GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE: A PASTORAL QUEST FOR MASCULINITY TRANSFORMATION AND GENDER-BALANCED POWER RELATIONS AMONG THE OVAWAMBO OF NAMIBIA

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted at any university for obtaining any qualification.

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As an Editor, I hereby declare I edited this dissatation.

Mrs Susan Bauer

As Supervisor, I hereby approve this thesis for submission to be examined.

Prof. H. Moyo

ABSTRACT

In Ovawambo culture, a man is perceived as the head of the family, family property owner, breadwinner and family protector. He is mandated by culture to have control over the woman and over all the valuable family assets. However, with Namibia's independence came a new constitution and gender reform laws that redefined gender roles and affected age-old norms and long-held beliefs about masculinity. The law reforms empower women and emancipate them from patriarchal gender injustice thereby commanding equality for men and women in all cultural and social spheres of life. The aim of this study is to identify the driving force behind gender-based violence and its relation to Ovawambo patriarchal gender structure, Namibia's constitutional reforms in respect to gender roles, as well as male unemployment and power abuse. Employing a qualitative empirical approach based on semi-structured interviews with three focus groups, one-on-one interviews among 40 Ovawambo participants, and participatory observation, the study investigates the experiences of men who are crushed between the old and new gender relationship structures. Findings reveal that there is a growing fear of losing power among Ovawambo men and that imbalance of power in gender relations is at the root of gender-based violence in Ovawambo intimate relationships. The male participants resented the gender equality and family laws which they believe undermine their power and masculine identity. The situation forced them to abuse their power in order to maintain their superiority to women. However, the study shows that gender legislation alone cannot promote peace and human rights in Ovawambo intimate relationships. To address the issue of patriarchy, power abuse, and gender imbalance between men and women, it is helpful to view power from the theological perspective of compassion and vulnerability. Thus, the research endorses the *theopaschitic* model reframed by the theology of the cross and resurrection according to Luther, Moltmann and Louw. It is argued that *theopaschitic* theology could help to transform the Ovawambo traditional understanding of masculinity because it emphasizes God's compassion and pathos. However, transforming men's attitudes and values alone is not enough. There is a need to transform the self-understanding of both men and women to accommodate gender equity. Thus, this study also adopts a pastoral *uukwanankali koinonial* (compassion and fellowship) model to influence both Ovawambo *uukwanankali* social communitarian philosophy that is based on compassion and the understanding of the current gender biased laws to help both men and women to shift from traditional patriarchal, hierarchical competitiveness and injustice to fellowship, compassion and gender justice.

DEDICATION

To my beloved sons, Johanneslis Twapandula Gratia and Nicky-Peter Tunekwatho, with the hope that the content of this dissertation will become your pillar of wisdom and the quality of your character to represent the image of God in this context of masculinity crisis.

To my beloved dad, the late Mateus Shimbungu Haufiku, from whom I was supposed to acquire my masculine identity, but whom I met only once at the age of eleven before he passed on when I was 16 years old.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AIDS: Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BDPFA: Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
CIDA: Canadian International Development Agency
CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
DAW: United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women
DWA: Department of Women Affairs
ELCIN: Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia
ESV: English Standard Version
FMS: Finnish Missionary Society
GBV: Gender-Based Violence
HIV: Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IBACP: Independent Broadcasting Authority Code of Practice
IMAGES: International Men and Gender Equality Survey
IASC: Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IPV: Intimate Partners Violence
MDG: Millennium Development Goals
MGECW: Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare
MTV: Music Television
NNGP: Namibian National Gender Policy
NBC: Namibian Broadcasting Corporation
NEPAD: New Partnership for Africa's Development
NDHS: Namibia Demographic Health Survey
NHDR: Namibian Human Development Report
NLRDC: Namibia Law Reform and Development Commission
NPAGBV: National Plan of Action on Gender-Based Violence
NRSV: New Revised Standard Version
NUNW: National Union of Namibian Workers
NWV: Namibian Women's Voice
PSDA: Pastoral Semantic Differential Analysis
PSD: Pastoral Semantic Differential
SADC: Southern Africa Development Community
SADF: South African Defense Force
SARDC: Southern African Research and Documentation Centre
SIAPAC: Social Impact Assessment and Policy Analysis Corporation

SWANLA: South West Africa Labor Association

SWAPO: South West Africa People's Organization

SWC: SWAPO Women's Council

WCPU: Women and Child Protection Unit

WEE: Women Economic Empowerment

UNAM: University of Namibia

UNDEVAW: United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women

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CHAPTER 1

PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION

1.1 Introduction to the Study

Across the world, human society has been marked by unrestrained structures of injustice, oppression and discrimination which cause untold suffering to many people. One of the outcomes of these unrestrained structures is gender-based violence. Gender based violence has become a societal problem which also poses a major counseling challenge to both the Church and the State as it has defied efforts to eradicate it (Nasimiyu-Wasike 2000:120). In Namibia, gender-based violence remains a problem in most families where violation of human rights and dignity, especially of the women and children, continues unchecked. To a lesser or greater extent, the cultures of all eleven ethnic groups[1] in Namibia promote gender violence in their gender relationships (LeBeau 2004:3). Among the Ovawambo, gender-based violence remains one of the major causes of crises especially in intimate gender relationships including marriage and family life. Although the government of the Republic of Namibia is working hard to curb this social and family problem, gender-based violence seems to increase rather than decrease. Before we continue, it is proper to first get the in-depth meaning of the term gender-based violence.

1.2 What Is Gender-based Violence?

The term gender-based violence is used to describe a cultural and social system of inequality between men and women which justify all forms of violence perpetrated against women and girls (Inter-Agency Standing Committee 2015:5). According to Holmes and Bhuvanendra (2014:1), gender-based violence includes physical, sexual and psychological abuse, threats, coercion, arbitrary deprivation of liberty and economic deprivation, whether occurring in public or private life. However, the common type of gender violence globally is sexual violence which includes sexual exploitation and forced prostitution, domestic violence, trafficking, forced marriage and harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation. As noted

[1] According to Nambala (1994:11-53), Namibia's twelve ethnic groups are the Basters, the Ovawambo, the Ovaherero, the Damara, the San (Bushmen), the Nama, the Himba, the Kavango, the Caprivians, the Afrikaners (the Settlers) and the Tswanas.

by Edwards (2011:20), “violence against women” has been defined in international law and has been used synonymously with “gender-based violence.” However, Sheerattan-Bisnauth (2010:115) argues that the term gender-based violence is more helpful than violence against women because it analyzes violence in the broader sense with the understanding that the causes and the solutions to violence are personal, political and structural. This information is helpful in the process of acquiring an umbrella definition of gender-based violence.

