docket opened, some would ask such questions like, (ungarohwe nemukadzi iwewe, une chokwadi nazvo izvozvo?) is it even true that your wife beat you? And I had to ask him, kuti, can't you see the blood, and the scratches and wounds resulting from the assault? It showed me that they were not convinced regardless of the fact that I had visible signs of assault.* **Interview-Mr GW-a male victim of IPA (41 years old), Harare**

Another participant indicated that it was only after the intervention of Varume Svinurai (men's organization), that the police instituted an arrest on his abusive wife, without which, the man claimed, *'...no arrest would have been made'*. The participants, therefore, shared the sentiment that the police generally do not consider their reports seriously.

The cases that were taken to court were prosecuted and offenders were convicted. The common sentences imposed by courts following these convictions, as reported by the men, were community service and suspended prison terms. Despite showing satisfaction with the court processes and conviction of offenders, the participants indicated negative perceptions about the forms of punishments or sentences imposed by the criminal courts on the female offenders. One participant had this to say regarding a court judgment against his physically abusive wife:

> *...but I think the court was too lenient because considering that I was injured to the extent of losing a finger and was bed ridden in hospital and unable to walk for two months, I expected her to get either a prison term or community service. To my surprise, she only got a suspended sentence of a year.* **Interview MCS-PTF-a victim (aged 48 years), Harare**

Participants who reported seeking civil legal remedies were fewer than those that sought criminal remedies. The remedies sought were; custody of children; peace and protection orders – also referred to as restraining orders and maintenance refunds resulting from misattributed paternity. While sentiments regarding the outcomes in criminal cases amongst participants were negative, those that had their cases dealt with in the civil division expressed mixed views on the matter. For some, the court processes and remedies were satisfactory, yet some participants who sought and secured peace orders averred that such orders are not always effective due to the fact that they expire, requiring the victims to apply for extension and they are often breached by the offenders, as can be noted in the excerpt below by Mr MD. One participant cited the high legal fees associated with civil litigation as a stumbling block among male victims who may have considered it. Additionally, a key informant from a men's organization pointed out the lack of information regarding the civil legal procedures and processes among men as a major factor contributing to their failure to exploit the option. The excerpts below express these diverse sentiments.

I want to thank the court, we were at court three times and the first was protection order, and it was well handled, and I was granted the protection order, even the custody court here in Harare, where she was claiming custody of the children, it was also well handled, and the court denied my wife custody of the children. **Interview-Mr DN-a male victim of IPA (47 years old) from Harare**

She often violated the conditions of the peace order and even after the order had lapsed, she continued with her verbally abusive behaviour. **Interview-Mr MD-a male victim of IPA (49 years old), Harare**

I knew about peace orders, but I did not have the means to engage legal services. **Interview-Mr GW-a male victim of IPA (41 years old), Harare**

Some used the civil sub-system of the justice system to claim custody of their children. Custody can be understood as a court-sanctioned measure whereby one parent or both are given the responsibility to house and provide care for a child (Barber cited in Khunou, 2006).

A majority of male victims expressed critical views of the laws that govern families and intimate relationships, the criminal laws in general, and the actors within the justice delivery system, with some labelling them as 'unjust.' Among these participants were the ones that made use of the criminal justice system and were unsatisfied by the way their cases were handled by police, prosecutors and the judiciary. They viewed the ridiculing by police and what one participant described as 'light sentences' imposed by the courts on female offenders as a portrayal of the scepticism and suspicion with which IPA against men is perceived within the justice system. Other participants viewed the justice system as a representation of the law itself, which they described as biased against men. For these participants, it is the law that prescribes differential treatment between male and female victims of IPA. These views are expressed in the excerpts below.

…my reports of abuse were always questioned by police. Even at court, the magistrate kept on asking if I was telling the truth, she only got convinced after my child testified and even so, she gave a light sentence. She only cautioned her, and I think these officials behaved in this way due to the fact that I as the complainant am a man, not because of the law. **Interview-Mr MD-a male victim of IPA (49 years old), Harare**

My view is that, the police and judiciary only follow and apply law. It is the law which is unjust. I think the law does not treat men and women who abuse their partners equally. **Interview-Mr DN-a male victim of IPA (47 years old), Harare**

…even in the constitution, there are specific rights for groups like women, children, the disabled but none for men. So, if my rights are infringed on, I have no Constitutional remedy to that…and if they are not listed down, how am I going to claim them constitutionally? **Mr TND-Key informant (Varume Svinurai), Harare**

The findings presented here indicate a lack of confidence in the justice system among participants, although some were satisfied. Such a lack of confidence stems from, among other factors, the treatment they were subjected to by officials in the system and the remedies provided for by legislation. McCarrick et. al. (2016) refer to men's experiences of humiliation, ridicule, and sometimes counter arrests by police as double victimization. Another identified factor contributing to men's lack of confidence is their discontent with court judgments and sentences against female offenders, which as reported, has an effect of trivialising male victims' abuse experiences. These factors have a negative bearing on the victims' perception of the justice system and their chances of seeking help (McCarrick et. al., 2016). Nonetheless, discontent with court judgements is a common feature among aggrieved parties, and among men there is a desire to see women offenders of IPA being treated the same way as abusive men, who are often incarcerated without bail upon arrest. Thus, their dissatisfaction may largely be based on subjective assessments and envy, even though a claim cannot be made that the discontent is unfounded.

Participants were also critical of the laws that govern IPA and family relationships. As already noted above, the criticism against the DVA's non-recognition of emotional, psychological, economic and verbal abuse as criminal offenses and the lack of provision for the crime of rape of males in the Criminal Law (Codification Reform) Act are cited as major areas of concern among male victims of IPA. Furthermore, the constitution suffers the same criticism. In one of the above excerpts, Mr TDN (a male victim) held that the Zimbabwe's constitution has no provision for rights of men as a social group while it provides for other groups such as women and children, to mention a few. This shows that the claims made by male victims were not always baseless but, in some cases, premised on extant evidence. Hence, the commonly held sceptic perception of the justice system. Apart from the loopholes in laws, it is worth noting that in some cases the scepticism amongst male victims of IPA is based on factors such as their ignorance or lack of understanding of laws governing IPA and domestic violence, their inability to access legal advice for the want of financial resources as well as the ineffectiveness of some legal remedies as noted above. But be that as it may, the highlighted shortcomings in laws render abused men vulnerable, considering that such limitations militate against their legal protection by the system which is meant for their benefit together with other citizens.

Counselling and social support

According to Locke et. al. (2001), counselling is a support process in which a person (who may or may not be an expert) holds a face-to-face talk with another person to help individuals solve personal problems as well as couple or family conflicts. It may also be meant to help improve a person's attitude or character. Counselling usually provides a safe and confidential platform for victims of IPA to express their feelings and experiences (Mutanana & Gasva, 2014). Thus, it is considered as a coping mechanism. The three forms of counselling that emerged in this study and form the subject of this section are; counselling by family members and friends;

professional; and religious (Christian or church) counselling. Abused men's experiences and perceptions of adopting these modes of counselling are presented below.

Counselling has traditionally existed as a conflict resolution mechanism among African communities, albeit fundamentally different from the modern Western-influenced forms of family therapy (Charema & Shizha, 2008; Sodi et. al., 2010). While Douglas & Hines (2011); Machado et. al. (2016); & Machado et. al. (2017) posit that counselling by family members is informal in the western world, it is customarily recognised within Zimbabwean communities as a mechanism of addressing IPA (Mutanana & Gasva, 2014; Murambadoro, 2018). Hence, as above-noted, it is ostensibly formal. All of the abused men who participated in this study, regardless of the form of abuse suffered, sought help from their family members. They did so in a variety of ways. Some participants reported that they approached the most convenient relative, yet others followed the proper customary channel by consulting family elders, as represented by both maternal and paternal aunts and uncles. This difference in approach did not have a significant bearing on the experiences and perceptions the participants held on help-seeking from family members. The majority of abused men consulted family members after efforts to dialogue with their abusive partners failed to yield results and the factors they considered before making such a move included the timespan and frequency of abuse as well as the extent of harm inflicted through the abuse. Although the participants reported seeking family counselling regardless of the form of abuse they experience, it would appear form the findings that victims of such forms of abuse as prolonged denial of sex, misattributed paternity and verbal abuse relied more on family than did victims of other forms. In one notable case the participant averred that he only notified his family after two years of enduring emotional and verbal torture.

Some participants in the minority expressed scepticism on the effectiveness of the involvement of family members as a mechanism to addressing IPA. Their misgivings were premised on their claims, among others, that family members may take sides between the conflicting spouses or partners, thereby possibly exacerbating the tensions. The excerpts below highlight these sentiments.

> *…the abuse went on for a very long time and our relatives from both sides also became involved and joined either side of the squabbles. Some of these relatives even insulted me as a useless and good for nothing man…* **Interview-Mr MD-a male victim of IPA (49 years old), Harare**

> *We then went to her aunt upon her request where I was then questioned, and I felt she was not helping the situation because she took my wife's side.* **Interview-Mr DN-a male victim of IPA (47 years old), Harare**

Despite such cynicism, the majority of abused men indicated confidence in the helpfulness of family members in alleviating the adverse consequences of IPA. The participants noted that

apart from being readily available, family members are a source of affective and financial support, aspects of which are integral to the wellbeing of victims of abuse. In the excerpts below, the participants noted how their family members advised against fighting back and acted as safety nets by bailing out the victim of misattributed paternity (the participant) when he was arrested for failure to raise child support money.

> *…there was a time, I felt like beating her up because I felt I had enough of it, and I told my cousin who advised me against it, and I took his advice.* **Interview-Mr GW-a male victim of IPA (41 years old), Harare**

> *My family bailed me out of prison when I was incarcerated for failure to support a child who was not mine…they then advised me to go for DNA paternity tests which as you also now know came out negative… (He cries)* **Tele-observation- PF2011[33]- a male victim of abuse from Kwekwe**

The participants further pointed out that in some instances, family members played a pivotal role by referring the abused men to law enforcement authorities, churches and/or professional counsellors. This is in line with Machado et. al. (2016); & Huntley et. al. (2019), who assert that seeking help from family members likely leads to help-seeking from professionals. In the below statement, the abused man recited the way his brother referred him for counselling at Varume Svinurai Men's Trust.

> *I approached my young brother with my issue, and he introduced me to Varume Svinurai Men's forum…at the organization I related my problem and they directed me to legal specialists where I got legal counsel.* **Interview-Mr MD-a male victim of IPA (49 years old), Harare**

Twenty-one of the thirty-four interviewed male victims indicated that they sought professional counselling from Varume Svinurai. Considering that this constitutes more than half of the study participants, there could be potential suspicion of a sample bias. It is, however, important to note that only 12 of them were recruited through the organisation. As mentioned above, Varume Svinurai is a men's organisation which provides social support to men including those who report abuse. The support offered include *inter alia* professional family counselling. These participants were referred by either workmates, friends or family members. They were sometimes referred by the women's organisations at which they had initially sought help. In one of the cases a man, who was emotionally and psychologically abused by his wife, approached a TV personality (Amai Chisamba) who then referred him to Varume Svinurai. It would appear from these findings that the participant did not personally know of the existence of the organization.

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[33] Global DNA Zimbabwe Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/GlobalDNAGlobally/?ref=br_rs Accessed on 14 August 2019

The participants perceived professional counselling by Varume Svinurai counsellors as helpful. Their testimonies showered Varume Svinurai counsellors with praises and positive feedback, indicating satisfaction with their services. Some participants recited that they were listened to and not treated with suspicion, neither did they feel judged. According to these participants, such treatment enabled them to be expressive about their experiences and get help as a result, as can be noted in the interview excerpt by Mr MD below. Two participants indicated that they were confused about their experiences and were not sure of how they were supposed to respond, thus they needed to talk to someone. Nonetheless, they did not know who to talk to and what form of advice they needed. They reported that it was only through dialoguing with Varume Svinurai counsellors that they were advised to be steadfast and to take legal action against their abusive partners. These sentiments are expressed in the statements below.

> *Varume Svinurai, are advisers, and their advice is the best I have ever had. They helped me from the beginning to the end of my problems and they handled my case with so much zeal and passion and their counsel yielded great results. Now I am back together with my wife. They were always there for me whenever I needed them.* **Harare Interview-Mr CM-a male victim of IPA (43 years old), Harare**

> *These organizations helped me a lot ...Varume Svinurai, was excellent, (handina chekutaura) I am short of words because, my wife was being advised to harass me so that I can beat her, and I did not know how to react. I was advised at Varume Svinurai to be calm and steadfast and not be violent towards her. They even advised me to seek legal counsel, because they are not lawyers themselves.* **Interview-Mr DN-a male victim of IPA (47 years old), Harare**

> *She would also beat me up, but I did not retaliate because I was receiving counselling from Varume Svinurai, I could not fight her back.* **Interview-Mr GT-a male victim of IPA (47 years old), Kwekwe**

> *I think men find it easy to express their concerns because Varume Svinurai, bring men together to discuss issues that pertain to family and marriages. At Varume Svinurai I was not judged or labelled as an abuser...they wanted me to tell my story...* **Interview-Mr MD-a male victim of IPA (49 years old), Harare**

Mr Nzounhenda (a key informant) from Varume Svinurai echoed the same sentiments. He noted that men who "are targets of abuse, often do not know how to cope or deal with women who may be abusive and as a result they also resort to abusive behaviours themselves." He further averred that most abused men are not versed with the law on IPA and as a result of such ignorance, they perceive the law as only meant to protect women while they have to protect themselves by fighting back. Varume Svinurai, therefore, in addition to the psycho-social support, offer men with referrals on and to legal experts, as can be noted in the excerpt by Mr DN above, where he stated that he was further referred to legal experts by Varume Svinurai counsellors.

As noted above, support organisations for men are often labelled as promoters of patriarchy or promoters of feminist backlash who aim to reverse the gains of the work on violence against women (Minnings, 2014). It is interesting that statements by the abused men indicate that Varume Svinurai as their support organisation discouraged them from retaliating the abuse they suffered. Statements by Mr CN, Mr GT and Mr DN, to mention a few, do not only show their satisfaction with the support they were given but also point to Varume Svinurai's efforts to reduce violence in its entirety. That is, their work as an organisation in discouraging men from fighting back positively impacted on violence against women. It may well be argued that Varume Svinurai's efforts contribute towards the promotion of non-violent forms of masculinity. While Gibbs et. al. (2015) aver that little is known about the efficacy of organisational programs or policies in bringing about change in masculinities, findings in this study attest to Varume Svinurai's work, with some success, in inculcating positive masculinities among their clients and members. The creation of safe spaces where men are supported without having their masculine identities being judged is shown in this study to have assisted in changing abused men's attitudes and behaviours towards those that contest hegemonic masculinities. Drawing from Kia-Keating et. al. (2005:p.179) notion of 'renegotiating masculinities', Varume Svinurai's work may be conceptualised as contributing towards the transformation of what it means to be a man in the Zimbabwean context.