Remarkably, none of the UNO treaty bodies adopted terms such as violence against women or gender-based violence. Rather, they maintain those definitions outlined in the human rights instrument. Subsequently, the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women of 1993 adopted the term, “violence against women,” which it defines as being synonymous with “gender-based violence.” Gender-based violence is any act of violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life (UNDEVAW 2009:32). The UNDEVAW defines violence against women as all physical, spiritual, emotional, psychological and sexual harm that women and girls experience in life. However, this violence stems from historical power inequality between men and women, as DEVAW also affirms that such violence is “a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women” (Inter-Agency Standing Committee 2015:13).

The DEVAW definition was strongly criticized by Edwards (2011) and Sida (2015) who claim that it has a number of limitations. For example, it does not provide an explanation of gender and it only focuses on the violence against women which suggests an element of sexual discrimination. Sida (2015:6) and Edwards (2011:21-22) also maintain that this definition refers to only physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering but fails to mention structural or economic violence as well as human rights abuse. Sida (2015:6) further argues that the term gender-based violence covers not only the violence that is perpetrated against women and girls but also the violence which men and boys experience at the hands of women and girls. Consequently, the terms “violence against women” and “gender-based violence” are often used interchangeably. Gender-based violence takes quite different forms based on the social or cultural context (IGWG of USAID 2008:4; Gardsbane 2009:1; Merry 2009:3).

Women and girls are most affected by gender-based violence, as they suffer a lot more than men and boys because fundamentally gender-based violence originates from the use of force

or coercion, physical or psychological, which women and girls experience at every stage of their life cycle. However, this does not discount the violence that men and boys culturally and socially mete out on them. There are, in addition, sexual and gender minorities such as men who have sex with men and transgendered persons who are also subjected to gender-based violence (Inter-Agency Standing Committee 2015:5). For that reason, Edwards (2011:21-22) suggests that the definition of violence against women or gender-based violence should include all basic human rights' violations. It should not be limited to any act, omission or threat to life, physical, sexual or psychological harm and suffering perpetrated against women or its structural and economic manifestations and must not exclude one gender (Edwards 2011:21-22). Rather, gender-based violence should include all violence, harm or threat against women, men, boys and girls based on their sex (SADC 2012).

Thus, gender-based violence is as an umbrella term for a wide range of violations committed against a person or group of persons based on their gender (IGWG of USAID 2008:4; Gardsbane 2009:1). Fulu *et al* (2013 cited in Mejia *et al* 2014:1) also concur that gender-based violence is an umbrella concept that refers to any form of violence used to establish, enforce or perpetrate gender inequalities and keep in place unequal gender-power relations. As an umbrella term, it encompasses all harmful acts against a person's will due to the different cultural or social gender constructions of men and women (Inter-Agency Standing Committee 2015.13). Merry (2009:15) further explains that gender-based violence has its basic roots in the patriarchal system that positions men over women and some men over other men. It covers also rape during wars, sexual abuse in prison and wherever human rights are violated due to racism as well as imbalance in gender, power, performance and character. Kakujaha-Matundu (2015:105) affirms that the term gender-based violence includes physical, sexual, economic, emotional and psychological violence such as domestic violence and sexual abuse (defilement, incest, forced pregnancy and sexual slavery). It also covers harmful traditional practices against women which include honor killings, maiming, female genital mutilation, early marriage, infanticide, denial of education, confinement, rape, and emotional abuse.

Gender-based violence targets both individuals and groups on the basis of their gender (Indongo & Mutorwa 2015:74) and it is a form of discrimination that robs people of their human rights and fundamental freedom. It embodies a pattern of behavior that undermines the dignity, autonomy, and security of the victims, limits their freedom in society and puts their health in danger. It is therefore clear that, in most cases, women and girls are the survivors of

gender-based violence even though boys and men are also affected as sexual/gender minorities. Gender-based violence is fabricated through the structural inequalities between men and women but it is characterized by the use and abuse of physical, emotional, or financial power and control (USAID 2012:1). Thus, Kaldine (2007:229) and Mogotsi (2016:20) both agree that gender-based violence remains one of the most pressing issues in Namibia and in the entire global context as a human problem that is prevalent in most families of the world and that continues to violate human rights and dignity.

It is, however, difficult to address the problem of gender-based violence especially in family and intimate relationships, as it is often regarded as a private matter or personal business (Sheerattan-Bisnauth 2010:115). For that reason, the society, including churches and courts, does not take it seriously. Merry (2009:3,178) suggests that the solution requires a situated analysis that recognizes the effects of the larger social context on gender performances and any culture or social structure used to explain and justify the violence. Therefore, as we probe the root causes of gender-based violence, it is also important to consider the impact of Ovawambo patriarchal gender beliefs on gender politics during the struggle for Namibian independence and in the post-independence era.

Therefore, this study seeks to explore the root causes of gender-based violence and its relation to the Ovawambo cultural view of manhood and masculinity, restoration of Ovawambo culture by colonization and evangelization, changes in Namibia's constitution regarding gender roles, male economic deprivation or unemployment, and power abuse in Ovawambo intimate relationships. To accomplish this goal, the study used the qualitative empirical approach in which semi-structured interviews were conducted with three focus groups and one-on-one interviews of selected men were conducted to obtain information about their life experiences after the implementation of Namibia's gender equality legislation.

This study also attempts to challenge the issue of the imbalance of power in Ovawambo gender relationships in order to transform the mindset of Ovawambo men and cause them to shift from some of the negative hegemonic masculine[2] practices that cause harm to women, children, and

[2] Hegemonic masculinity refers to the configuration of gender practice that claims and tries to maintain a dominant influence of patriarchy in a particular society at a certain time through dominant position of men and the subordination of women. It helps us to understand the power relations and hierarchies which based on gender identities, between men and women and between men and other fellow men (Connell 1995:77; see also Haralambos & Holborn 2008:138-139 and Connell 1987 in Cleaver 2002:7). The word deliver from Antonio Gramsci analysis of class relations. Hegemony refers also to the cultural dynamic by which men claim and sustain a leading position against women in social life. In this way hegemonic masculinity promotes power abuse,

the men themselves. Thus, this study adapts the *theopaschitic* model reframed by the theology of the cross (cf. Luther {Luther work 1957; Von Loewenich 1976, Nürnberger 2005; Althaus 1966; Lazareth 1960}; Moltmann {1974; 1990; 1992; 1993; 1974} and Louw {1998; 2000; 2008; 2011; 2015}) to see whether an understanding of the theology of suffering could produce a paradigm shift in Ovawambo men from hegemonic masculinity to redemptive and compassionate masculinity and result in a balance of gender power in Ovawambo relationships.

Chapter One outlines the structure of this study which includes a brief overview of the historical background, context of the study, the research problem, motivation for the study, the objectives of and significance of the study, definitions of the key concepts, outline of the chapters and the conclusion.

1.3 Brief Historical Background

According to Bantu legends and myths, as postulated by Malan (1995:15 in Buys & Nambala 2003: xxxiii), the Ovawambo[3] people are a branch of the Bantu family which migrated from the north-eastern to the south-western parts of Africa. The Ovawambo people currently occupy both sides of Namibia and Angola, between the northern border of Angola and the Etosha National Park (Malan 2012:15). The Ovawambo (also known as Ovambo or Aawambo) is a collective name for eight different tribes namely the Kwanyama, Ndonga, Kwambi, Ngandjera, Mbalantu, Kwaluudhi, Nkolonkadhi and Mbandja. Oshivambo is a generic term which refers to the linguistic varieties of the people's language namely Oshindonga, Oshikwanyama, Oshikolonkadhi, Oshingandjera, Oshikwambi, Oshikwaluudhi, Oshimbandja and Oshimbalantu. The Ovawambo speak the Oshivambo language (in Oshikwanyama or Oshiwambo in Oshindonga dialect). These are all dialects of Oshivambo languages. There are syntactic and phonological differences between these varieties, but those differences do not cause any intercommunication problems. Although each of the eight tribes has its own dialect, only three have been developed as languages of instruction in formal education, that is, Oshindonga, Oshikwambi and Oshikwanyama (Nambala 1994:30; Malan 1995:14, 17; Mbenzi

violence against women and unequal distribution of family responsibilities. Furthermore, it deals with relational issues in masculinity. Connell suggest that not all men benefiting equally from the constitutions of patriarchy and that some forms of masculinity are culturally raised above others in certain places (Connell 1995:77).

[3] One can also use term, Vambo or Ovambo, in relation to a person in the singular, for example, an Ovambo or Vambo man or woman, while in the plural Ovawambo denotes men or women (Malan 1995:14, 17). Oshivambo or Oshiwambo refers to the language spoken by the Ovawambo and to any type of property, for example, an Oshivambo name or Oshivambo culture. It should be noted that Ovawambo is commonly used to refer to the people while Ovambo also refers to the land where these people live.

1999:10). After Namibia's political independence on 21st March 1990, Ovamboland was divided into four regions, that is, Oshana, Oshikoto, Omusati and Ohangwena.

1.4 Context of the Research Problem

The concept of family among the Aawambo is extended by nature. It consists of the father, the mother, grandparents, children and grandchildren, but some families may consist of only the mother (for example, a widow or single mother), grandmother and children. In some cases, a household may consist only of the grandmother and her grandchildren. Most families among the Aawambo are extended in nature. The Aawambo operate a matrilineal society. Their life force is not communicated via the lineage of the father but of the mother (Vedder 1966:74-75; Munyika 2004:144). The children do not belong to their father but to their mother and her clan. It is common, even today, for a woman to ask her brothers and sisters or her family members for economic support, such as school fees, for her children. This is because the Aawambo believe that children belong to the mother; therefore, it is not the duty of the father to care for children who do not belong to him.

The Ovawambo culture forbids a man to perform any kind of task which is regarded as feminine in nature like pounding mahangu, cooking, or living in the kitchen. Rather, such feminine tasks are performed by women who have no rest or free time to relax (Isaak 1995:104). Women are also forbidden by the Ovawambo culture to fight against men, to slaughter a cow, to collect salt from the salt pan, to hunt, and to carry traditional weapons like a bow and an assegai (Eirola 1992:39). The Ovawambo marriage and family life are structured according to the cultural gender norms which are influenced by a patriarchal ideology[4]. In Ovawambo culture, the man is the head and ruler of the family while the woman is expected to play a submissive role to the man (LaFont 2007:247). A man is perceived to have more value socially, economically, and politically than a woman. He is regarded as the family head, property owner, breadwinner, protector, and owner of the house. As the head of the household, the man has absolute power to control all household resources such as livestock and all income (Ambunda & De Klerk 2008:48). Ovawambo culture mandates its men to dominate women and have rights over all

[4] Ovawambo culture is constructed according to patriarchy, which means literally that fathers rule but at the same time they are matrilineal. There is no clear evidence or early source which can help us to define why Ovawambo people practice both partiachy and a matrilineal family system (Haufiku 2013:4). Although both patriarchy and matriarchy are part of Ovawambo culture, Becker (1995:79-87) argues that, patriarchy is influenced by Western culture that permeated the Ovawambo through missionaries and colonialism. Most of the Ovawambo men support the patriarchal ideology because it helps them keep their hierarchical position in the family. (Haufiku 2013:4). This means that matriarchy is regarded by some families as an age-old norm while partriarchy was strengthened in the missionary era based on biblical texts.

valuable family property. He makes most of the major decisions in the family, especially about the management of the family's resources and finance. He is mandated by culture to rule over his wife and children, and he has the final say in most of the family decisions.

Since the man is the head of the family and the breadwinner, the women and children are expected to submit to him and obey his instructions (Malan 1995:19; Ruppel 2010:18). A woman only contributes to decision making in matters that pertain to the children because the Ovawambo also operate a matriarchal system. However, when he disciplines his son, he must to do so cautiously, because if he causes any serious bodily harm while beating his child, or if he kills the child, he is forced to pay compensation to his wife's kinsmen (Miettinen 2005:55). Ovawambo men also have a cultural mandate to discipline their women and children who disrespect them or question their authority. Wife beating is regarded as a norm and a sign of love which implies that gender-based violence is a serious matter among the Ovawambo and it requires urgent attention (Isaak 1997104; LaFont 2007a:3). The government of the Republic of Namibia has tried to curb gender-based violence and all forms of discrimination in intimate relationships. Since Namibia's independence in 1990, and in response to entrenched patriarchy, various government policies[5] and legal frameworks on gender-based violence have been implemented which require both civil and criminal legislation. Consequently, fixed traditional gender structures which reinforced patriarchy, social, and cultural norms in Ovawambo gender relationships have also changed dramatically (more details about the Ovawambo social life and the implications of gender equality legislations are available in Chapters 2 and 3 below).

1.5 Motivation for Research

As noted in the previous paragraph, the Namibian government has made remarkable progress in efforts to curb gender-based violence by establishing legal documents and policies to counteract gender-based violence. These laws opened the door of great political, economic and social change. The gender laws also alter age-old norms and long-held beliefs about masculinity and aim to accommodate and protect women. However, the fundamental question is whether this democratic ideal will change deep-seated cultural prejudices and fixed gender roles (Louw 2008:385). How would the new roles (for example, equal partnership with women and changes in gender roles) play out against more traditional roles of men as breadwinner, head of family

[5] The various types of legislation include the Maintenance Act (1996), Married Persons Equality Act (1996), Combating Rape Act (2000), Combating of Domestic Violence Act (2003) and the Children Status Act (2007). These laws are explained in depth in Chapter Three of this study.

and protector? How do Ovawambo men benefit from this change? Although the gender equality laws have been introduced to discourage gender-based violence and to emancipate women from all cultural, social and political inequalities (Amathila 2012:256), it seems that they do not yet offer lasting solutions to gender conflict (Freeman & Kamwanyah 2015:15). Gender-based violence continues to be a major problem that affects women, men, and children in Namibia.