Religion has always been a safety net for people in the midst of precarity (Mandizadza & Chidarikire, 2016; Cline, 2019). It is sociologically viewed from multiple angles, one of which, as noted by Watlington & Murphy (2006), is that it provides comfort and a sense of purpose to its adherents. Christianity featured highly in this study as a point of reference to which participants often referred or resorted direction and guidance on how to handle the various abuses they experienced. There emerged a strong sense of dependence on the church as an institution, representing the Christian religion and the bible as the source from which Christian teachings and spirituality are derived by the participants.

Participants who reported seeking spiritual advice and counselling from their pastors were more than half (20) of the male victims who participated in this study. While one male victim averred that he opened up about his wife's abusive behaviour to church elders when he noticed the signs of abuse, that was not the case with other participants. In most of the cases such moves were made after efforts to dialogue with the abusive partners, as well as family interventions, failed to yield desired outcomes and that would mean after lengthy timespans of enduring abuse. The same sentiments were expressed by a pastor who was a key informant. She stated that:

> ...yes, men come for counselling and in many cases are embarrassed to talk about it because they are afraid of being stigmatised that they are women, sissies and not real men. So, they keep quiet about it for a long time until it is almost beyond help. They often come for help on the eleventh hour, when it is long overdue, and a lot of damage

has already been caused both on the person and to the relationship. **Key informant interview (BISH) a pastor and church founder from Harare**

Despite the noted reluctance to approach church leaders or pastors, all the participants who cited the church and faith in God as coping mechanisms intimated their confidence in these strategies. The participants, some of whom were pastors, articulated their reliance on Christian counselling as a profound mechanism of resolving IPA. Mr ZK (a male victim) had this to say about his situation, "*I have 26 years with my wife. We are Christians, so I have always involved our church leaders to help us as a couple. So that has helped me and my wife to deal with our problems...*" For some male victims, confiding their abuse in pastors ensured privacy due to the confidentiality with which the matters are treated. Thus, they would opt seeking help from pastors and not from the criminal justice system. These perceptions were also confirmed by the key informant-pastor, who noted that:

> *...men are comfortable coming to pastors because of guaranteed confidentiality unlike to police because it becomes a public matter and public knowledge that they have been abused, which is mothing they are not comfortable with.* **Key informant interview (BISH) a pastor and church founder from Harare**

Apart from the fact that their cases remain confidential, some male victims pointed out that their dependence on faith in God was their source of strength, courage and power to persevere during the circumstances. Studying scripture as individuals and listening to the teachings at church provided them with motivation and hope that their situation would change through God's intervention. This is in line with Sheu & Sedlacek (2004) assertion that religion and spirituality characterise essential coping strategies among male victims of IPA. Below are statements by Mr NK, who was subjected to abduction and incarceration resulting from his wife's false allegations of sodomy with his son, as already noted in Chapter 4, and Mr DN, who was a victim of physical, verbal and emotional abuse.

> *I never approached police to report counter allegations about the way my wife had me abducted and her false allegations, neither did I make any application for peace or protection order nor civil damages for the assaults and all the rights violations that happened. I said God will fight and hit back on my behalf. And I believe God's whip is the strongest and mightiest. I think faith has proven to be something to reckon with and a strong weapon that I can rely on...I think my decision to depend on faith was a correct decision.* **Interview-Mr NK-a male victim of IPA (70 years old), Kwekwe**

> *The bible however, helped me so much I remember, the chapter, in Jeremiah 15 10-11 and chapter 20 v10-18. I would memorise that chapter, and it helped me to persevere in the trying times. I would cry asking God why this was happening to me when I love my wife and children? I did not do as other men who go out get mistresses or abuse alcohol, I would find solace in prayer, singing and reading the bible.* **Interview-Mr DN-a male victim of IPA (47 years old), Harare**

The above-stated results depict the Christian religion represented by various churches in Zimbabwe as posited by Chuma & Chazovachii (2012:12-13) as a vital institution in addressing IPA. That may be the explanation why, as noted in the previous chapter, some churches epitomised by Amai-Chitau (2014); and Amai-Gunguwo (2016) have incorporated couples education sessions as part of their teachings, where co-existence between wives and husbands are emphasised.

Discussing men's help seeking behaviour

Table 6.1 Participants' help-seeking patterns

Source of help	Number of men who sought help	Total
Family	34	34
Support groups and organisations	21	34
Churches	20	34
Police and Courts	18	34

There is a great deal of research documenting men's help seeking behaviours (Lane & Addis, 2005; Cheung et. al., 2009; Hammer & Vogel, 2010; Hines & Douglas, 2011; Barkhuizen, 2015b; Machado et. al., 2016), and it is widely acknowledged that when experiencing problems such as IPA, men do not readily seek help (Pearson & Makadzange, 2008), the reasons for which are multiple. Some of the reasons why male victims are less likely to report abuse committed against them or seek professional help are: society's stigma for not protecting themselves (Munson, 2011); fear of secondary victimization because they fail to conform to the male identity stereotype of being invincible hence they will be perceived as wimps or weak men (Lysova & Douglas, 2008; Lien & Lorentzen, 2019); the risk of not being believed because they are men (Barkhuizen, 2015b; McCarrick et. al., 2016); the fear of being removed from or asked to leave their homes –especially by family courts because it is ostensibly the easy option (Huntley et. al., 2019) as well as the unavailability of the support systems and services required by men (Barkhuizen, 2010; Huntley et. al., 2019), i.e. the society is often unwelcoming and inattentive to their concerns. Although findings in this study may seemingly portray men as willing to seek assistance when victimised, it should be noted that in most cases they did so after enduring abuse for lengthy timespans. For some it took serious physical harm and emotional breakdown before they sought any help. As already noted above, one of the pastors who was interviewed noted that male victims often seek help "on the eleventh hour." The findings on the reasons for such reluctance concur with the above cited extant literature. Some of these reasons have had little research coverage and will thus be briefly delineated below.

Among the predictors of help-seeking by male victims is the availability or visibility of services. This study established that the institutional, legal and policy frameworks provide the context within which services for IPA victims are provided. As already noted above, there are notable deficiencies among the institutions, polices and laws with regards to the provision of services to male victims of IPA in Zimbabwe. The extant and well-established institutions, for

instance government departments and civic or interest rights groups, are meant for other demographic groups and not for men. Men who find themselves in a position of victimhood in such contexts as a corollary, find it difficult to access any help they may need (Huntley et. al., 2019). The few and less established institutions that assist abused men are less known because they do not receive media coverage (Barkhuizen, 2010) and in most cases are not established because of a lack of funding. Varume Svinurai, as noted above, is a typical example in this regard. Abused men in this study reported that they did not know about its existence prior to their victimisation. They got to know about the organization through referrals by relatives, friends, or other organisations. In a rather unusual above-mentioned case, one male victim from Harare approached a television personality who referred him to Varume Svinurai, where he was then assisted. Such a case is indicative of the desperation with which some abused men require the services. It is also in accord with Cook, cited in Barkhuizen (2010), that abused men often have no facilities to go to when they need them. Thus, while their failure to seek such services may be perceived as reluctance, it might in fact be due to the invisibility of the services designed for male victims of IPA.

The stigma that is culturally associated with men's vulnerability is one among possible predictors of help-seeking among men who suffer abuse at the hands of their female partners (Sheu & Sedlacek, 2004; Cheung et. al., 2009; Barkhuizen, 2010). According to Farrimond (2012), the dominant conceptions of masculinity, or 'hegemonic masculinity' to use Connell's (1998) terminology, such as avoidance of shame and control of emotions (Lebitse, 2018) puts male victims of IPA in a position where they do not readily show or acknowledge vulnerability albeit apparent victimisation. The "macho attitude", as noted by Barkhuizen (2010:p.76), inhibits their chances of seeking help as they want to portray an impression that they are in charge of their faculties. George (1994); & Allen-Collinson (2009) describe this phenomenon, using Goffman's (1967) 'face-work' concept, as an attempt by male victims to escape stigmatisation by 'saving face.' Findings in this study present somewhat of an antithesis to this intersection between male identity and vulnerability as they show that abused men were willing to seek assistance but did not know where to find it. However, this antithesis is cautiously noted considering that the methodology employed in this study only focussed on male victims who had made reports. A study including men who did not report their cases may have found different results. More so, even though the men reported that they sought help, they did not always promptly do so. In some cases, as already noted above, it took serious harm or lengthy timespans of abuse for the male victims to open up, even to their families. Such delays in help-seeking may thus be understood as reluctance and resistance in compliance with the masculine dictates of a tough personality.

Apart from the above noted contention that much of the underreporting is due to men feeling embarrassed by the stigma of being an IPA victim, research (Barkhuizen, 2015b; Barkhuizen, 2015a; McCarrick et. al., 2016; Machado et. al., 2017; Evans, 2019) shows that many of those who do come forward, risk being arrested themselves, after their abusers make false counter

accusations against them. Most of the male victims in this study stated that they hesitated to report abuse for fear of being arrested themselves, and when they eventually reported they were often treated with suspicion within the criminal justice system, especially by the police among other actors. As already noted herein, their experiences were not only dismissed by police, but they could even find themselves under arrest when their partners turned the tables on them. This evidence is consistent with findings by Barkhuizen (2010); & McCarrick et. al. (2016) that men are often arrested under false charges and their disclosure of victimhood are not taken seriously, despite having evidence. Such negative responses, especially by law enforcement agents, impede abused men's efforts to seek help (Szilassy, 2019). The negative responses are also associated with the scepticism with which men perceive the criminal justice system. The male victims in this study indicated a lack of confidence in the services of the police and their concerns were premised on their experiences when they sought help. Even pastors and professional counsellors made reference to the pre-eminence of creating safe spaces for abused men, where they would not feel judged and would be motivated to consider seeking help (Szilassy, 2019).

Lastly, it emerged in this study that some male victims fear the negative consequences that may unfold after they seek help (Huntley et. al., 2019). The possibility of divorce, losing custody of their children and having to leave their matrimonial home without anywhere else to live (Barkhuizen, 2010; Huntley et. al., 2019) are noted in literature on men's help-seeking as a major drawback. Men in this study also highlighted these as some of their fears as they contemplated help-seeking. However, these concerns were also related to the source of help. In most cases it appeared that men were likely to avoid the justice system so that they would save their relationships with the perpetrators, yet they would opt for prayers and counselling by pastors and professional counsellors respectively.

From the above discussed predictors of help-seeking among male victims of IPA, it can be noted that men face multiple barriers. While some are related to different individual circumstances, others are external to them and are based on the sources of help.

<u>**Retaliation**</u>

One would be forgiven for assuming that abused men who perceived their experiences of abuse at the hands of their spouses as provocation would indeed retaliate with abuse. That was, however, largely not the case in this study. Only one man retaliated by beating his unfaithful wife, while the other participants reported that they decided against it, even when they had such ideations. Numerous reasons were cited for non-retaliation, and these are delineated here. The first and major reason that most participants cited is the advice and counselling from Varume Svinurai. One participant indicated that a counsellor at Varume Svinurai advised against retaliation as it would lead more harm and compromise his success chances at court, if legal remedies were to be sought. Below is his statement:

...she would also beat me up, but I did not retaliate because I was receiving counselling from Varume Svinurai...that was very helpful to me because in court when I then produced the evidence that I was non-violent, I won the case. **Interview-Mr MD-a male victim of IPA (49 years old), Harare**

Apart from the advice and counselling on how to handle abusive partners Mr MD received from Varume Svinurai, he pointed out that he was afraid of getting arrested as the aggressor if he ever attempted to retaliate or defend himself. Below is an interview excerpt by him.

I sometimes felt like beating her up, but I was afraid of being arrested. Police always threatened me with arrest even when I was not defending myself...so I knew if I ever made an attempt to beat her back, they would pick me. **Interview-Mr MD-a male victim of IPA (49 years old), Harare**

For some participants, their non-retaliation was based on the fear of causing more harm, especially physical harm, to the aggressor and through proximate abuse of the children who would also suffer as a result of witnessing their parents fighting. Mr DN, whose wife had doused hot water on him, had this to say:

...that made me really furious, and I lifted her up wanting to smash her on the floor but I was quick to think that it would have resulted in severe injuries on her and I put her down but I told her that I hit to kill, I don't want to beat you... **Interview-Mr DN-a male victim of IPA (47 years old), Harare**

He went on to further state that:

I also had a thought about our children, I felt they would find it very difficult to understand why we as their parents are fighting. I thought it would be difficult for them to understand who really was at fault between us. **Interview-Mr DN-a male victim of IPA (47 years old), Harare**

Furthermore, another participant from Harare, Mr GW, who owned a gun and was professionally trained in firearms, recounted that his training played a major role in his decision against retaliation. The training had more emphasis on maintaining one's calm and composure as opposed to being easily infuriated. He managed to master calmness in the face of his physically abusive wife, and as a result he did not fight back. Without that training, Mr GW stated that he would have made use of his gun in one of the violent attacks by his wife. Apart from the above noted reasons against retaliation, Lien & Lorentzen (2019) assert that male victims of abuse sometimes decide against retaliation as a way of challenging the traditional notions of male identity.

Retaliation as a coping mechanism among victims of abuse is characterised by self-help attempts to inflict harm on the aggressor (Wills, 1987) and resist the abuse (Alberta-Gov, 2008). It is always responsive and thus may or may not be intentional but determined by the

aggressor and dependent on the victims' perception of their capability to fight back. Although all of the abused men who participated in this study were able-bodied and visibly capable of causing harm, it is established in preceding passages that the majority did not do so. Such findings are consistent with research on coping mechanisms by Barkhuizen (2010), who also noted the same reasons for non-retaliation by male victims.

The type of abuse experienced is one among the other predictors determining whether the victim would consider retaliation or not (Leisring & Grigorian, 2016). The findings in this study show that retaliation was only considered by men who had been physically abused. According to Sinnamon (2017), retaliation usually results from impulsive behaviour that characterises volatile relationships. Thus, the high levels of emotional abuse reported herein may be a possible explanation to the abused men's decisions against retaliation.

The above-noted cases are indicative of the fact that men are not always violent or abusive. They may have the means and capacity to be abusive, but they may still decide against using such ability. These findings raise sociological questions regarding men's control of power in intimate relationships. Do they have inherent power based on their gender? Are there no instances where men reconsider their power even when they have it? These questions can be answered by perceiving intimate relationships through the Foucauldian conception of power as ubiquitous and mundane. Any party therein may embody it regardless of their gender, but that should not be construed as a claim that intimate relationships are egalitarian. It should further be highlighted that the abused men's decisions against retaliation did not mean that they never took action, rather they adopted primary control or avoidant mechanisms such as the ones discussed in the next sections.

6.3.2 Secondary coping strategies

While help-seeking by victims of IPA is a socially oriented coping mechanism, other means of coping such as excessive alcohol consumption, desertion of home, divorce and suicide are individualistic (Wills, 1987). The victims endeavour to deal with the abuse by engaging in behaviours that do not involve the abuser, which Machado et. al. (2017:p 518) refers to as, "doing something in isolation." These mechanisms are, in this study, regarded as primary coping mechanisms as previously noted.