According to WHO, one-third (31%) of Namibian women in intimate relationships have experienced physical violence (World Health Organization 2005:243-246). Lafont and Hubbard (2007:108) reveal that Namibia has one of the highest rates of sexual violence in the world. Although no statistics of gender-based violence occurrence for the period before independence are available, the post-independence statistics reveal shocking figures of gender-based violence cases in intimate relationships, all of which have not been reported. Thus, the actual data for gender-based violence cases could be much higher than those officially registered (Legal Assistance Centre 2003:17 Gowaseb; 2010:106). In 2012, the Namibian police reported 1397 rape cases and attempted rape nation-wide. One is tempted to admit that this is a very high number because rape is the most underreported crime in Namibia. It is regarded as a family or private matter. The majority of the victims (945, that is, 68%) were adult women and 409 (29%) were females under 18 years old. Rape and abuse also experienced by pregnant women was 18% of the total number of women who experienced physical violence during their pregnancy (WHO 2005: XV; Legal Assistance Centre 2013:4; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung 2015:10-11).

Additionally, Situde (2016:1) notes that 50,000 crimes related to gender-based violence were reported from 2013 to 2015 and the Oshana region recorded the second highest number of cases. This figure is equal to the 45 gender-based violence related crimes that were committed daily in Namibia between 2013 and 2015. Situde further reveals that there were 22,174 (about 20 cases a day) assaults with the intention to cause grievous bodily harm, 18,054 common assaults (about 16 cases a day), 2,839 rapes (about three in a day), 1,138 attempted murders (about one per day) and 734 murders (about one every two days) – all related to gender-based violence. The recent survey on gender-based violence acts conducted by the Legal Assistance Centre (2017:201) affirms that one in seven women (14%) as well as one in 12 men (8%) experience gender-based violence in his or her family on a daily basis.

The survey also shows that about one-third (36%) of women in Namibia had experienced physical or/and sexual violence caused by an intimate partner. Of women aged 15-49 who had never been married, 33% had experienced physical, sexual and/or emotional violence from their partner at some time or the other and 28% experienced such violence in the previous 12 months. Furthermore, 33% of married women aged 15-49 also experienced physical, sexual and/or emotional violence from their spouse at some time and 28% had experienced such violence in the previous 12 months. Most of the participants in this research identified male unemployment, poverty and cultural patriarchal gender stereotypes as the main contributors to gender-based discrimination. In this regard, Freeman and Kamwanyah (2015:15) point out that many socio-cultural challenges still need to be tackled before gender equality can be achieved in Namibia.

Subsequently, this study poses the following questions: Why have the current gender equality laws and policies that were made to combat gender-based violence so far failed to bring lasting solution to the crisis in Ovawambo marital life? This research predicts that there is an inappropriate understanding of masculinity identity as well as an imbalance of power in gender relations that contribute to gender-based violence in Ovawambo intimate relationships.

The above questions prompted us to investigate the driving force behind gender-based violence in relation to the Ovawambo cultural idea of manhood and masculine identity, unemployment, changes in the Namibian constitution regarding gender roles, and power abuse among the Ovawambo. This study interacts with Ovawambo men in order to encourage them to examine their life experiences in the light of the tumultuous change that is evolving in intimate relationships especially in marriage and family life. The study also seeks to deconstruct the Ovawambo idea of masculinity by transforming and reframing its destructive traditional understanding of male roles as well as dominant forms of masculinity that are harmful to women and even to men themselves. Therefore, *theopaschitic* theory reframed by the theology of the cross and resurrection is adopted to determine whether Ovawambo men can be helped to shift from a mindset that is characterized by power abuse, domination, unhealthy competition, control and exploitation to that of compassion, love, caring, respect and service. This study also tries to relate the idea of biblical *koinonia* to the Ovawambo social communitarian principle of *uukwanankali*[6] to help transform intimate gender relationships from a traditional patriarchal

[6] *Uukwanankali* is an Oshivambo word that denotes compassion or sympathy and hospitality. It is *uukwnankali* that compels one to support fellow human beings in difficulty or to rejoicee with those who are rejoicing (ELCIN-CCSCR 1996:52).

and hierarchical model that is also affected by current gender biased laws into relationships that enjoy compassionate fellowship.

1.6 Research Problem, Questions and Objectives

This section outlines the problem, the question (as well as sub-questions), and the objectives of this research.

1.6.1 Research problem

In light of the information above, one may ask: What motivates Ovawambo men to abuse their power against women? Can the identity of Ovawambo men change from its hegemonic masculinity nature to become more strongly associated with responsibility and compassionate identity? Therefore, this study examines the root causes of gender-based violence in Ovawambo intimate relationships and family. It also seeks to transform the cultural understanding of Ovawambo masculinity and the imbalance of power in gender relations through a theology of the suffering God. Poling (1991:187) states that practical theology is the theological interpretation that focuses on the unheard voices in personal and community life with the purpose of continual transformation of faith in the true God of love and power toward renewed ministry practice. The challenge facing pastoral theology has to do with the effort to develop a model which not only takes salvation of the Gospel seriously but also tries to understand and interpret human existence within the socio-cultural context of marriage and family relationships (Louw 1998:1).

Thus, the research problem seeks to address the factors that cause Ovawambo men to abuse their power against women in post-independent Namibia.

1.6.2 The research questions

The central research question is: If indeed gender related violence in Namibia and specifically among the Ovawambo has increased greatly after the country's political independence, what factors motivate Ovawambo men to abuse their power against women?

In addition to this question, the following sub-questions are asked:

1. How are Ovawambo men culturally expected to prove their manhood and masculine identity in marriage and family relationships?

2. Within the democratization of gender equality and changing gender roles, what changes have the gender equality laws brought to Ovawambo marriage and family life?

3. How do Ovawambo men react to this change?

4. To what extent could *theopaschitic* theology, reframed by the theology of the cross and resurrection, bring about fundamental transformation in Ovawambo masculine identity in Ovawambo intimate relationships?

1.6.3 The research objectives

The objectives of this study build on the above research questions and are stated as follows:

1. To examine the Ovawambo traditional perception of masculinity in gender relations.

2. To examine the impact of socio-cultural, economic, and gender role changes in the current democratization process on Ovawambo family life and gender relations.

3. To examine how the Ovawambo men react to the current change in the gender roles and relationships.

4. To consider how *theopaschitic* theology could play a role in transforming the Ovawambo male identity from harmful masculine identity in order to strike a power balance in Ovawambo gender relationships.

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study is carried out among the Ovawambo where gender-based violence is rampant (Kandirikirira 2002: 114; 121-122; LeBeau & Spence (2004:50; Hubbard 2007b; Situde 2016:1; Legal Assistance Centre 2017:201). It considers Ovawambo masculine identity as a primary factor in the perpetration of gender-based violence in intimate gender relationships. The discussion is from the perspective of change in terms of a new legal system in Namibia, as it calls for a new economic order that is gender wise and more inclusive, taking into account the fact that the Namibian society is, to some extent, shifting towards abandoning traditional perceptions of male domination. This study presumes that the fear of losing power among men may be a major factor in the increase in gender-based violence acts in Namibia. Given that the present gender laws in Namibia are a social reality, there is a need to probe how men are living in intimate relationships after the implementation of the gender equality laws, because existing

literature is silent on this matter. This study therefore explores the impact of the gender equality laws on Ovawambo men's lives. It aims to contribute ideas that can help Namibian society through NGOs and the Government in their effort to curb gender-based violence and the imbalance of gender power in Namibia.

1.8 Definition of key words

1.8.1 Gender-based violence refers to violence that is directed at an individual because of his or her biological sex, gender identity or perceived adherence to socially defined norms of masculinity and femininity. Gender-based violence encompasses all forms of violence that occur based on the way men and women are expected to behave in a specific socio-cultural setting. It refers to all violent acts perpetrated against women, men, girls, and boys based on their sex (SIDA 2015:6; Kistner 2003:12). Gender-based violence also refers to various actions ranging from interpersonal violence within the home to the rape of men or women in marriage or prison. Gender-based violence is a form of violence whose meaning depends on the gendered identities of the men and women (Merry 2009:3). Thus, gender-based violence refers to all forms of violence which involve men and women, but which, in most cases, makes women its victims (IGWG of USAID 2008:4).

1.8.2 Masculinity refers to the roles and behavior that are traditionally assigned to men and sometimes to the characteristics of being male. Masculinity is an ideology that stresses the natural and inherently superior position of males, while serving to justify the oppression and subjugation of women. This ideology justifies men as being naturally more powerful, competent and successful than and fundamentally different from women. However, some masculinity researchers use masculinity in the plural form because there is no single way of being a man across religion and cultures and because of the variety of ways of becoming male (Hearn & Connell in Haywood & Mac an Ghaill 2003:10; Chitando 2013:665).

1.8.3 Patriarchy is a social-legal order that tolerates male domination over women, as well as over fellow males (Nkosi 2002:236). Patriarchy is a system in which males dominate females in most spheres of life including economic, sexual, and social life (Iipinge & LeBeau 1997 in LeBeau 2004:2). Basow (1992:108) defines patriarchy as a societal organization which is based on the supremacy of the father in the family and the reckoning of descent and inheritance along the male line. Patriarchy is a cultural or social relation of power between men and women and

between men and men. It is a system that maintains class, gender, racial, and heterosexual privilege as well as the status quo of power. Patriarchy relies both on crude forms of oppression such as violence and on subtle ones including laws to perpetuate inequality. Patriarchal belief in male and heterosexual dominance is one of the root causes of gender-based violence. Patriarchy is a structural force that influences power relations, whether they are abusive or not (Thompson & Hickey 1996:173; APIGBV 2015:1).

1.8.4 Transformation, as used in this context, is the process whereby theology is used to liberate people in order to live a fully human life through a radical change in their life that follows the pattern of Jesus. It is a life permeated by values such as personal responsibility, respect for others, a radical correction of the social ills, a commensurate decrease in crime rates, healing of the broken-hearted, and an exporting of kingdom righteousness (Dorr 1990 in Louw 1998:4; White in Leslie & Leslie 2010).[7] Transformation helps people to make fundamental and significant change in gender norms and practices that violate human rights and dignity in particular cultural and social understanding (Donald *et al* 2010:16, 368).

1.8.5 Theopaschitic theory is a theological theory or doctrine which calls for a more passionate approach to our understanding of God's presence within the reality of human suffering such as injustice, poverty, stigmatization, discrimination, stereotyping, illness, violence, the abuse of power, or natural catastrophes. God's passion on the cross of Christ becomes the proof that God identifies himself with human suffering and displays solidarity with human forsakenness (Louw 2011:46-47). The word compassion is derived from the Latin word meaning to bear or to suffer. It refers to sympathy or pity for the plight of another, being moved emotionally by the other's tragic situation or distress (Ezhanikatt *et al* 2005:206). It also means suffering with or journeying with those who suffer, leading to a desire to relieve that suffering (Kwa 2011:364).

1.9 Outline of Chapters

This thesis comprises eight chapters.

Chapter 1 serves as the background to the study and outlines its motivation, problem statement, goals, methodology, research design and limitations.

Chapter 2 presents the historical background of the Ovawambo people, their gender relationship structure and social life.

[7] See www.letusreason.org/Latrain32.htm.

Chapter 3 examines Ovawambo gender relationships in post-independence Namibia as well as the Namibian government's implementation of gender equality laws and their impact in on the relationship between men and women.

Chapter 4 establishes the theoretical framework upon which this research is built in order to address the research problem. The data discussion aims to produce a paradigm shift in current Ovawambo gender relationships.

Chapter 5 outlines the methodology that was followed during the collection of the data that was employed to address the research questions.

Chapter 6 comprises of the data presentation from three focus groups namely selected Ovawambo male perpetrators of gender-based violence at the Oluno Correctional Facility, married men from Oniipa Parish and Onguta Parish of the ELCIN, and one-on-one interviews with twenty ELCIN pastors from the eastern dioceses.

Chapter 7 discusses the research findings based on the *theopaschitic* model. It presents *theopaschitic* theology reframed by the theology of the cross as a theoretical framework for this study and its impact on the understanding of manhood and masculine identity, gender relationships and the social communitarian principle of *uukwanankali* among the Ovawambo.

Chapter 8 presents the conclusion and recommendations for future research.

1.10 Conclusion

This chapter serve as background to the study with respect to meaning of the term gender-based violence, a brief overview of the historical background, context of the study and the research problem. It also includes motivation for the study, the objectives and significance of the study. This chapter reveals that in Oshivambo culture a man is perceived having more value socially, economically and politically than women in the society. Men are honored as leaders and heads of the family. The woman does not have any control over household properties and income. However, shortly after Namibian independence in 1990, the Aawambo community experienced cultural diversity. The advent of Namibian independence in 1990 has created the opportunity for immense political, economic and social changes. The new Constitution and legal reform have reflected the gender equality and the expansion of personal liberty. Liberation brought change through restructuring gender roles and gender equality laws. This change caused Ovawambo men to perceive women's rights as detracting from their rights, thus they express the feeling of a loss of social status due to women's advantages in gender equality. Finally, the definitions of the key concepts and outline of the chapters were also outlined. So, after the discussion of the background and the foundation of this study, this study now moves to the

second chapter which deals with literature study. It focuses on the brief history of the Ovawambo people to consider how aspects of the Ovawambo social-cultural life contribute to gender-based violence.