Alcohol abuse

It's not uncommon for some victims of IPA or domestic violence to abuse alcohol (Cuskey, 1978; Golding, 1999; Benyera, 2017). In this study some male victims, who were not in the majority, recounted using alcohol at the time when they were being abused by their wives. Three of them stated that they would spend the greater part of their day at drinking spots and only visited their homes (where the abusive wives would be) during the very late hours of the day when they would just retire to bed upon arrival. Among the reasons the abused men cited for drinking alcohol excessively is its ability to impair their perception of the abuse they

suffered in the relationship, thereby helping them to forget and avoid the shame that they felt in reality. Some victims also reported that alcoholism, besides being pain alleviating and a time killer, is life enhancing and gave them feelings of self-worth which were eroded through the different forms of victimisation they experienced.

Riggs et. al. (2000) contend that the question regarding whether alcohol abuse is a risk factor or a coping strategy among female victims of IPA is shrouded in controversy, as there are no conclusive study findings. Nonetheless, Cuskey (1978); & Saxon et. al. (1978) consider alcoholism as a copying strategy among troubled persons, albeit noting its self-destructive effects. This study, although having its focus on abused men, confirms that alcohol abuse is one among many other coping strategies that male victims of IPA adopt. The participants further noted, however, that excessive drinking of alcohol did not stop the abuse from occurring. Rather, one of the participants (Mr GW) reported that due to the continued abuse, he developed an addiction to alcohol. Mr PL, another participant, reported that he had his work life affected as he had to take some days off from work due to anxiety and hangover. Such findings concur with Golding (1999); & Lien & Lorentzen (2019), whose findings led to the conclusion that IPA is a risk factor of mental disorders, such as anxiety and alcohol abuse among victims. They are also consistent with the assertions by Riggs et. al. (2000) & Anonymous (2016) that victims of abuse use excessive alcohol consumption as an avoidance mechanism, which in most cases becomes a problem on its own. Based on the noted findings, it is postulated that alcohol abuse only obscures and distracts victims from having the correct perception of their realities, but it does not resolve the abuse itself.

Desertion

Home desertion is often associated with children who flee from abusive parents, step-parents and/or siblings (Conticini & Hulme, 2007; Ruparanganda, 2011). Research also shows that men desert their homes or families (Feldman et. al., 2018), and Poole (2015) posits that they do so in greater numbers than women. Nonetheless, not all desertions by men are wilful. Some are forced desertions, whereby men flee from their abusive wives or forced by them (the wives) to move out, thereby ending up homeless and destitute, as noted by Poole (2015). Half of the abused men in this study reported abandoning their homes when their spouses were abusing them. Three of these men stated that they spent at least one night on the streets after leaving home. Those in the majority reported moving back in with their parents or seeking refuge at a friend's or relative's house. While for some participants the desertion was for short timespans, ranging between one and two weeks after which they returned home with the anticipation of reduced risk of violence, other participants' efforts to return home did not materialise, leading to legal separation and divorce from their spouses. This was the case especially among those who experienced serious physical abuse. After surviving burns from having been doused with hot water by his wife, one male victim, Mr-TTK, had this to say; "I moved out of my house because I am now afraid that she may kill me while I am sleeping." Mr-TTK clearly stated that he was in fear and vulnerable as a result of the assault and other abuses that he experienced at

the hands of his wife. His decision to move out, despite him being the owner of the house, portrays the powerlessness with which he found himself, even if he is a man in a patriarchal context. A common reflection shared by all of the participants who deserted their homes is that they did not do so willingly. They all noted that it was a difficult decision to make. The major reason for such difficulty being their desire to be with their children.

The subject of men's homelessness is one characterised by great controversy in much the same way as the topic on abuse of men by women. While such authors as Hagen (1987); Pleace et. al. (2008); & Bretherton (2017) contend that women are affected by homelessness more than men and are likely to desert their homes as a result of violence, Feldman et. al. (2018) assert that the levels of homelessness between men and women are the same. Yet another writer, Poole (2015), contends that homelessness is a gendered phenomenon mostly affecting men. He further avers that men become homeless not only because of unemployment or release from prison but sometimes also due to IPA by their female partners. Findings in this study are consistent with Poole's (2015) contention, as all of the abused men who reported abandoning their home for the streets or to move in with a friend or relative cited physical and/or verbal abuse by their female partners as the reason for doing so, as noted above. The Zimbabwean society generally is accepting of male homelessness, making it an issue that requires no attention. It is for the same reason there are no shelters for men who leave their homes due to abuse. Abused men whose relatives or friends are unwilling or unable to accommodate them often find themselves on the streets as already noted above. Despite some male victims in this study using abandonment of home as an avoidance strategy, whereby they simultaneously pursued other remedies such as family counselling and returned home afterwards, others did not return home. This can thus be understood as the use of desertion as a step towards divorce and an opportunity to regroup and move on (Hawkins, 2014). An inference that can be made from men's use of desertion or abandonment is, therefore, that it is sometimes an acknowledgement by them that they are not all powerful at all times. Rather, women may under certain circumstances in intimate relationships (as spouses and partners), also wield power.

<u>Divorce</u>

Ending abusive intimate relationships is not one of the first responses to IPA by abused men (Barkhuizen, 2010; Huntley et. al., 2019). They usually consider divorce only after exhausting other possible options of addressing their abuse. Fifteen of the thirty-four abused men who participated in this enquiry reported that they divorced their abusive partners and although a few chose not to remarry, the majority of them did. It is noteworthy, nonetheless, that the totality of the divorced participants and those that remained on legal separation, stressed their reluctance to divorce. There are a number of reasons and factors pointed out as having influenced the male victims' reticence to divorce.

The first and most common factor emerging among all divorced participants was their perception of the abuse. The victims that perceive the abuse they suffered as occasional

relationship conflicts were less likely to readily consider divorce. Below is an excerpt from Mr GW, whose wife subjected him to beatings, verbal insults and false abuse allegations.

> *I thought every marriage and relationship has its problems and ours was not an exception, so I always thought things were going to be normal someday. In 2012 that is when I decided to have divorce because I felt I could not continue in that situation.* **Interview-Mr GW-a male victim of IPA (41 years old), Harare**

It can be noted from the above excerpt that Mr GW's perception of his situation of abuse played a major role in his delayed decision to divorce his wife. In this case he endured abuse for nine years and only divorced her after having realised that she was not changing her behaviour. The second and strongly emerging factor having an influence on abused men's decision to divorce was their religious beliefs. As already noted in the preceding sections, all participants in this study reported that they belonged to the Christian religion. Thus, bible teachings and values which discourage divorce were part of their belief systems. Mr DN, who was a pastor and a victim of abuse, had this to say:

> *The bible despises divorce…and I always struggled to picture how my children would perceive the divorce and how they would relate with me after the divorce. Would they really accept the fact that their mother was divorced for a real cause? Are they even able to appreciate what divorce means?* **Interview-Mr DN-a male victim of IPA (47 years old), Harare**

The excerpt shows that the Bible took centre stage in Mr DN's divorce considerations. For that reason, and that of his pastoral role, which is revered and ought to be held by an exemplary figure, that he endured 15 years of abuse after which he reluctantly divorced his wife. It is interesting but also imperative to note that Mr DN, in his statement, makes reference to yet another factor that sounds dear to his considerations, which is his children. He raises many questions which shows the debate he was having with himself regarding his children. The same sentiments were recited by Mr MD, who stated that:

> *I did not want to divorce her because I wondered what kind of life my children would lead; I felt my children would have difficult lives and I did not want them to be raised by separated parents considering that I had had the same experiences myself.* **Interview-Mr MD-a male victim of IPA (49 years old), Harare**

In the above-noted case, Mr MD's convictions about his children and his fear of contracting HIV while in search of a new partner prevented him from divorcing his wife. They ended up getting back together after a lengthy period of separation. For some participants, the reasons for their resistance had more to do with the unavailability elsewhere of a place to live. This finding is consistent with Barkhuizen (2010); & Huntley et. al. (2019), who postulate that some male victims stay in abusive relationships because they have nowhere else to go. In Zimbabwe, male victims who divorce or separate from their partners often find refuge at

relatives or friends' homes, given that there are no extant shelters that can accommodate them. Thus, in the event that no relatives nor friends are willing to take the victims in, they will likely not consider divorce as a means to address their circumstances of abuse.

In a somewhat different case, a male victim reported that he remained on legal separation with his estranged wife and he even turned down her divorce attempts. Upon an inquiry by the researcher on the rationality of his stay in the abusive relationship, the man noted that he did not want to have their matrimonial property divided, because he would lose out. So, he decided to hang on until the wife died, subsequent to which he moved back into the house. This is a case of strategising and being calculative on the part of the abused man. It illustrates that even if he was vulnerable in his marriage, he could still be agentive and tactical. The theoretical significance drawn from this case is that vulnerable parties in intimate relationships can still tactically exercise power, thereby rendering power unstable and continuously contested between parties in intimate relationships. It can be inferred from the presented findings that although abused men considered divorce as a coping mechanism, they reluctantly did so for various reasons and in consideration of multiple factors. These include their children, religion, perception of abuse, chances of contracting HIV and AIDs as well as the availability of a place to live elsewhere.

Suicide and suicidal ideations

Suicide is an act of intentionally causing one's own death and it is rather unusual for human beings to wantonly kill themselves unless it is in response to unresolved difficult problems (Saxon et. al., 1978). According to the World Health Organization, suicide deaths in Zimbabwe account for 1.3% (Approx. 1,641 deaths) of total deaths (Approx. 126,230 deaths) per annum and most of them are committed by men (WHO, 2019b; WPR, 2019). These statistics indicate that suicide contributes substantially to the total annual death toll considering that it also ranks in position 16 of the top 50 causes of death in Zimbabwe. Although none of the participants in this study are known to have committed suicide during or after data collection, some participants in the minority noted that they, at the time they were being abused, did entertain suicidal thoughts. They maintained that such thoughts were a result of the abuse they were subjected to by their partners. Mr DN, in an interview, intimated that:

> *...there were times I felt overwhelmed and lost any hope with life and all I wanted was to die and not face the humiliating victimization anymore. I never told anyone about my thoughts. Whenever I had such thoughts, I would think of my children and that I am Christian, and I would then decide against suicide. **Interview-Mr DN-a male victim of IPA (47 years old), Harare***

It is clear from the above excerpt that Mr DN contemplated committing suicide as a result of the victimisation he suffered. It is also explicit in his wording that his children and religion were important factors in his considerations. These factors are similar to the ones the participants reported to having considered when they were contemplating divorce.

Research on suicide is characterised by debate in much the same way as that on home-desertion or homelessness among men. According to Jones (1986), suicide is committed out of despair, which most often is a result of depression or stress and other mental health issues. Nonetheless, studies by Lettieri (1978); Watlington & Murphy (2006); & Potts et. al. (2016) concluded that suicide and suicidal ideations among men is usually related to family breakups and conflicts. Potts et al. (2016) further note that suicide among men is less likely to be as a result of mental health issues. The findings in this study, as presented above, confirm the argument by Potts et al. (2016). This is true considering that all the abused men who reported having suicidal ideations did not have a history of mental health problems prior to being victimised. A study by Adinkrah (2012) also documents suicidal behaviour among Ghanaian men who were abused by their spouses. Adinkrah (2012) concluded that men commit suicide as an escape from the shame of abuse. In Goffman's phraseology, such suicide can be understood as 'face work', a form of human behaviour in which people manage their identity by preventing loss of a face or by regaining it once it is lost (Goffman, 1967), as noted above.

Of the four typologies of suicide by Durkheim cited in Jones (1986), is what he termed egoistic suicide. Durkheim refers to this typology as resulting from individuation (Jones, 1986), that is, a scenario where individuals perceive themselves as being out of social groups through defined values, traditions and norms. This Durkheimian conception of suicide coincides with the assertion made by Adinkrah (2012) that men in patriarchal contexts view abuse by women as shameful and against cultural norms. Thus, the killing of oneself becomes a possible option out of a difficult situation. Apart from showing that there is a relationship between religio-cultural beliefs of victims and their perceptions of IPA against men, which then inform the coping strategies they adopt, participants' suicidal thoughts are also indicative of their vulnerability and powerlessness within their relations with women (Lettieri, 1978).

6.3.3 Discussing the factors that determine the choice of strategy

The preceding presentation on coping mechanisms adopted by abused men shows *inter alia* that these mechanisms are not exclusive. The men would in some cases resort to more than one coping mechanism and they sometimes did so simultaneously or in successive ways. It is pertinent to therefore consider the question regarding the factors that the abused men contemplated in choosing coping strategies. Conspicuous determinants from the findings are the availability and the nature of available coping options (the broader context of abuse) and the men's comprehension of the abuse they experienced.

Available coping options

The broader Zimbabwean context emerged as a major predictor or determinant of the coping mechanisms adopted by abused men in this study. The contextual factors such as extant policies, laws, infrastructure, institutions and religio-cultural values and norms had a great bearing on the coping options available for men in this study. This is in keeping with Stark (2004), who postulates that social and structural context constrains or enables the choices

available to IPA victims and the two cannot be divorced. As already noted in the discussion on men's help-seeking behaviours above (6.3.1.1), even though the male victims knew they needed help, they did not know where to seek such help, possibly due to the reason that there are no open discussions about abuse of men in the Zimbabwean context. Furthermore, the non-availability of service providers that support abused men is a possible primary reason as to why male victims in this study sought help at Varume Svinurai and rarely at Padare, where they would often be turned away or referred to other services for reasons already noted above. Legally, as already noted above, the Zimbabwean Constitution does not provide for gender specific rights for men, such as reproductive rights, as it does for women. The implication of which is that men whose reproductive rights are infringed upon, such as the victims of misattributed paternity, do not have any legal recourse within the criminal and civil justice sub-systems.

<u>Abused men's perception of abuse</u>

Chapter 5 presents the various ways in which abused men in this study perceived the IPA they experienced. Such perceptions are determined by, among other things, the context of abuse, and they determine the victims' response (Sheu & Sedlacek, 2004; Waldrop & Resick, 2004). According to Waldrop & Resick (2004), victims' perceptions of the nature, severity and frequency of abuse have a bearing on the way they respond to the abuse. This viewpoint is confirmed in this study, where the nature and severity of abuse were pivotal when some abused men had to decide whether to report their cases to the police or not. Although other factors such as the consequences of adopting a certain coping mechanism came into play, the nature and severity of abuse determined how abused men responded. For instance, physical abuse that resulted in serious injuries such as a broken arm or body burns was reported to police, as noted in the case of PTMC above. He further noted that he expected the court to consider the severity of his injuries in its sentence imposed on his abuser. An impression portrayed would thus be that serious physical abuse requires coping strategies that reflect such seriousness. For the victims of emotional abuse, it would seem they considered the timespan of the abuse as a determinant for response. The above-noted case of Mr GW is an example in this regard. After two years of his wife's manipulative and verbally abusive behaviour, he sought mediation and counsel from family members, and this was the first strategy he resorted to. He then divorced her after nine years, which to him was a period long enough to imply severity and warrant a serious response.