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND, SOCIO-CULTURAL BELIEFS AND GENDER RELATIONS AMONG THE OVAWAMBO

2.1 Introduction

In Chapter One, we focused on the preliminary discussion which serves as the foundation for this research. That chapter contains the introduction to the study, motivation for the research, the research problem and objectives as well as the definitions of the key words and an outline of the chapters. To address the research question and the objective of this study, it is important to review previous studies of the factors that contribute to gender-based violence in human relations. It is also helpful to search literature for the possible solutions to the prevalence of gender-based violence through what is called literature study (Bless *et al* 2013:49). A literature study involves a review of current writings on the problem under investigation in order to put the research project in context by showing how it fits into a particular field of study (Kaniki 2006:19-21). A literature review further helps in identifying knowledge gaps and developing a research problem, theoretical framework, issues and variables related to the research topic, conceptual and operational definitions and methodology (Kaniki 2006:19-21). Conducting a literature study implies that the researcher must take note of accumulated knowledge drawn from books, dissertations and articles on a certain topic or issue.

Often, this background literature also provides the theories which can be built upon by the new study. Literature review helps us to come up with a tangible research topic from the works of previous researchers on numerous topics that relate to our study. Previous researchers also present answers which then allow the researcher to identify a gap in the existing knowledge and to outline and define the research. In other words, the literature review helps us to connect our research to current theoretical ideas and debates that make it easier to identify the scientific area to which we wish to contribute. A thorough literature review also helps us to be aware of different angles of study, as we may have a one-sided view of our research (Boeije 2012:21-23). Therefore, this chapter probes different views of previous scholars on possible factors that

lead to gender-based violence and identifies gaps in knowledge as well as limitations of previous studies including determining what has already been studied or what should be studied or improved. Specifically, the literature review in this study aims to probe the meaning, root causes of, and driving force behind gender-based violence in society, in this case, among the Ovawambo, based on findings from available published and unpublished sources. In the preliminary discussion in this chapter, we have shown that the focus is on the Ovawambo therefore we offer below a brief history of the Ovawambo people and consider how aspects of their social-cultural life contribute to gender-based violence. However, as we deal

2.2 Origins of the Ovawambo people

According to Loeb (1962:15), the Ovawambo are the oldest of the tribes that settled in Southern Africa. The people originated from the unknown lakeshores in Central Africa as the following Ovawambo folklore shows:

> *Halawili! Halawili! Halawili*[8]*!*
> *Omukwiyu' omomeya, halawili;*
> *Omwandi' omondombe, halawili!*
> *Halawili! Halawili! Halawili!*
>
> [*Halawili! Halawili! Halawili!*
> The fig tree lives in water; *halawili*
> The Omwandi tree in water pool, *halawili*
> *Halawili! Halawili! Halawili!]* (Lehtonen 1965:10).

The poem shows that the Ovawambo originated from a place full of water. The people believe that they originated from a place close to rivers and lakes (Hahn 1966:1; Lehtonen 1965:10).

The Ovawambo social life is closely related to that of the matrilineal agriculturalists of Central Africa. It is believed that the Ovawambo people moved from eastern Africa to their present location in northern Namibia and southern Angola. However, existing literature does not clearly indicate how the Ovawambo arrived in Namibia. Some scholars believe that they came from the northeast over the Zambezi and Kavango Rivers westwards (Hahn 1966:1), while other historians claim that they arrived in the area as one group (Malan 1995:15 cited in Buys & Nambala 2003: xxxiii). Ovawambo myths and traditional songs reveal that the people descended from an ancestor called Mangundu. The Ovawambo believe that *Kalunga* (God) first created Mangundu and his wife whose name is unknown. Their firstborn was Nangombe the father of all Ovawambo (Lehtonen 1965:10; Munyika 2004:140). Nangombe was born in

[8] The word *'halawili'* is not an Oshivambo word, thus, its meaning is unknown.

Ethiopia from where the Ovawambo migrated to their present location. However, there are other narratives about the origin of the Ovawambo people. The historian Munyika (2004:141) integrates these stories and concludes that the Ovawambo belong to the Bantu group which moved from Nigeria through Cameroon and Gabon and divided into two groups, the Eastern and Southern Bantus. It was from the Southern Bantu that the Ovawambo originated. They moved through the Democratic Republic of Congo to Angola and Zambia and later crossed the Zambezi and Kavango rivers to their present location, that is, Ovamboland.

Ovamboland is located on a sandy floodplain about 1200m above the sea level from the north. The area covers 56,000 sq. km and is located between Latitudes 17.30 and 18.30 S and Longitudes 14.00 E and 17.30 E (Tuupainen 1970:12; Aarni 1982:22). Ovamboland extends from Etosha Pan in the south to approximately 16ºS in the north and from Kaokoland and the Kunene River in the west to approximately 18ºE in the east, covering areas in the present-day Northern Namibia and Southern Angola. This means that Ovamboland is situated on both sides of Namibia and Angola—between the northern border of Angola and the Etosha National Park. Namibia and Angola share a common border, but it was an artificial demarcation made by Western colonizers (Wellington 1967:141-142; Tuupainen 1970:12; Tötemeyer 1978:1; Aarni 1982:22; Buys & Nambala 2003: xxxiii; Miettinen 2005:35). The colonial boundary caused the Ovawambo people to be divided into two groups—one-third of their population live in Namibia,[9] while the remaining two-thirds, the Ovakwanyama people, live in Angola (Nambala 1994:28).