According to Markus & Kitayama cited in Sheu & Sedlacek (2004), religious beliefs have a bearing on the feelings, thoughts, and actions of adherents of such beliefs. This holds true when one considers how Christian religious values and spirituality featured prominently in this study among abused men. For some, they were a source of strength during trying times and for others a fountain of solace and hope for a better life without problems. As a function of religious values, in some instances abused men perceived the IPA they suffered as a spiritual problem (as noted in 5.2.4 above) which required prayers for the exorcism of the evil spirits that were

behind the abusive partner's behaviour. The appropriate coping mechanism in such instances would then be seeking the help of church pastors and leaders. Religion and its influence on abused men's coping decisions is also evident in the way some of them resisted divorce. In the cases already noted above, Mr DN endured physical and emotional abuse for 15 years, after which he reluctantly divorced his wife, while Mr MD abandoned his matrimonial home for almost a year before he returned and never divorced his wife. Both these abused men cited their religious values as being key in the way they perceived their wives' abusive behaviour and in informing their decisions and actions in response to the abuse.

The aforementioned are the key factors that were at play in almost all of the male victims' considerations of coping strategies to engage in. Nonetheless, they are not the only factors abused men in this study considered. Other idiosyncratic factors peculiar to each individual man, such as the imminent consequences following the adoption of a strategy, fear and shame were highlighted and, in most cases, they were associated with avoidant coping mechanisms like desertion, alcohol abuse and divorce. For instance, Mr TTK, who was doused with hot water by his wife, abandoned his home citing fear of being killed by her while sleeping. Additionally, Mr X cited shame as the reason he contemplated suicide on various occasions at the time when his wife was verbally and emotionally abusing him. Fear of and shame from secondary victimization, as noted in the discussion on men's help-seeking above, were also advanced as leading determinants for abused men's reluctance to seek help. They would instead opt for secondary coping mechanisms, which by their nature are avoidant and individualistic. In another instance, Mr NK a victim of abduction as well as false allegations of sodomy and rape, abandoned his home but did not divorce his abusive wife. His reason for deserting home instead of divorce was based on him being strategic calculative as opposed to any other factor. He indicated that if they were to divorce, he would stand to lose all the material resources that they had acquired together. So, he decided to move out but remain married. This example indicates that some of the factors that abused men in this study considered when choosing coping strategies were purely tactical and individualistic.

All of the above noted factors point to the vulnerable situation within which abused men find themselves. However, borrowing from Jungar & Oinas (2011) notion of duality of vulnerability or victimhood and agency, it can be averred that abused men are not without agency. Regardless of the above-noted structural constraints which male victims of abuse encounter, the evidence of their help-seeking behaviour and other coping mechanisms presented above indicate some level of resistance on their part.

6.4 What do abused men need?

There is no unitary or easy answer to the question pertaining to what male victims of abuse need. This is due to the nuanced experiences and voices that are expressed in phenomenological studies such as this one. As a result of the peculiarity of their individual circumstances, abused men in this study identified various diverse but sometimes similar material and non-material

resources of necessity to them. For the purposes of this study these resources are categorised into recognition, social support, support through media, legal support and spiritual support.

6.4.1 Recognition

A critical analysis of the above discussed legislative, policy and institutional frameworks gives an impression of the shortcomings which characterise them with regards to protection and support for abused men. Little attention to representation is given to male victims in the way laws and policies are formulated. The same applies to the available institutions which provide services to IPA victims. These frameworks portray Zimbabwe as a context in which IPA is a problem that only affects women, while men are 'illegitimate' or, as George (1994) posits, 'unacceptable' victims. Conceptions of law and policy which are based on historical gendered notions that male identity is homogeneous and hegemonic largely result in their exclusion (Khunou, 2014). Recognition of men as victims of IPA thus becomes their crucial need. Acceptance and acknowledgement of the phenomenon of IPA against men in all its forms is of great importance because it impacts on the provision and access to required services by male victims. Without recognition, male victims of IPA would ignored, isolated and suffer discrimination. Such recognition entails the formulation of policies and laws using gender neutral or gender-inclusive language. According to Cook (2009), although gender-neutral language does not in itself imply equality, it renders equality of treatment possible. More so, it shows political will to acknowledge men as potential victims of IPA and of IPA against men as undesirable as that against women.

Recognition also involves specifically providing for different gender groupings where necessary. For instance, as noted above, while the Zimbabwean Constitution[34] specifically provides for the rights of women and children, it does not have any such provisions for men. This is regardless of the fact that it is evident from research that men do have rights –such as health (Khunou, 2014) and reproductive rights, which also need to be protected. Although it may be argued that Khunou's study was undertaken in a different context from the one this study emanates, gender-selective policy provision is a global phenomenon. The World Health Organisation[35] is a conspicuous example in this regard. It does not give space to reproductive health issues among men, neither does it allude to the existence of men's reproductive rights as it does with those of women (WHO, 2019a). This gives an impression of a gendered representation of health issues at global level, the resultant effect of which is that polices and laws which are adopted by respective countries at a local level also become gendered.

Another example would be the failure of Zimbabwe's DVA[36] to recognise emotional abuse and other non-physical or sexual forms of abuse as crimes, but rather only as wrongful acts. The

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[34] The Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment 20 Act of 2013 *Section 3*

[35] Human Reproduction Report Annual Report 2018 *World Health Organization*

[36] Domestic Violence [Chapter 5:16] Act 14 of 2006 *Section 3*

implication of which is that, as shown by this study, men, who in most cases suffer emotional abuse more than any other type, cannot find recourse in the criminal justice system. The multiplier effect of which is that such abuse is viewed as less serious and hence not deserving of attention (Barkhuizen, 2010:p.288). Men need legislative, policy and institutional systems that recognise their vulnerability or victimhood as well as the diversity and nuances of masculinities (Cook, 2009). Such recognition is crucial in that it legitimises abused men's demands for space in accessing other services such as shelter, media space, legal as well as social support. It also gives them a voice in academia and policy development, as Mfecane (2019) asserts. Without recognition, these other needs among abused men will not be realised because the victim will be "unworthy" (Van Niekerk et. al., 2015) and the subject of IPA against men would remain a controversial one (Jones, 2001; Cook, 2009).

6.4.2 Social support

Social support refers to the various types of help that people receive from others (Seeman, 2008). It is generally categorised into three types: informational, emotional and instrumental support (Seeman, 2008). The family has traditionally been the primary source of social support to victims of IPA (Pearson, 1986). The same is true if one considers the evidence in this study where all of the abused men intimated their experiences to a family member. However, Pearson (1986) further avers that it is now generally acknowledged that counsellors or psychologists and other institutions can offer social support that facilitates coping among experiencing difficulties in life such as IPA. This is because social support in its various forms enhances one's wellbeing through giving them a positive image of the self and cushioning them against stress and harm-causing life experiences (Seeman, 2008).

Informational support

The ability of one person (who may or may not be a professional) to provide help in the form of problem-identification and definition or information about possible remedial action, is an element of social support. This is referred to as informational support. Informational support as a type of social support represents the assistance that others may offer to a distressed person through the provision of information (Seeman, 2008). Pearlin cited in Wills (1987), suggests that conversations with helpful people such as professionals can reduce distress because they assist in clarifying the nature of the problem and in correctly appraising the abusive situation with regard to its relative threat potential and/or severity. Most of the male victims herein reported having experienced confusion as they tried to come to terms with their partners' abusive behaviour, especially when the abuse was not physical. As a result, they sometimes failed to give clear descriptions of their experiences and had no idea of what they needed. They sometimes would indicate that they needed advice without clarifying what sort of advice they required. In some cases, such confusion was further compounded by the participants' lack of basic information regarding what to do when they were victimised by their partners. In those instances, the confusion thus became a hindrance to victims' ability to take any action or seek help. Hence, informational support turns out to be a necessity. The sources relied on by abused

men in this study were family members, church leaders and Varume Svinurai, albeit they were found to be inadequate. Below is an excerpt from a key informant from a men's organisation in Harare, noting the services that IPA victims usually seek from this organisation.

The excerpts below from two male victims, Mr DN and Mr GW, capture the inherent lack of information and thus failure to point out the form of advice they needed, which indicates the need for information among male victims of IPA.

> *I think such organisations as Varume Svinurai, could do more and be visible so that people know of their existence and be aware of men's rights. Because many men are not aware of what to do when they are abused...I think these organisations are very helpful, I remember when I went there, I would meet some men coming to thank the counsellors for the advice they received on how to handle their matters. To me that meant that the advice they were given was effective.* **Interview-Mr DN-a male victim of IPA (47 years old), Harare**

> *Some men do not know what to do and where to get advice, and even the type of advice they need....* **Interview-Mr GW-a male victim of IPA (41 years old), Harare**

<u>Emotional support</u>

Seeman (2008) defines emotional support as help given to other people which makes the recipients feel loved, cared for and have a sense of self-worth. Such support frequently takes the form of non-tangible types of assistance, for example, discussing a reported problem and providing encouragement or positive feedback (Seeman, 2008). It is noteworthy that negative life events such as IPA threaten victims' self-esteem (Wills, 1987). Therefore, supportive interpersonal encounters would serve to counter some of the adverse impacts of IPA through the encouragement and enhancement of victims' self-esteem. Esteem support and enhancement can be described as efforts towards showing an individual that they are accepted and valued for their own worth as a person (Wills, 1987). This form of social support, as noted by Wills (1987) (also termed confidant support), may be provided through instances where someone listens attentively and empathetically to a person's concerns or problems and shows understanding and acceptance of the distressed person despite the difficulties they are facing. All of the male victims who participated in this enquiry reported that there were hardly any people willing to listen to their experiences other than some family members, pastors and counsellors from Varume Svinurai. They did not receive the self-esteem enhancement and emotional support they needed, and as a result, they felt having little or no self-worth, as is presented in Chapter 5 (5.2.2). It can thus be asserted in confirmation to Barkhuizen's (2010) findings that victims of IPA, their children as well as their abusers require emotional support given that the emotional impact of IPA often persists long after the abuse has occurred.

Closely related to the aforementioned is the need among male victims of IPA to be believed and to have their concerns and experiences understood. There is substantial research (Douglas

& Hines, 2011; Barkhuizen, 2015b; McCarrick et. al., 2016; BUSTOP-TV, 2018; Lien & Lorentzen, 2019) documenting the difficulties which abused men encounter when they make attempts to disclose their abuse cases. The above-presented findings on men's experiences of help-seeking, where they indicated that they struggled to have their accounts of abuse understood and believed, concur with and confirm findings from such research. Male victims' experiences with criminal justice officials, especially the police, were largely negative as the participants described them as judgmental. They therefore need safe spaces where they do not feel judged based on cultural expectations of stereotypically invincible men and where they are allowed to express themselves to listening ears. Such spaces, as the abused men avowed, are few and only found at churches and men's civic organizations like Varume Svinurai. Varume Svinurai has various support groups, each consisting of men with somewhat similar experiences of IPA. Cook (2009) posits that through the shared experiences in support groups, men get encouraged and have their sense of worth enhanced. This may be the reason why abused men in this study felt somewhat comfortable with seeking help at Varume Svinurai. However, considering that it is the only organisation in Zimbabwe known for offering abused men such support, and it has no reliable means of funding, its ability to adequately cover the entire country is questionable. The Organising Secretary for the organisation this to say:

> We have managed to reach various corners of the country, on zero budgets. We are not donor-funded; however, we still need to do more provided we get funding or to raise our own money. The organization has no properties of its own… **Mr TND-Key informant (Varume Svinurai), Harare**

Instrumental support

In contrast to other forms of social support, instrumental support refers to the various types of tangible help that others may provide (Seeman, 2008) to IPA victims e.g. financial help or help with shelter.

Provision of shelter and trauma centres

It has been argued elsewhere by Pizzey et. al. (2000:p.34) that male victims of IPA need shelter or temporary shelter. Although no participant in this enquiry pointed out the need for shelter, it is asserted based on the accounts of some abused men who reported spending nights on the streets, that if there were shelters for abused men, they would have been accommodated. None such shelters exist in Zimbabwe even though there are shelters for female victims of IPA and other forms of GBV. This may raise questions and concerns, especially among interest groups, considering that research shows that homelessness affects more men than women (Hagen, 1987; Poole, 2015). Provision for shelter to vulnerable groups regardless of their gender serves as a bulwark to the harsh conditions of homelessness, which include starvation and malnutrition (North & Smith, 1993; Pizzey, 2011; Bretherton, 2017; Feldman et. al., 2018).

Apart from shelter, Barkhuizen (2010) stresses the significance of trauma centres in providing support to victims of IPA and the expertise with which they do so. She further points out that

they are important sites for group therapy and ideal for setting up support groups (Barkhuizen, 2010). However, there are no such centres for abused men in Zimbabwe. Similarly, toll-free-hotline services are non-existent, despite their importance in reporting and responding to IPA (Cook, 2009). These services, needless to say, play a role which cannot be overemphasised in the fight against IPA regardless of the gender of the victims or perpetrators.

6.4.3 Support through media and publicity

Media coverage contributes to the awareness of men's victimisation and vulnerability, which in turn may contribute to its recognition (Jones, 2001; Cook, 2009; Barkhuizen, 2010). Beaming the abuse of men on various media platforms also has the potential of educating and conscientizing the would-be service providers such as police on what is expected of them when dealing with IPA cases, especially those that involve men who, in terms of the dominant cultural norms in Zimbabwe, are expected to be strong and able to protect themselves. Such service providers are informed of the way they should handle IPA victims regardless of their gender. Barkhuizen (2010:p.288-289) highlights the importance of television reality shows, "radio talk shows and men's magazines" in publicising men's accounts of abuse and how society should react in order to assist such men. These are indeed profound in awareness campaigns of phenomena regarding the nature of IPA. It can be further suggested that social media is also instrumental in this regard, conspicuous examples of which are Facebook and YouTube webpages.

Social media is fast becoming a major player in information dissemination due to the volumes of interactions that occur online and the amount of time people spend on such platforms (Simpson, 2017; Ahmed, 2019). Following one of the data gathering methods adopted in this study – tele-observation, a comedy video (POBOX-TV, 2019) highlighting police reactions to men's reports of abuse by their wives posted on *P O Box Reloaded* (a media house based in Harare) Facebook page was analysed[37]. Of importance to this study was the shock, disbelief and laughter with which the policeman in the video reacted, the perceptions of the viewers of the video expressed in their comments as well as the statistics regarding the reactions by the viewers. The video was viewed by 20 000 of the webpage's followers and 1 063 viewers reacted by either liking, laughing at or loving the video. It was shared more than 205 times and about 250 viewers had left comments by 15 September 2019. In comparison with other videos posted on the same webpage, the video in question[38] attracted a significantly high number of viewers and attention. The perceptions expressed in the comments were mixed, as some laughed while others took the chance to thank the page administrators for featuring the

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[37]   https://www.facebook.com/poboxreloaded/videos/2324097980976840/?v=2324097980976840   *PO BOX reloaded Arohwa neMukadzi Posted on 22 July 2019*

[38] Ibid

important subject which gets little media attention and emphasised the difficulties faced by men who are abused by their female partners. Below are some of the comments.

> **T:** *True reflection of what happens in society…*

> **S:** *Secondary victimisation…*

> **M:** *Hilarious…and it's so true police have no secret at all, those who want to report are seriously deterred by that.*

> **J:** *Hahahahah that policeman laughed yho… good message though!*

> **K:** *…a lot of men don't report their abuse coz of this embarrassment*

> **R:** *Yoh that's very true…*

Facebook comments on Arohwa neMukadzi (He has been beaten by his wife) video[39]

An assumption that can be made from the attention drawn by the video post[40] is that some, if not all, of the viewers learnt something about the abuse of men in intimate relationships and the difficulties they are faced with when seeking help. It can therefore be inferred in confirmation of Cook (2009); & Barkhuizen (2010) assertions that the media is key in information dissemination and awareness promotion among younger generations, thereby contributing to the prevention of the cycle of IPA. Such awareness also helps in reducing the isolation of abused men which often results from a lack of information on the phenomenon of IPA against men. Mainstream media in Zimbabwe is not doing much in publicising the phenomenon or putting the work done by organisations such as Varume Svinurai into the lime-light. The media can be a crucial vector in spreading information about the existence of and services offered by such men's organisations. Lastly, as can be extrapolated from the Facebook video[41] example mentioned above, media can contribute to demystifying the topic of abused men and present it as a subject for public discussion that is not controversial or vexatious (Cook, 2009).

6.4.4 Legal support

Apart from the above noted, some participants highlighted the need for legal support for abused men. The same form of support already exists in Zimbabwe, but only for women, through such organizations as Msasa Project and Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association (ZWLA). Men who find themselves in abusive relationships with women have nowhere to get such support and yet they need it because they in most cases cannot afford paid-legal advice. Here is what one male victim had to say about his situation and legal help needs:

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[39] Ibid

[40] Ibid

[41] Ibid

Men who are abused also need such organizations as Msasa project and legal representation because for instance mine, my wife was represented by lawyers whose costs and bills she was not paying yet I was not represented because I could not afford a lawyer. So, if there are organizations that also represent men, it would also help abused men who cannot afford to pay legal fees. **Interview-Mr MD-a male victim of IPA (49 years old), Harare**

Cook (2009) avers that the lack of low-cost or government sponsored legal services for the poor is a problem that is not particular to IPA or domestic violence crimes, but one that generally affects all victims of crime in many low-income countries. The same situation is prevalent in Zimbabwe. High legal costs prevent male victims of non-physical forms of abuse such as emotional, verbal and economic abuse, from accessing justice. This is especially so considering that they are required to seek civil remedies from family courts, where there are no state-provided prosecutors, as is the case in the criminal justice sub-system. It accordingly stands to reason that affordable or free legal services are a necessity to IPA victims, who in most cases are not well-to-do.

6.4.5 Spiritual support

The findings on abused men's coping mechanisms and help-seeking feature a strong sense of dependence on faith, particularly the religious victims, to which they attribute their success stories on coping with IPA. These findings concur with Barkhuizen's (2010:p.287) hypothesis that faith-based institutions such as churches can be a source of social support to male victims by providing them (the victims) with 'safe spaces' to speak about their experiences without being criticised. As such it would not be unfounded to aver that abused men need spiritual support. This may not necessarily apply or resonate with every male victim but only to those that are believers. Chitando (2007) shows how spirituality can be a source of a renewed mind-set. Mandizadza & Chidarikire (2016), on the other hand, reflect on how spirituality helps people to cope with challenging circumstances such as terminal illness. They present the critical role of spirituality in providing victims of disease with solace and assisting them to adjust to their lived situations (Mandizadza & Chidarikire, 2016). It is averred herein that male victims of IPA, a majority of whom perceive spirituality in high regard, require it in times of distress as it can help them to persevere.

6.5 Chapter overview and conclusion

It cannot be overemphasized that Zimbabwe has laws, policies and institutions – both state and non-state, in place that are meant to deal with the problem of IPA and other patterns of GBV. The Constitution, the Criminal Law (Codification Reform) Act and the DVA all form a representation of the legislative configuration while blueprints such as the CEDAW, SADC Protocol on Gender and Development and the National Gender Policy, among others, constitute the Zimbabwean government's political will and commitment at both international and national levels to address issues of GBV. There are at least six government ministries and agencies that

are intimately or remotely mandated to deal with GBV issues, just as there are numerous civil society organisations that are involved in awareness campaigns against GBV and in providing various forms of support to victims of abuse. A critical analysis of the findings in this study suggest that these structures are designed to address GBV as a women's issue, even though in some instances polices are formulated in a somewhat gender inclusive language. As a result, male victims of abuse are not properly or sufficiently provided for. There are examples noted above where abused men would not know where to get the help they needed because the services which they knew only existed for female victims. It can thus be averred that the legislative, policy and institutional frameworks in Zimbabwe as presented herein, are not without shortcomings with reference to protection, prevention and remedial provisions for male victims of IPA. These bodies do not fully recognise male victims of IPA and as a consequence do not adequately provide for abused men.

An important finding made herein is that the legislative, policy and institutional frameworks extant in Zimbabwe provide a broader context within which abused men have to manoeuvre in engaging coping strategies. There are a number of coping mechanisms engaged in by men, which in this study are categorised into primary and secondary coping strategies. The former includes help-seeking within the justice system, among family and friends, and in civil society and faith-based organisations while the latter includes individual actions such as alcohol abuse, home-desertion, suicidal thoughts and divorce. The major factors identified as primary in influencing abused men's choices of coping strategy are the available coping options and abused men's perceptions of the abuse they suffered. As a result of the context, which does not give full recognition to male victims of abuse, abused men in this study had limited coping options available to them. Their needs as a demographic group such as social support, media support, legal support and spiritual support are largely viewed as trivial. These needs are supposed to be provided through the same legislative, policy and institutional frameworks which provide for other demographic groups. However, the same frameworks do not fully acknowledge men's victimhood and that IPA is an issue among men. Consequently, services provided for men who fall victim to abuse are inadequate.

An inference that can be made therefore, is that a lack of recognition of men's victimhood exacerbates their vulnerability and portrays them as embodying powerlessness in their intimate relations with women. This assertion advances the post-structural feminist thought on power in intimate relationships that it is ubiquitous and unstable. Any individual in intimate relationships can embody power and powerlessness.

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CHAPTER

7 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

This study set out to examine Zimbabwean male victims' construction and negotiation of meanings around their experiences of IPA perpetrated by women, in light of their male gender identity. To achieve this aim, the study had the following five specific objectives that were addressed in the different chapters on the thesis:

1) To examine and delineate the common conceptualizations bordering male identity in Zimbabwe centring on core ideations and expressions thereof.
2) To explore the various forms of women-perpetrated abuse experienced by men in Zimbabwe.
3) To examine the meanings attached by abused men to their experiences of abuse in relation to their culturally defined gender roles.
4) To examine the mechanisms and strategies employed by men in response to the experienced abuse.
5) To identify the needs of abused men and examine the extent to which current support offered by service providers address these needs.

This final chapter summarises the main findings in relation to each of the specific objectives and draws on these findings to make recommendations for practice, policy and future research.

7.2 Summary of key findings

7.2.1 Objective 1
To examine and delineate the common conceptualisations bordering male identity in Zimbabwe centring on core ideations and expressions thereof

Chapter 3 delineated male identity as one of key aspects in this study. Drawing on data from FGDs and in-depth interviews, the chapter demonstrates that there are diverse features, practices and patterns of male identity in the Zimbabwean context. The male body is considered fundamental to identity construction among men, but only within a cultural context where interpretations are made regarding its appearance, i.e. size and potency of men's genitalia and their ability to meet the sexual expectations of their sexual partners. Such partners in heterosexual relationships are women. Male identities among Zimbabwean men that are constructed on the basis of the body are therefore relational and negotiated between men and their partners. Marriage and fatherhood – family headship, provider and protector roles as well as entitlement to respect by family or household members, especially spouses (wives) and

children, epitomize the basic cultural practices associated with masculinity among Zimbabwean men. These practices are also challenged, sometimes negotiated and manifest in multiple and varied ways. The same is the case with nationalist and Christian masculinities with which some men identify.

The study's conspicuous finding that has had little attention in gender discourses is that of men's vulnerability as opposed to their invincibility. Vulnerability in common cultural perception or in gender research is not among the traits that are associated with male identity (Lien & Lorentzen, 2019). It is confirmed in this study that some aspects of male identity such as the significance of the size of men's genitalia, their sexual potency, fatherhood and provider roles, to mention a few, are heavily dependent on confirmation and validation by women, making male identity, to that extent, a women's prerogative whereby they can rescind or affirm such identity, as Lien & Lorentzen (2019:p.164) note. Chapter 4 builds on this key finding by illustrating other forms of men's vulnerability that are exposed through their experiences of women-perpetrated IPA.

The findings noted above demonstrate that male identity is fragmented, fluid and unstable. They further depict a variety of identities which are either confirming or contesting hegemonic forms of being a man, thereby posing a challenge to an imaginary homogeneous Zimbabwean masculine identity. The post-structural feminist conception of identity as subjective, as opposed to it being essentialised (Barrett, 2005), is also confirmed. An analysis of men's real or lived and expected identities is also made in this chapter, at the conclusion of which it is argued that conformity with societal gender stereotypes by men is not always guaranteed.

7.2.2 Objective 2
To explore the various forms of women-perpetrated abuse experienced by men in Zimbabwe

Data from key informant and in-depth interviews reveal that men in Zimbabwe are subjected to various form of abuse at the hands of their intimate partners, as related in Chapter 4. These include physical, emotional, verbal, financial, proximate, sexual and psychological abuse. However, emotional abuse is the most common and is executed through subtle, indirect and non-combative abusive behaviours by women. These include prolonged withholding of sex, use of sex a manipulation tool, misattributed paternity (paternity fraud), economic abuse as well as psychological and verbal abuse, which by their nature are covert. Thus, an inference is made that men who are abused by their partners are more likely to report emotional harm compared to other forms. This finding also underscores the fact that IPA is not only physical but includes non-physical behaviours whose harm is not readily visible to the outside world as the ones noted above.

The above-noted forms of abuse are not mutually exclusive. Rather, they overlap and intersect with each other, thereby compounding their impact on the target of abuse. Although there were

difficulties in finding definitive patterns and risk factors across the reported forms of abuse among all male victims due to the multiplicity of the forms of abuse, it can be cautiously averred that high levels of IPA were noted among working class men (the definition adopted in this study, as noted in Chapter 4, includes those individuals involved in small informal enterprises that only generate income enough for their survival) and those with at least secondary education. This assertion is cautiously advanced due to the limitations of the purposive sampling technique employed in this study.

It is further noted that most of the covert abusive behaviours by women reported by men are not defined as criminal acts in terms of Zimbabwean criminal[42] and domestic violence laws[43]. Thus, men's experiences of emotional forms of IPA are largely unrecognised and therefore invisible.

7.2.3 Objective 3
To examine the meanings attached by abused men to their experiences of abuse in relation to their culturally defined gender roles

Male victims in this study, through in-depth interviews, reported diverse perceptions of their experiences of abuse. These are: IPA as an expression of passive power by women; a factor driving questioned identity among men; an epitome of trampled reproductive rights; a spiritual warfare; An act of provocation; and a consequence of negative personality traits such as aggressiveness, arrogance and being manipulative. Despite the inherent multiplicity of meanings derived by male victims from their IPA experiences, the perceptions which stood out among all of the male victims, as detailed in Chapter 5, are that women-perpetrated IPA is a basis for victims' questioned identity (masculinity) and that IPA is an expression of women's power through both direct and indirect ways. These meanings by male victims of abuse establish a connection between IPA and male identity. They bear critical significance in this study because they point to the way in which abused men feel about the possibility of having their identities challenged by women-perpetrated IPA. This study thus establishes that although IPA against men may be physically or economically harmful, it is an affront to the socio-cultural expectations of men's respectability in families or households. Thus, it also impacts on male victims' emotional and psychological wellbeing as they may feel inadequate in fulfilling the cultural markers of male identity.

Of note among male victims' meaning-construction is the common sentiment that they do not always embody dominance in their intimate relationships with women, but sometimes find themselves in subservient positions. The diversity which characterises the above-noted meanings is in keeping with the phenomenological methodological stance and the post-

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[42] Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act [Chapter 9:23] 23 of 2004 Sections 61-87

[43] Domestic Violence [Chapter 5:16] Act 14 of 2006 *Section 3*

structural feminist theoretical insights adopted herein. Meaning making is inherently subjective and a result of many intervening factors. Thus, its results are nuanced.

Identified intervening factors in IPA victims' meaning making of their abuse were idiosyncratic and structural factors. Idiosyncratic factors were epitomised by IPA victims explaining their perpetrators' behaviour as resulting from personality disorders of the perpetrator, an act of provocation or an indication of trampled rights. Structural factors influencing their meaning-making included religious values and the cultural context within which the abuse took or continued to take place.

7.2.4 Objective 4
To examine the mechanisms and strategies employed by men as reaction to the perceived abuse

Common responses to IPA among the male victims can be categorised into primary and secondary strategies. Primary responses refer to attempts by IPA victims to gain control by bringing the problematic circumstances into line with their wishes and include seeking counselling from institutions such as the family and the church; retaliation and pursuing legal routes (Sheu & Sedlacek, 2004). Secondary strategies, on the other hand, involve actions by IPA victims to bring themselves into line with the problematic situation without attempting to change it (Sheu & Sedlacek, 2004). These include divorce; alcohol abuse; deserting the home and in some instances, though not common, some men reported harbouring suicidal thoughts.

The findings show that male victims' responses to IPA were mostly influenced by two factors. Firstly, the victims' perceptions of abuse. Those who perceived IPA as a challenge to their identity, as acts of provocation or as assertions of power by women, in most cases sought divorce or considered retaliation. On the other hand, those who viewed it as a problem which requires a solution sought help in the form of counselling from family members, churches and men's organisations. The same was the case with those who perceived abuse as criminal or a violation of their rights. They, in most cases, resorted to the legal system as recourse. Secondly, Zimbabwe's legislative, institutional and policy frameworks, which basically entails the broader context within which the IPA takes place, were found to have a profound influence on how the male victims responded to it. Due to the shortcomings in legislative, institutional and policy frameworks' scope, male victims face the challenge of a lack of recognition and, as a result, in most cases they would be reluctant to seek help. Reaction by service providers, i.e. the police, limited recognition by the law[44], the general social trivialisation of men's experiences of IPA as well as the lack of or limited number of institutions which specifically deal with men's abuse issues are some among the many contextual aspects which deter men

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[44] Domestic Violence [Chapter 5:16] Act 14 of 2006 *Section 3*

from seeking help. These contextual aspects, with their limitations, expose men's vulnerability and the multiple needs among male victims of IPA.