2.3 Ovawambo Worldview and the Concept of Cosmos

According to Hiltunen (1993:34), to understand the Ovawambo people, one first has to understand their view of the world. It should be noted that most of the Ovawambo traditional history was lost (Munyika 2004:157) because it was orally transmitted from one generation to another (Aarni 1982:9). Scholars agree that before the missionaries arrived in their land in 1870, the Ovawambo believed in one Supreme Being called *Kalunga* (Dymond 1950:140ff; Hahn 1966:2ff; Tötemeyer 1978:2ff; Aarni 1982:92ff; Nambala & Buys 2003:1-4). *Kalunga* was their first ancestor and as the Supreme Being and Creator, its name *Kalunga* was seldom

[9] The Ovawambo presence in both Namibia and Angola resulted from the border agreement made between the German and Portuguese governments on 30 December 1886. Namibia was a colony of Germany while Angola was colonized by the Portuguese. These two governments made an agreement that the international border of northern Namibia must split the Ovawambo people (especially the Ovakwanyama tribe) into two parts (Buys & Nambala 2003: xxxiii; Tötemeyer 1978:1).

uttered. *Kalunga* or *Mpamba* is a self-made deity "*Mpamba iishita ye mwene*," who has all power, lives everywhere and is omniscient (Hiltunen 1993:34; Buys & Nambala 2003:3-4). According to Ovawambo myth, no gender is attributed to *Kalunga*. However, sometimes *Kalunga* is regarded as mother because of the Ovawambo's matrilineal worldview or as male due to *Kalunga's* power and attributes which fit well with male and patriarchal traits (Dymond 1950:136-137). Furthermore, the Ovawambo sometimes regard *Kalunga* as an aristocrat who visits different places on earth (Vedder 1938:76). Since *Kalunga* is supreme, s/he lives in the air with ancestral spirits but sometimes comes down to the earth. *Kalunga* is not personified but is omnipresent, omniscient and the source of both good and evil, luck and misfortune. Although both good and evil originate from *Kalunga*, his/her favor cannot be obtained by means of offerings. *Kalunga* is above and sees everything but is unseen (Tötemeyer 1978:8). *Kalunga* expects every person to behave according to the tribal norms and values. Anyone found guilty of misconduct deserves punishment or a curse from *Kalunga* (Dymond 1950:149) who always carries two baskets in his/her hands—one for blessings and one for curses. Through the ancestors, *Kalunga* issues either blessings or curses according to what people deserve (Vedder 1938:76)—to those who do good, blessings and to the wicked, curses. One reason why *Kalunga* has misfortune in his or her basket is because *Kalunga's* power seems to verge on fatalism, at times. The Ovawambo strongly believe that *Kalunga* lives in heaven where everything good exists. Thus, in every crisis they like to say: *"Egulu andola okwali li na oongudhi ando omapongo otatu longo tuye kuKalunga,"* meaning, "Heaven does not have ladders, otherwise we orphans can climb to God." The Ovawambo use this adage because they believe that in heaven, there is no anguish or difficulty (Aarni 1982:119).

Kalunga is sacred and the owner of everything. S/he is the helper of everyone and giver of rain to the people and the entire creation. The Ovawambo see *Kalunga* as the senior spirit who controls all ancestors. When people experience hard times, they believe that *Kalunga* knows about it, or that it is *Kalunga's* will, and they express trust and confidence in *Kalunga* in such helpless situations. The Ovawambo believe that *Kalunga* is the giver of all life's blessings. *Kalunga* is always close to the people to help them because of his or her compassion (*olukeno*). When the Ovawambo realize that they are powerless to face a particular challenge, they say "*Okalunga ashike ta talwa*," which means, "We shall only depend on God who can help us in this crisis." This indicates that the Ovawambo believe that through the power of magic *Kalunga* is their helper in the time of danger and a last resort in life's valley of difficulties. Magic is a part of the religious system which covers all Ovawambo everyday activities. According to

Hiltunen (1993), the Ovawambo believe in the power of magic as a living and vital force from God that ensures peace and blessing in everyday life. Hence, Ovawambo magic rites have productive, protective, preventative, healing, purifying and conciliating elements and they are believed to contain offers and prayers that help to keep the blessing in a lineage and to sustain life (Hiltunen 1993:35, 223).

The Aawambo believed in a three-storied world. *Kalunga* (God) and the dead nobles live in the first or upper level above the earth called *egulu* (heaven) (Amaambo 2008:11). No ordinary person hopes to get there. The second world is inhabited by the living whose relationships are, by definition, vertical. It is called *ombandayevi* (the earth) or *uuyuni* (the world). To some extent, this world depends on the first for its survival. For example, it receives its means of survival such as rain and sun from the first world. It was believed that *Kalunga* allows just enough drops of rain to get through to humans to allow them to produce just enough for subsistence and to have sufficient grazing for their stock. Dead ancestors assure fertility, good harvest and health (Vedder in Munyika 2004:144; cf. Hiltunen 1993:34, 75).

Kalunga has all the power to control the world and to bring good or bad to humans on the earth. *Kalunga* always visited people through dreams and calamities to reveal to them what is expected of them. *Kalunga* also listens to and answers people's prayers through *aathithi*[10]. One of the main duties of *aathithi* is to coordinate and transmit the prayers of the people to God. *Aathithi* work as mediators between *Kalunga* and the people to give them everything they want. As agriculturalists, the Ovawambo need rain. Therefore, they depend on *aathithi* because people only get rain when *aathithi* approaches God on their behalf (Aarni 1982:119-122; Hiltunene 1986: 56, 61). We can see clearly here that Ovawambo religious faith plays a major role in unifying *Kalunga* with the people. All Ovawambo festivals such as rainmaking, opening of a salt pan, farming magic, protective magic, preventive magic, purifying and conciliating magic all aim to unify people with God. Through these festivals, the Ovawambo also strengthen their spirit of *uukwanankali* (Hiltunene 1986:37; Munyika 2004:187). The role of the King as a leader is to guide the people and foster strong unity and *uukwanankali* among them.

The Ovawambo also have rites that directly or indirectly serve to keep the relationship between the living and the dead. These religious rites, such as magic, witchcraft and taboos, have two

[10] In my Christian translation aathithi can be called angels because of their role to communicate between God and His people. Jesus could be called a great Muthithi because of his mediatory role between God and human beings.

functions. The first is to preserve the chain of a lineage between the living and the ancestors (*aathithi*). The second is to regulate everyday life and secure the earthly life. Thus, the Ovawambo believe that death is not the final life stage, but the bridge to the company of *aathithi*, which is believed to have the duty of securing the earthly community because it lasts forever. This means that the chain of the lineage remains unbroken because life continues from past generations to the present and into the future. Therefore, religious rituals, including magic, witchcraft and taboos, are performed to secure the conditions of everyday life, to prevent evil, and to strengthen comradeship. Unity, sharing, attachment, and the wellbeing of all are important elements because they preserve continuous guidance and protection (Hiltunen 1993:34; Munyika 2004:208-209).