7.2.5 Objective 5
To identify the support needs of abused men and examine the extent to which current support offered by service-providers address these needs

Chapter 6 details the identified needs among abused men, which include informational support, emotional support, instrumental support through temporary shelters, support through media coverage, legal support and spiritual support. Key among the identified needs was the need for legislative, policy and institutional recognition of abused men's vulnerability among other vulnerable demographic groups. Without legal and policy recognition, male victims of IPA face the challenge of failing to get commensurate legal recourse.

The findings in this study indicate that the legal definition of IPA or domestic violence in Zimbabwe is limited and therefore inadequate to the extent that only physical and sexual abuse are categorised as criminal conducts, while emotional, economic and verbal abuse are delictual acts which cannot be prosecuted. Considering that these are the major forms of abuse suffered by men from women, as noted in Chapter 4, men's experiences thereof are therefore rendered invisible from a prosecutorial and criminological perspective.

The study findings further confirm a report by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies-IFRC (2017) that the policy framework on IPA in Zimbabwe, as epitomised by the National Gender Policy, CEDAW and SADC Protocol on Gender and Development *inter alia,* portray IPA as a women's issue. Men are only incidentally if at all referred to as victims of abuse in intimate relationships within the language of the above-noted policies. Due to such a limited depiction of IPA victims, the policy framework can be understood as inadequate with regards to the recognition of men's vulnerability.

Some state institutions such as the Ministry of Women Community and Small Enterprise Development and civil society institutions, Padare and other women's organizations which support IPA or domestic violence victims, do so for women and children, while Varume Svinurai/Vukani Madoda is the only organisation that supports male victims, as noted in Chapter 6. Apart from it being largely unknown, Varume Svinurai/Vukani Madoda does not have a wide coverage across the country due to financial constraints, as noted by its representative. Such an ostensible lack in institutional support coverage for male victims noted in this study points to the inadequacy with which their support needs are met.

Their needs as a demographic group, such as social support, media support, legal support and spiritual support are largely viewed as trivial. These needs are supposed to be provided through the same legislative, policy and institutional frameworks which provide for other demographic groups. However, the same frameworks do not fully acknowledge men's victimhood and the

fact that IPA is an issue among men. Consequently, services provided for men who fall victim to abuse are inadequate and mostly non-existent.

7.3 Personal contact with the participants and research topic

Reflexivity forms an important part of any qualitative enquiry. As part of research practice and in trying to answer main research questions, qualitative researchers grapple with empirical challenges that arise as a result of conducting a study with participants or informants who, ostensibly, represent the familiar. For Burawoy (2003), reflexivity entails a process of subjecting the entire research process to intense scrutiny through questioning the research practices, identities, and positions of the people involved. Researchers engage in reflexivity when they address the effect of their presence on their participants, without disregarding the effects that the same participants may have had on them (Robertson, 2002). Reflexivity is thus an essential element in sociological and anthropological studies where researchers, on top of being critical of their relations with their participants, also candidly reflect on their general field experiences and the environments in which they conduct their studies (Robben & Sluka, 2012). Furthermore, as Cornwall & Lindisfarne (1994) contend, qualitative researchers need to appreciate their personal knowledge and preconceptions on the subject of research and how they may enable or hinder clear understanding thereof. In this regard, descriptive phenomenologists such as Hurssel (1989) propose the 'bracketing' of such preconceptions. Nonetheless, the phenomenological approach adopted in this study holds that ridding the mind of one's preconceived ideas and personal and/or background knowledge on the researched phenomenon is questionable, if not an impossibility (Lopez & Willis, 2004), given the fact that this is normally the foundation of research questions and the identified research gap. Rather, the researchers should acknowledge and outline these as well as their impact on the analysis of the fieldwork findings and the emergent themes, (Okely & Callaway, 1992).

Abused men, key informants and community members who together comprise the participants in this study, as well as the researcher, all hail from the same country, Zimbabwe. They have all experienced the effects of political and economic instability which have rocked Zimbabwe for the past two decades. They were raised and received almost the same socialisation on gender. This raises a pertinent question regarding whether these shared circumstances make them familiar to or consider each other as close. The researcher is required by the dictates of reflexivity as a qualitative researcher to ask such questions as: what common perimeters or margins do I have to manoeuvre? If I have a shared nationality and language with the participants, then what boundaries do I have to navigate and are there any taken-for-granted barriers in negotiating the boundaries? The researcher endeavours to answer these questions as he delineates on his contact and relationship with the study participants.

Despite not having a personal history of being abused by a woman, the researcher has had personal contact with both male and female victims and perpetrators of IPA between June 2009 and February 2017, when working in Zimbabwe's Justice Department as a Community Service

Officer. As he interacted with these different groups of his then clients, during the course his work, he developed a keen interest in abused men and, upon realizing that there was no literature on this group in Zimbabwe, it was decided to conduct a study for his masters' degree on the nature and prevalence of violence against men in the Kwekwe district. This coupled with his literature review on IPA in Africa and globally, locates the researcher in an inevitable acknowledgment and admission of the fact that this study was conducted with the baggage of preconceptions emanating from his own personal history. Purporting that such pre-knowledge did not influence this study would be blatantly inaccurate. However, the researcher reflected on such knowledge throughout the research and drafting stages of this study in order to cautiously interpret the experiences of men and live up to the intersubjectivity and intertextuality (Coffey, 2002) of phenomenological accounts, as opposed to the imposition of his own understandings.

Positionality is the major aspect that the researcher has had to reflexively grapple with in this study due to the multiplicity of its dimensions. Positionality refers to the stance of the researcher in relation to the social and political context of the study—the community, the organization or the participant groups (Rowe, 2014). In some instances, the researcher would identify with the participants, yet in others they differed greatly. As already noted, the study was conducted in Zimbabwe among fellow Zimbabweans, who speak and understand the same languages as the researcher, and some of their customs and cultural practices are also those of the researcher. This would make him an apparent insider to these participants. Nonetheless, the researcher would also ask himself questions regarding whether he really understands what abused men go through in their marriages, how they relate with their spouses/partners and vice versa; Whether all of the aspects that are considered when defining a man in the Zimbabwean context are known to him too? Due to the fact that the researcher could not answer the questions in the affirmative, he therefore regarded himself as an outsider in that dimension.

Some community members, particularly elderly women, during focus group discussions would reluctantly explain some of the words they used. The researcher considered this to be so because the community members thought he would know the meanings since he was Zimbabwean and thus, one of them. In an FGD with elderly men, nonetheless, it was different as they kept their distance. Rather, they seized the opportunity to lecture the researcher on how to become a man. It could only be imagined that they perceived the researcher as an uninformed youth who needed serious teachings from them, the 'knowers.' In their eyes, the researcher could definitely not be one of their own, hence he was an 'other.' The same was the case with some key informants, who treated the researcher with high levels of professionalism while also exhibiting remarkable knowledge of their areas of operation. Their constant use of the English language and peculiar work vocabulary, which they often explained, could only make the researcher feel 'othered.' In one instance for example, a pastor started asking the researcher questions regarding the hypothesis or argument of this study instead of answering the given questions. This felt like an act of asserting her power over the researcher as she is a respectable

church leader and as such, she could not have me ask her questions. Rather, the researcher had to answer hers. The researcher, however, proceeded in asking questions after answering hers. During interviews with abused men, some would maintain a very formal relationship, epitomized by addressing the researcher as 'Mr' or 'Sir'. This is regardless of the fact that the researcher tried to be as casual as possible both in their interactions and dressing. The researcher's interpretation of their reservedness centres on the subject of the study, which is highly sensitive and private. Hence their reluctance to let someone penetrate such a personal sphere unrestrained. Furthermore, it is trite in Zimbabwe, especially towards general elections, that people discuss political issues and developments on taxis, buses, and other public or private spaces. Nonetheless, it was noted that some participants were conspicuously silent on the subject while others were very open with their opinions and willing to hear the researcher's as well (which, however, was kept guarded and tentative in case it would antagonise them). For those that kept silent, it can only be imagined that they felt the researcher was not close enough that he could be trusted with their political opinions, lest they be discussing with a state security agent. There is always that fear in Zimbabwe, especially if one meets a stranger. This could just be the researcher's imagination though. It cannot be because they were uninterested, for Zimbabwe's ever-evolving politics affect bread and butter issues and determine the way one organises their daily lives. Therefore, whether one is interested or not, they will have to appreciate it. Hence, the researcher got the sense that he remained an outsider to those that were not open to him.

However, some participants, i.e. key informants and abused men alike, were known to the researcher from previous studies and work practice as already noted. Padare (a men's organization) counsellors at one point invited me him to attend their counselling sessions where he was introduced to counselees as a student associated with their organisation. Such a gesture was viewed as a confirmation that the researcher belonged with them and the particular counselees, who later became participants in this study, maintained this closeness in their subsequent encounters with the researcher. With other abused men, close relationships were established in much the same way as they had respect for the counsellors and pastors, who had referred the researcher to them.

Although it is arguable, the researcher considered their gender to have had a profound influence on the level of closeness that some abused men maintained. They would refer to the researcher as 'mukoma Justice'. *Mukoma* is a Shona word which literally means big brother, but the men who used this title were visibly much older than the researcher. It is illogical to contend that they meant that the researcher is their big brother. Rather, it is rational to conclude that they used such a title to denote the close relationship attained with the researcher. Some would share jokes and give similes or examples of the current political activities leading to the July 2018 national elections. It was a given fact to them that the researcher knew the political goings-on because of their shared Zimbabwean identity, hence the researcher was one of their own. Such

insights are signs of inclusivity and to that extent, boundaries of exclusivity were navigated into the inside of the participants' lives.

From the noted research experiences, the researcher avers that his positionality is problematic. His identity in this study is one which unsettles the divide between outsiderness and insiderness. What Abu-Lughod (2000) termed 'halfie'. The researcher kept shifting positions from one who belongs to the 'other', depending on different positionality dimensions. This transcendence of the insider-outsider borders gives an impression that exclusive outsiderness or insiderness is utopian, if not an outright fallacy. The researcher located himself right at the fulcrum of this pendulum throughout the research process and as he grappled with interpreting the meanings derived by men from their experience of abuse perpetrated by women. He was constantly conscious of the reality that, as a researcher, he is a profound tool for data collection as he is a producer of this intertextual account of their interactions with the participants.

7.4 Study limitations

It is acknowledged that due to the purposive selection of abused men who sought help to the exclusion of those who did not report their cases or seek help from the studied service providers, this may be interpreted as a major limitation of this study. In an attempt to mitigate such limitations, as Padgett cited in Abrams (2010) suggests, tele-observation was employed as an additional data gathering method. Tele-observation, as noted above, was utilised to capture IPA against men cases published on various media platforms within the selected study sites. Nonetheless, unreported and unpublished cases still remain excluded in this study, constituting a difficult to reach population. Abrams (2010) acknowledges that encountering hard to reach populations groups is a common experience among qualitative researchers. However, she cautions researchers to be transparent and open about their decisions and acknowledge any excluded perspectives (Abrams, 2010). Future research endeavours will focus on innovative efforts to engage abused men whose cases are neither reported nor published. However, the data gathered through the chosen methods suffices the demands of the study.

Additionally, the scope of the study is only limited to the accounts of the victims of IPA to the exclusion of the voices of the perpetrators. Such exclusion can be viewed as one of the study's inherent shortcomings. A recommendation is however, noted below in section 7.5 (5) for future research to solicit such voices.

7.5 Recommendations for policy, practice and future research

Based on the key findings of the study, the following are recommendations for policy, practice and future research.

7.5.1 Policy

Gap-Lack of recognition of male victims of IPA. Such limited consideration of male victims signals a failure in policy conceptions of vulnerability and victimhood.

Recommendation-There is a need for political will and effort to formulate polices and laws on violence and abuse that are gender inclusive and acknowledge the nuances of IPA. Evidence on abuse in Zimbabwe and the world over shows that it is multi-patterned, multi-dimensional and exhibits itself in multiple forms or types. Policy and remedial interventions should be based on such evidence to reflect multiple and nuanced possibilities in order to better account for the various experiences, motivations, meanings, and contexts of perpetrators and victims. There is a need to broaden the policy framework and enlarge the conceptions of vulnerability to include men alongside other vulnerable groups (Van Niekerk et. al., 2015) while also acknowledging women's agency (Andersen, 2008). Such policy approaches have the potential to minimise the appraisal distortions that characterise the victim-abuser dichotomy.

Such initiatives may encourage male victims to disclose their abuse experiences, knowing that they will be listened to and taken seriously. Examples can be men's organizations or men-only groups or workshops in which male victims are able to share their experiences. Careful facilitation of such groups would enable male victims to open up and disclose their experiences. This recommendation was raised by almost all of the men who participated in this study. There is only one known men's organisation in Zimbabwe, namely, Varume Svinurai, and it is virtually invisible because of a lack of funding and continuous criticism and ostracization by women's groups and some academics such as Minnings (2014), who label it as a feminist backlash.

7.5.2 Practice

Gap 1-There are no services, such as shelters, specifically meant for male victims of abuse

Recommendation 1- Male victims of IPA, particularly those who are forced out of their homes as a result of violence, need places of refuge. Such places of refuge can be state or non-state provided. Despite having shelters for abused women, no such shelters exist to serve abused men. It is recommended therefore, that the state invest in provision for all victims of violence who need services such as shelter regardless of their gender. Shelters for men are needed in much the same way as those for women.

Gap 2-Men face negative responses from service providers, which shows a clear lack of understanding of the situation of abused men.

Recommendation 2-Awareness, retraining of service providers and re-socialisation of communities.

Considering that men's vulnerability emerged as a prominent theme in this study, it would be profound and safe to recommend a shift in gender socialisation towards conceptualisations of male identity as fragmented and having elements of fragility as opposed to total invincibility. This confirms Botha's (2019) assertion that, the society needs to move towards creating and accommodating a safe space where men are allowed to be vulnerable. Men's vulnerability must not be shunned upon as a weakness but must be acknowledged and recognised as an inherent part of humanity.

Safe spaces for men can be created through the use of inclusive language on matters that pertain to people of all genders. This applies even to the naming of government ministries and departments. For instance, some participants in this study suggested that there be a Ministry of Gender not only a Ministry of Women, as that makes people of other genders feel unwelcome and unrecognised.

Educating and re-socialising service providers, especially state departments such as the police force (Barkhuizen, 2010:p.288) and other protection services, government officials and NGO staff about the realities of men as victims of IPA, the specific services they require (Choi et. al., 2015) and to take any reports from male victims as seriously as the reports from female victims. Additionally, such service providers need to be educated regarding the systematic collection of data on the incidences and nature of IPA focused on male victims. Such education is essential in two ways. Firstly, it encourages men to report such cases whenever they are victimised, thereby reducing their chances of retaliating, which in itself exacerbates violence against women. Secondly, it is essential in order to justify the provision of services and to leverage for funding. Non-existence of police statistics on IPA against men in Zimbabwe is not a sign of its non-existence, but a symptom of a system that does not treat such cases separately. Hence, they end up being obscured by other cases. This was the case in all police stations visited.

Furthermore, as suggested by Van Niekerk et. al. (2015), national governments need to adopt a multi-sectoral approach in preventing and addressing violence and abuse in intimate relationships. The involvement of public and private sectors (for example, health, education, criminal justice, social services and business) and civil society, in coordinated collaborative efforts against IPA, has a high potential of yielding success in Zimbabwe.

Gap 3-Lack of information among male victims of abuse regarding *inter alia*, where to get the required assistance.
Recommendation 3-IPA victims, whether male or female, need information regarding what they need to do in the event of violence, where they can report or seek refuge and generally how to handle abusive situations. This information is not readily available in most cases. Thus, as (Cook, 2009) suggests, institutions such as call centres and victims' helpline can play a pivotal role in allowing victims of abuse to access such information. Additionally, it is crucial

for the media to take a leading role in highlighting cases of abuse which involve men as victims for the awareness of the public (Barkhuizen, 2010), as this is another significant avenue for the passage of information.

Gap 4-There is need for GBV interventions and programmes in Zimbabwe that take into consideration IPA experienced by male victims if the war against overall violence is to be won.

Table 7.1 Thesis mapping

#	Research question	Research objective	Research method	Recommendation
1.	What are the common perceptions surrounding male identity in Zimbabwe?	To examine and delineate the common conceptualizations bordering male identity in Zimbabwe, centring on core ideations and expressions thereof.	Semi-structured in-depth interviews Focus Group Discussions	There is need for recognition of masculinity as inherently vulnerable as opposed to invincible.
2.	In what ways do women abuse men?	To explore the various forms of women-perpetrated abuse experienced by men in Zimbabwe.	Key informant interviews Semi-structured in-depth interviews Tele-observation	There is need for legal recognition of non-physical forms of victimization or abuse as crimes.
3.	What meanings do men attach to their perceived victimization and what are the forces underpinning those perceptions?	To examine the meanings attached by abused men to their experiences of abuse in relation to their culturally defined gender roles	Semi-structured in-depth interviews	-
4.	How do men deal with the perceived abuse?	To examine the mechanisms and strategies employed by men in response to the experienced abuse.	Key informant interviews Semi-structured in-depth interviews	Awareness of the options available to men, retraining of service providers and re-socialization of communities.
5	Are there any support systems for men who report to be abused?	To identify the needs of abused men and examine the extent to which current support offered by service providers address these needs.	Key informant interviews Semi-structured in-depth interviews	In view of limited and constrained support structure. It is recommended that the provision of social, instrumental, and informational support be also accorded to men.

7.5.3 Future research

1) This study unearthed some aspects which could form the future research agenda of the broad subject of IPA in general and women-perpetrated PA in particular. These include: *A focus on more complex and nuanced theoretical conceptualizations of the nexus between gender and violence* (McHugh et. al., 2005; Lien & Lorentzen, 2019). There is no single way of explaining violence that occurs in intimate relationships. Theoretical insights such as those of post-structural feminism open the discourse on GBV to multiple conceptualizations (McHugh et. al., 2005). Such conceptualizations are key in assisting in the broader understanding of violence in intimate relationships as opposed to the narrow depiction of men as perpetrators and women as victims.

2) *Research on IPA to employ more theories that are open to multiple interpretations of the gender-violence nexus.* Such theoretical approaches as the post-structural feminist theory are key in highlighting the need for a holistic understanding of violence. They also highlight the need for recognition of men's vulnerability (Hamilton, 2019) in research and in the broader fight against IPA and other forms of GBV.

3) *Research to challenge the established stereotypes regarding gender, power and violence*. This study established that no particular gender embodies all of the power in intimate relationships. Power can be harboured by any person as there are multiple power centres. It also emerged in this study that some abuse and violence in intimate relationships does not emanate from power struggles, but from idiosyncratic sources such as spiritual possessions, negative personality traits and dysfunctionality of respective relationships. Thus, these other sources of violence require intellectual attention through empirical research, which is premised on gender-inclusive and multi-causal perspectives of IPA.

4) *Including IPA among men in more nationally representative and quantitative studies*. Currently, large, nationally representative surveys focus primarily on women, much to the exclusion of men, thus aggravating the information gap on this aspect of gender-based violence. For example, even when they make reference to IPA against men, surveys such as the Demographic and Health Surveys (see for example, the Zimbabwe-DHS (2012); & Zimbabwe-DHS (2015)) do so remotely and from the perspective of women without interviewing men themselves.

5) *Studies to solicit the views of women perpetrators of IPA*. Qualitative studies on women-perpetrators' views can potentially capture the reasons behind women's abusive behaviour. Such studies may further illuminate women's perceptions of their behaviours – regarding whether they even consider themselves to be abusive. Thus, contributing to a holistic picture of IPA which is necessary for crafting intervention mechanisms.

7.6 Overall conclusion

The overall conclusion of this study is that a lasting solution to domestic violence, IPA or any other form of gender based violence can largely be realised through broad-based and inclusive approaches which acknowledge that persons of all genders can be victims or perpetrators of such violence and abuse (Hooks, 2000; Perilla et. al., 2003; McHugh et. al., 2005; Cook, 2009; Van Niekerk et. al., 2015). A scenario whereby a certain significant portion of the population is negatively impacted by IPA but is systematically rendered invisible is untenable. This is so regardless of the gender category of that portion of the population. Bell Hooks (2000:p.65-66) postulates that: "…we must acknowledge that men and women together … must oppose the use of violence as a means of social control in all its manifestations: war, male violence against women and adult violence against children, teenage violence, …racial violence" and women's violence against men. Such conceptualisations correctly depict violence as a complex, multi-faceted and dynamic aspect of human interaction which occurs in multiple forms and patterns (McHugh et. al., 2005).

While this study does not question the seriousness of the domestic violence and IPA directed against women by men, it confirms findings from the Global North; GSS (2008); (Cheung et. al., 2009); Hines & Douglas (2010); Josolyn (2011); Douglas et. al. (2012); Silvers (2014); NCADV (2015b); Gelles (2016); Hogan (2016); & Lien & Lorentzen (2019) and those from the Global South; Adinkrah (2000); Adinkrah (2007); Barkhuizen (2010); du Toit (2010); Kumar (2012); Zimbabwe-DHS (2015); Chiramba (2016); Musune et. al. (2016); & Botha (2019), which show that men also fall victim to women-perpetrated IPA.

The study further illustrates two connections between male identity and IPA. Firstly, it underscores that male identity as a form of gender identity does not guarantee immunity to vulnerability and/or being victimised. Men are themselves vulnerable beings and sometimes the vulnerabilities emanate from their gender, as detailed in Chapter 4. Male identity is presented as fragmented, fluid, unstable and sometimes negotiated, thus providing a nuanced outlook of the gender-violence nexus. This outlook is open to multiple possibilities and explanations of IPA and other GBV forms as opposed to it being conceptualised as men's violence towards women. That is, one which does not present IPA as 'unilateral' (McHugh et. al., 2005), i.e. men's abuse against women or vice versa, but rather as multi-sourced.

Secondly, it is underlined in Chapter 5 that IPA negatively impacts on male victims' construction of their own identities as men. This connection manifests itself in abused men's perceptions of IPA as a 'source or basis for their questioned gender identity'. Socio-cultural gender expectations, which in most cases portray men as invincible, are challenged by instances of women-perpetrated abuse in intimate relationships. As a result, abused men may self-question their own identities due to those internalised socio-cultural expectations (see section 5.2.2 in Chapter 5).

Power is key in IPA incidences, but using the post-structural feminist thought and the phenomenological methodological insights, the study demonstrates that other idiosyncratic factors such as personal problems among perpetrators (some of which emanate from demon possessions) and the nature of each individual relationship as noted in Chapter 5, are equally significant in explaining IPA.

It is established in this study that male victims' perception, interpretation, comprehension and explanation of their experiences of abuse were not only premised on their individual circumstances in their relationships. They were also influenced by the socio-cultural patriarchal context that Zimbabwe is in and the religious, particularly Christian, norms to which they are subscribed to. Hence, the meanings they derive from their experiences of abuse were inherently multiple. It further demonstrates that such meaning-making, together with the broader legislative, policy and institutional frameworks, influenced and were instructive of their reactions or responses to the IPA they experienced. As detailed in Chapter 6, abused men's help-seeking behaviour and choice of coping strategy were influenced by various factors, but the legislative, policy and institutional frameworks as the broader context had an immense contribution to their choice making. Nonetheless, the noted frameworks are not without limitations. The most conspicuous of all, as averred by Van Niekerk et. al. (2015), is the lack of recognition of men's vulnerability and victimhood resulting from IPA. Zimbabwean laws, policies and institutions meant to provide support to IPA victims, as demonstrated in Chapter 6, systematically neglect male victims. As a result, they are rendered invisible and somewhat non-existent.

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9 APPENDICIES

APPENDIX A: Informed consent form for key informants

Informed consent form for key informants

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM

My name is Justice Medzani and I am at doctoral student in the Department of Sociology at the University of Pretoria. I am conducting a research on intimate partner abuse as reported and claimed by men. The research project is titled: *Intimate partner abuse and male identity: Experiences and claims of abused men in Zimbabwe.* The study seeks to investigate men's claimed experiences of intimate partner abuse perpetrated by women in Zimbabwe focussing on the ways they construct and represent male identity in view of the abuse. It also seeks to explore the meanings attached by men to the claimed abuse and the various ways in which they deal with the abuse including their reporting and help-seeking behaviour.

As part of the study I am requesting your permission to conduct an interview to assist me in gathering the information described above. The interviews should be about an hour long and will be scheduled at a time and place suitable for you. I am additionally requesting your permission to audio record the interview to maintain accuracy of the information shared. Please note that your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may choose to withdraw at any time during the interview. If at any point in the interview you feel uncomfortable with a question asked, you are not forced to answer it and have an option to decline to respond to the question.

All data collected in the interviews will be treated with strict confidentiality. The details of your identity will remain confidential throughout the study as all transcripts will be coded such that your identity can not be linked to the transcripts. There will be use of pseudonyms to protect your identity in reports and publications on the research. All information collected from you will be stored at the Department of Sociology for a minimum of 15 years. It will only be used for academic purposes notably a doctoral thesis and scholarly articles.

Your participation in this study will not lead to any direct benefits; but will add to the knowledge on understanding the role of and services provided by police, church and family counselling organizations in addressing intimate partner abuse experienced by men. There are no anticipated risks attached to participating in this study. However, if you feel distressed in any way at any point during the interview or after, please let me know and I will refer you to a trained counsellor ((Mr. Wilfred Chinhanho) who will be on standby. I will also share with you

details of the local Social services department. Debriefing and counselling services offered by the psychologist and the Social services department will be at no cost.

It is of crucial importance that before you agree to participate in this study you fully comprehend what is involved and are satisfied with your participation within the study. If you agree to participate in the study, please sign the consent form available.

If you have questions or concerns before or after the study, please contact me on:

Cell number: 00 27 62 1345246 or by email at Email: u17345139@tuks.co.za

<div style="border:1px solid black; padding:10px;">

Consent

I hereby consent to participate in the research on male identity and men's claims of intimate partner abuse. I understand that I am participating freely and without being forced in any way to do so. I also understand that I can stop this interview at any time should I not want to continue, and this decision will not in any way affect me negatively.

 I understand that this is an academic research project.

 I understand that my answers will remain confidential.

…………………………………   ………………………….

Signature of participant   **Date**

</div>

<div style="border:1px solid black; padding:10px;">

I am willing for the interview to be audio taped.

………………………………..   ……………………………….

Signature of participant   **Date**

</div>

Interviewer's signature: ………………………….

Date: …………………………

Interview Guide for key informants

Topic 1: Background information on service providers (All informants)

1.1 Find out the name and function of the entity that the service provider works for. What is its mandate; what services does it provide?
1.2 What is the position of the informant in the organization and what does it entail?
1.3 How long have they been in this position?
1.4 How long have they been with the same organization?

Ask the following additional questions for non-governmental organisations only:

- What is the meaning of your organisation's name and the reasoning behind it?
- May you please outline the mission and objectives of your organization?
- Tell me about the history of your organization giving reference to when it was established and if there are any changes in its objectives since its inception.
- Is it a client or membership-based organization? Who are the main clients or members? What are their characteristics?
- Does the organization have presence countrywide? Where are the centres or offices located? How do people know about your organization?

Topic 2: Perceptions on IPA (All informants)

What is your understanding of IPA?

2.1 How common do you think is IPA in your area? What do they think are the main reasons for this?
2.2 How common do they think IPA against men is? Has this been the case always *or* has there been some new trends or changes (increase or decrease)? How can the changes or new trends be explained? (What could be the possible reasons?)

Topic 3: Victims of female-perpetrated IPA

3.1 What type of men approach your organisation for services? *Brief description of the male victims and the forms of abuse they report*
3.2 Are there any notable differences between men and women victims of abuse, in terms of the reported forms of abuse, the number of cases and the socioeconomic characteristics of victims?

Topic 4: Service provision and referral systems

4.1 What type of services are offered by your organization? Probe: health, legal advice and representation in litigations, counselling etc.
4.2 What is the typical assistance or help sought by the male victims of IPA that approach your organisation? *Please elaborate.*
4.3 Who are the service providers i.e. the employees or volunteers of the organization? Give reference to their: gender, age, level of education and professional training. Would you say their educational or professional training suit the needs of male victims of IPA seek?

4.4   Please outline the process followed by your clients when they first come to seek your services. *Probe- Do they set an appointment? Or, do they walk in*?

4.5   How frequent do abused men come for help? Why do you think this is the case?

4.6   Do the men sometime need services or which you do not provide? If so, which ones? How do you deal with such requests? Probe- Do you make referrals? If no, why? If yes

- *Which specific services do you make referrals for?*
- *Where do you make referrals to? –other institutions? Why specifically these?*
- *Is there any formal referral system (including tacking and follow-up);* Are there any feedback channels from the referrals? elaborate
- *How well do other partners cooperate with you in doing this?*

4.7   What are your main challenges in helping abused men? How do you deal with the challenges?

Topic 5:   Partnerships

5.1   Do you have any partners in your service provision (apart from referrals) for male victims of IPA? If yes, who are they? *Probe- Government departments, civil society organizations or private sector*. What role do they play in the partnership? If no, why?

General views

6.1   In general, do you think your services are well-suited for the needs of the male victims of IPA? Why/Why not?

- Do you think the services are adequate? Why do you say so?

6.2   How else do you think male victims of IPA can be assisted?

6.3   What is your view regarding the adequacy and effectiveness of national laws and policies on IPA against men?

6.4   To what extent do you think your organization has been successful in addressing the needs of men who claim to be abused? What are the successes? What contributed to the success?

Is there anything else on this subject that you would like to add that we did not discuss?

Thank you for your participation in the study

APPENDIX C: Padare/Enkundleni-Letter of Approval

PADARE/ENKUNDLENI MEN'S FORUM ON GENDER

Head Office: 10 Cardigan Avenue, Belvedere, Harare
E-mail: padare@gmail.com /padare@padare.org.zw
Website: www.padare.org.zw
Tel: 04-750 495

Zvishavane Office: Welfare Offices Housing Department
Zvishavane Town Council, Zvishavane
Box 5, Zvishavane

24 July 2019

To whom it may concern

RE: APPROVAL IN RESPECT OF REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

This letter acknowledges that I approved a request by Justice M Medzani a PhD student at the University of Pretoria conducted interviews with us as an organization for a research project entitled *"Intimate partner abuse and male identity: Experiences and perspectives of abused men in Zimbabwe"* in April 2018.

I also consented to and approved the use of the name of our organization (Padare / Enkundleni Men's Forum on Gender) in his thesis.

For any further information, I can be reached at *+263 242 759 043 / +263 773 302 592*

Sincerely,

Walter Vengesai
National Director

"MEN of quality are not afraid of equality, REAL MEN ARE NON-VIOLENT"

VARUME SVINURAI/VHUKANI MADODA MEN'S FORUM

Trust Deed No. MA932/2010

1977 Mainway Meadows

Waterfalls, HARARE

Cell +263 772 201 762/ 772 368 875

Email: *svinuraivhukani@gmail.com*

Date: 28 January 2018

To: The Institutional Review Board
Faculty of Humanities
University of Pretoria
Box 20 Hatfield
Pretoria, South Africa

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

The purpose of this letter is to grant Mr. Justice M. Medzani, a doctoral student in the department of Sociology at the University of Pretoria permission to conduct research at Varume Svinurai / Vhukani Madoda Men's Forum Trust. The study titled, "Intimate partner abuse and male identity: Experiences and claims of abused men in Zimbabwe" entails conducting interviews with men who are members and clients of our organization. The purpose of the study is to understand the abuse experiences of the men and the way they construct their male identities after the abuse.

For more details, do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

TEMBA NZOUNHENDA (tembanzou@gmail.com)

Organising Secretary

Cell: +263 772 201 762

Interview Guide for male victims of IPA

Topic 1:   Background information (all participants)

Find out about the respondent's:

- Age
- Marital status
- Education
- Religious affiliation
- Employment status and occupation
- Place of residence
- Childhood background: parents' marital history, the parents' relationship, the respondents' relationship with parents and siblings etc.

Topic 2:   Marital history

Let the respondents narrate their marriage life particular attention should be given to:

2.1   When and how did you get married (customary, Christian or common law marriage)?

- Is this your first marriage?
  OR
- If cohabiting: when did you start cohabiting with your current partner? What is your main reason for cohabiting (as opposed to marrying)? Do you intend getting married to her at some point? If yes, when; why then? If no, why and why do you continue living with her?

2.2   Do you have any children? If yes, how many and how old are they? Are they all with current partner?

2.3   What would you describe as a "normal" intimate relationship? Would you say you have ever experience it? Please elaborate?

2.4   In general, how happy would you say you are in your current union? Why do you say so?

Topic 3:   Male identity

Respondents to describe and explain their personal understanding of male identity while also giving reference to societal views on the subject.

3.1   In your culture, what would you say being a man means? What are the societal expectations of a man? *Identify the socially sanctioned makers of male identity.*

- *Probes-* What is the link with: sexuality; marriage; having children; the body (physical appearance and anatomy); initiation rites; employment status? Can those markers be embodied by women as well?
- Would you say you meet these expectations? If yes, which ones? If not, why?
- How do you enact or express the identified makers of male identity?

3.2   Describe the main gender roles and relations expected between married heterosexual couples in your culture.

- How is a man supposed to be treated by his wife?
- How is a woman supposed to be treated by her husband?
- What would be viewed as a form of disrespect by a husband towards his wife and vice versa?
- What would be viewed as a form of abuse by a husband towards his wife and vice versa?

Topic 4:   Forms of abuse and the way it happens

Ask respondents to talk about their abuse experiences. I understand you identify yourself as a victim of abuse by your partner or wife. May you tell me about it?

4.1   Why do you say it is abuse?

4.2   When did it start? Is it still happening?

- If yes, how often does it happen? Are there any plans to deal with it? Probe- what are the plans?

- If not, how and why did it end? How often did it happen? For how long?

4.3 Where do the acts of abuse often take place? Does it only occur in a particular place or it occurs anywhere? Does place or space where the abusive behaviour occurs matter?

4.4 Does she give any reasons for her behaviour? Whether respondents express their displeasure to their partner?
- If so, how and what is the response?
- If not, why? Probe- Is it because of fear?

4.5 Does it happen in the presence of other people? If yes, who?

4.6 Are there any other people who know about the abusive acts? If yes, who are those people? Who told them? How are the respondents affected by it? How did they respond to that information?

Topic 5:   Conceptualizations and perceptions of abuse

5.1 What does the form of abuse you identified earlier signify to you?

5.2 Does your partner's behaviour affect your self-perception? Why and how? *Explore whether the different forms of abuse identified impact the respondents in the same way.*

5.3 Does your partner tell you the reasons for their abusive behaviour? If, yes, what are they? If no, what do you think are her reasons for abusing you?

5.4 After being subjected to the abusive acts by your partner do you still see yourself as a man. If yes, what type of a man? If no, why do you say so? Describe your identity?

5.5 How do you feel about your partner's behaviour towards you?

5.6 Are you terrified of your partner? Explain more.

Topic 6:   How did respondents deal with abuse?

Respondents to name, describe and explain the mechanisms and strategies they adopted in coping with or resolving the conflict.

6.1 What else did they do other than consulting the organization, their pastor or going to police?

6.2 Did they seek help from family or friends?
- If yes, why? What was the response or reaction? Was it helpful? Explain.
- If not, why?

6.3 Who in the family offered help? Can this help be offered by anyone in the family? Are there particular individuals bearing that duty?

6.4 Did reporting to police, consulting a family counselling organization or pastor assist in dealing with IPA? If yes, in what way? If no, why do they think so? Provide an explanation.

Topic 7:   Respondents' needs- the extent to which they are met

Respondents to identify their needs and outline their views on current support offered by service providers to address the needs.

7.1 What in your view are your main needs as a victim of IPA i.e. whether material or immaterial?

7.2 Are there any providers to meet these needs? Who are they and what services do they offer? Are the services readily accessible by men?
- If yes, have you ever sought them? How often? Are the services adequate? Do they address the problem of IPA?
- If no, why? What in your suggestion should be done to address the problem of IPA?

7.3 What is the position of male victims of IPA at law? Does the law recognise them? If yes, does it address their needs?

Is there anything else you would like to add on this subject that we did not discuss?

Thank you for your participation in the study

Informed consent forms for male victims of IPA

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM

My name is Justice Medzani and I am a doctoral student in the Department of Sociology at the University of Pretoria. I am conducting a research on intimate partner abuse as reported and claimed by men. The research project is titled: *Intimate partner abuse and male identity: Experiences and claims of abused men in Zimbabwe.* The study seeks to investigate men's claimed experiences of intimate partner abuse perpetrated by women in Zimbabwe focussing on the ways they construct and represent male identity in view of the abuse. It also seeks to explore the meanings attached by men to the claimed abuse and the various ways in which they deal with the abuse including their reporting and help-seeking behaviour.

As part of the study I am requesting your permission to conduct an interview to assist me in gathering the information described above because you admitted to experiencing abuse perpetrated by your spouse or female partner. The interviews should be about an hour long and will be scheduled at a time and place suitable for you. I am additionally requesting your permission to audio record the interview to maintain accuracy of the information shared. Please note that your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may choose to withdraw at any time during the interview. If at any point in the interview you feel uncomfortable with a question asked, you are not forced to answer it and have an option to decline to respond to the question.

All data collected in the interviews will be treated with strict confidentiality. The details of your identity will remain confidential throughout the study as all transcripts will be coded such that your identity can not be linked to the transcripts. There will be use of pseudonyms to protect your identity in reports and publications on the research. All information collected from you will be stored at the Department of Sociology for a minimum of 15 years. It will only be used for academic purposes culminating in a doctoral thesis and scholarly articles.

Your participation in this study will not lead to any direct benefits; but will add to the knowledge on the interplay between men's claims and experiences of intimate partner abuse perpetrated by women and their socially constructed male identity. There are no anticipated risks attached to participating in this study. However, if you feel distressed in any way and at any point during the discussions or thereafter, please let me know and I will refer you to a counsellor (Mr Wilfred Chinhanho) who will be on standby. I will also share with you details

of the local Social services department. You will not incur any costs for debriefing and counselling services offered by the psychologist and the Social services department.

It is of crucial importance that before you agree to participate in this study you fully comprehend what is involved and are satisfied with your participation within the study. If you agree to participate in the study, please sign the consent form available.

If you have questions or concerns before or after the study, please contact me on:

Cell number: 00 27 62 1345246 or by email at Email: u17345139@tuks.co.za

---

Consent

I hereby consent to participate in the research on male identity and men's claims of intimate partner abuse. I understand that I am participating freely and without being forced in any way to do so. I also understand that I can stop this interview at any time should I not want to continue, and this decision will not in any way affect me negatively.

I understand that this is an academic research project.

I understand that my answers will remain confidential.

………………………………   ………………………….

Signature of participant   **Date**

I am willing for the interview to be audio taped.

……………………………..   ……………………………….

Signature of participant   **Date**

Interviewer's signature: ………………………….

Date: …………………………

Focus group guide

Topic: 1   Male identity (All groups)

1.1 May you please explain what they understand about male identity?

- What are the socially sanctioned makers of male identity? Identify the socially sanctioned makers of male identity.
- *Probe-* What is the link with, sexuality, marriage, having children, child care, the body (physical appearance and anatomy), initiation rites, level of education, employment status? Can those markers be embodied by women as well?
- What are the societal expectations of a man? What happens if a man does not fulfil these expectations?
- How does society judge him?

1.2 How is male identity formed or constructed?

- How does society contribute to the construction of male identity? *Probe-* Family, peers, schools, cultural practices, religious institutions and their teachings, civil society organizations, businesses, law and government polices etc.

1.3 What is the relationship between male and female identity?

- How do individuals embodying such identities relate? (How do men and women relate?)
- What roles do they play in society? Are they the same? If no, how do they differ? If yes, give a brief explanation to why you say so.
- What happens if they do not fulfil these roles?
- How does society judge them?

Elderly men and women only (41 years and older)

a) Are there any notable differences in what constitutes male identity now from the time of your youth i.e. the difference between millennial male identity and traditional male identity? If yes, what are the differences or changes?

- How can the changes be explained i.e. how did the changes come about?
- Are the changes a new phenomenon?

Topic: 2   Views of female-perpetrated IPA (All groups)

Respondents to give societal and their personal perceptions of IPA perpetrated by women.

2.1 What do you understand about IPA? What about IPA perpetrated by women?

2.2 How common do you think it is in Zimbabwe? Why do you say so?

2.3 What could be the major reasons behind this phenomenon?

2.4 What in your view could be the relationship between this pattern of IPA and male identify? *Probe-* What does it reflect about the male victim and the female perpetrator? *Please elaborate.*

2.5 How can the problem be addressed? *Please elaborate.*

Is there anything else on this subject that you would like to add that we did not discuss?

Thank you for your participation in the study

Informed consent forms for focus groups

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM

My name is Justice Medzani and I am at doctoral student in the Department of Sociology at the University of Pretoria. I am conducting a research on intimate partner abuse as reported and claimed by men. The research project is titled: *Intimate partner abuse and male identity: Experiences and claims of abused men in Zimbabwe.* The study seeks to investigate men's claimed experiences of intimate partner abuse perpetrated by women in Zimbabwe focussing on the ways they construct and represent male identity in view of the abuse. It also seeks to explore the meanings attached by men to the claimed abuse and the various ways in which they deal with the abuse including their reporting and help-seeking behaviour.

As part of the study I am requesting your permission to incorporate you in a group discussion to assist me in gathering the information described above. The discussion should not be more than two hours long. I am additionally requesting your permission to audio record the discussion to maintain accuracy of the information shared. Please note that your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may choose to withdraw at any time during the discussion. If at any point in the interview you feel uncomfortable with a question asked, you are not forced to answer it and have an option to decline to respond to the question.

All data collected in the discussions will be treated with strict confidentiality. The details of your identity will remain confidential throughout the study as all transcripts will be coded such that your identity can not be linked to the transcripts. There will be use of pseudonyms to protect your identity in reports and publications on the research. All information collected from you will be stored at the Department of Sociology for a maximum of 15 years. It will only be used for academic purposes culminating in a doctoral thesis and scholarly articles.

Your participation in this study will not lead to any direct benefits; but will add to the knowledge on understanding the societal views of what constitute male identity. There are no anticipated risks attached to participating in this study. However, if you feel distressed in any way at any point during the discussions or after, please let me know and I will refer you to a counsellor (Mr. Wilfred Chinhanho) who will be on standby. I will also share with you details of the local Social services department for counselling. You will not incur any costs for debriefing and counselling services offered by the psychologist and the Social services department.

It is of crucial importance that before you agree to participate in this study you fully comprehend what is involved and are satisfied with your participation within the study. If you agree to participate in the study, please sign the consent form available.

If you have questions or concerns before or after the study, please contact me on:

Cell number: 00 27 62 1345246 or by email: u17345139@tuks.co.za

---

Consent

I hereby consent to participate in the research on male identity and men's claims of intimate partner abuse. I understand that I am participating freely and without being forced in any way to do so. I also understand that I can stop this interview at any time should I not want to continue, and this decision will not in any way affect me negatively.

 I understand that this is an academic research project.

 I understand that my answers will remain confidential.

…………………………………   …………………………….

Signature of participant   **Date**

I am willing for the focus group to be audio recorded.

……………………………………..   ……………………………….

Signature of participant   **Date**

Interviewer's signature: ………………………….

Date: ……………………

APPENDIX I: Ethical clearance letter

Ethical clearance letter

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Humanities
Research Ethics Committee

7 March 2018

Dear Mr Medzani

Project:	**Intimate partner abuse and male identity: Experiences and perspective of abused men in Zimbabwe**
Researcher:	**JM Medzani**
Supervisor:	**Prof Z Mokomane**
Department:	**Sociology**
Reference number:	**17345139 (GW20180225HS)**

Thank you for the **well written** application that was submitted for ethical consideration.

I am pleased to inform you that the above application was **approved** by the **Research Ethics Committee** at the meeting held on 1 March 2018. Data collection may therefore commence.

Please note that this approval is based on the assumption that the research will be carried out along the lines laid out in the proposal. Should the actual research depart significantly from the proposed research, it will be necessary to apply for a new research approval and ethical clearance.

We wish you success with the project.

Sincerely

Prof Maxi Schoeman
Deputy Dean: Postgraduate Studies and Ethics
Faculty of Humanities
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
e-mail:tracey.andrew@up.ac.za

CC: Prof Z Mokomane (Supervisor)
        Prof D Bonnin (HoD)

Research Ethics Committee Members: Prof MME Schoeman (Deputy Dean); Prof KL Harris; Dr L Blokland; Ms A dos Santos; Dr R Fasselt; Ms KT Govinder; Dr E Johnson; Dr C Panebianco; Dr C Puttergill; Dr D Reyburn; Dr M Taub; Prof GM Spies; Prof E Taljard; Ms B Tsebe; Dr E van der Klashorst; Dr G Wolmarans; Mr V Sithole