2.4 Ovawambo Social Welfare

The Ovawambo people, as a Bantu group, are governed by African communitarian principles. Watadza (2016:4-5) defines African communitarianism as a school of thought in which people learn of their identity and role in their given communal area. African communitarianism has links with the ubuntu concept, "I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am" (Mbiti 1975:175; Mahokoto 2014: 81-82). In African communities, each person lives as a part of a family. Thus, kinship plays an important part in human relationships (Mbiti 1975:175). Kinship controls social relationships between the members of a given community. Kinship is seen as a vast network that includes everyone and determines the behavior of an individual towards another. This means that everyone is related to everyone else. A person can only become conscious of his or her own being, privileges, and responsibilities through other people. When one person suffers, he or she does not suffer alone but with members of the entire community. When he or she rejoices, it is together with other members of the community. Whatever injury one person in the community suffers, all members experience the same.[11]

The Ovawambo people are governed by communitarianism principles. Kinship and family ties are important to every member of a family, village and community. As noted earlier, the Ovawambo, like other African Bantu groups, are communitarian, which means they live as one community—*uukumwe* or *ekumwe*. This community is guided first and foremost by the values of partnership, fellowship, solidarity, compassion and hospitality (*uukwanankali*). *Uukwanankali* is the Ovawambo hospitality ethic of community and family life which inspires members to share with and support one another. Due to the moral belief in *uukwanankali*, every

[11]Mbiti (1969:102) also supports this idea as if he were writing about Ovawambo social life.

member is expected to treat his or her fellow human the way he or she wishes to be treated. Thus, *uukumwe* will only work properly if *uukwanankali* is present. Every member is expected to serve fellow community members, wish them well, and help them earn a good living. Practicing the principle of *uukwanankali* in social and family interactions means that every family member is expected to be compassionate towards fellow human beings and to live in unity with others. The Ovawambo act as a single community in partnership and are moved by pity and kindness to practice hospitality towards one another. However, one may ask: Why is there gender-based violence among Ovawambo which violates these noble principles? Furthermore, what happens to those who violate these established principles? There is no clear information on these questions. It seems that the *uukwanankali* principle was made for social welfare but not for the relationship between husband, wife, and children due to the patriarchal construction which mandates that men exercise control over resources and decision-making, leaving women with no power to negotiate (Ambunda & De Klerk 2008:49). Still, Ovawambo men are warned by their cultural norms to be careful when they discipline their wife and children, to not cause serious bodily harm by breaking bones or killing them, because they are then required pay a fine to the wife's clan if serious bodily harm occurs (Amaambo 2008:28).

In the spirit of *uukwanankali,* children belong not only to their biological parents or to their clan but also to the entire community. Thus, it is the duty of the entire community to raise children according to the desirable and agreeable norms and standards[12]. When one family experiences the loss of a member, the entire community mourns together and supports one another. If a woman loses her husband, the man's family would take care of her. In some cases, a widow could be inherited by her late husband's brother or one of the close relatives. Children were passed to other family members when one of or both parents die. During wedding ceremonies, the whole community celebrates together and shares all basic items needed for the wedding celebration. If one family loses its house to fire, all community members come together and bring new materials to replace those that were destroyed by the fire (Munyika 2004:187-188; cf. Aarni 1982:25).

However, the *uukwanankali* concept is not clearly practiced in marital relationships. Being a matrilineal society, the Ovawambo practice *uukwanankali* in communal life, in most cases, when men support their sisters' children. The unity of the matrilineal system is seen when a

[12] The community can also support the needy child with limited help. But it is the duty of his or her mother's clan to offer full support to every child in need.

man is ill or injured and lacks money or goods, or if he is sued and needs to pay heavy fines. He would then have a right to call for help from members of his own matrilineal family. Although this practice has some negative aspects because it causes some children to suffer when their fathers choose to help their sister's children rather than their own, it promotes unity within the matrilineal family. A man or woman may fail to receive help from his or her spouse, but the person's matrilineal relatives will never neglect hospitality towards their relative. Through this extended family partnership, no one is left out in terms of support (Tuupainen 1970:31).

2.5 Ovawambo Cultural Gender Identities and Status in Family and Social Life

According to Moore (1994: 53-56), human beings acquire gender identity through practical engagement with the lives lived by their progenitors, through processes of compliance, acceptance as well as through resistance and change. Various gender identities based on sexism[13] guide the roles that men and women play as well as their self-image and self-worth. Ovawambo people also are guided by different identities that inform their gender attitudes and discourses (Backer 2010:173).

2.5.1 Masculine Identity and Status

Among the Ovawambo, cultural and social value is attached to the man as the owner of the family property and the head of the family. As head of the household and property owner, he has the rights and power to make decisions about disposal and acquisition of property (Becker 2007:25). In Ovawambo culture, the male is always expected to be the protector of the family and his symbols of power include an axe, a bow and arrows, assegai, and knife. Thus, boys are raised differently from girls (Kanana 2000:111). A man is regarded as the axe of his father because an axe is an indispensable tool for a man in Ovawambo culture. He is also regarded as *esipa lyuulumbu* (a bone of hunger) which indicates that he can provide food for his family during seasons of drought. Additionally, he is seen as powerful and dangerous like a bear. Among some Ovawambo sub-groups such as the Ovakwanyama, a newborn baby boy is dressed in *nkandanga* skin. *Nkandanga* is the Oshiwambo name for a skunk which is believed to be a brave and invincible animal. To dress a boy in *nkandanga* skin symbolizes masculine power and the boy-child is expected to be brave and to fight to win (Iipinge *et al* 2000:13). The

[13] Sexism refers to the ideology that one sex, group of people or certain tribe are inherently inferior to the other (Thompson & Hickey 1996:168). It includes the attitudes and conditions or behaviours that encourage and promote stereotyping of social roles based on gender (Sheerattan-Bisnauth & Peacock (eds.). 2010:207).

woman's place is to obey the man's instructions and not to question or oppose his decisions. In certain instances, a woman may become head of the household, but this is very rare (LeBeau *et al*, 2004:191).

In the Ovawambo cultural setting, men are honored as leaders and heads of the family but women's rights and dignity are not recognized. Male power is conferred on a man who has his own livestock, house, wife/wives and who performs the social role of fatherhood. Such power is enhanced by a man's ability to get married and set up his own household. An Ovawambo man is expected to perform three main roles, namely, providing meat through hunting, protecting the village and the family, as well as initiating and educating boys. A man is perceived to have more value socially, economically, biblically, and politically than women.[14] Socially, a man is considered to have all the necessary rights to rule, to dominate, to punish and to give and refuse permission to his household because he is the head of the house. Economically, he is the family provider and source of the cultural economy, which depends primarily on cattle, salt, iron ore, and ostrich eggshells. Politically, he may be a soldier, policeman, traditional king, district headman, village headman and judge. To fulfill these roles, the man is expected to have more cattle, goats, sheep, or large fields of millet and of sorghum, maize, beans, pumpkin, watermelon and groundnuts. Such expectations force many Ovawambo men to stick to agriculture and farming.

Before colonialism[15], the economy of the Ovawambo depended primarily on cattle (*oongobe*) and millet (*iilya*). However, a man's wealth was not only measured by these since he also had additional property such as garden implements (hoes and axes), weapons (daggers, bows and arrows, and spears) and traditional ornaments (beads as necklaces and for the waist). The situation is not very different today. A man would only be regarded as a rich *oshipuna* if he has cattle or large fields of millet and corn; then, he will be called *ongundja*. In addition to *omahangu* (millet), the Ovawambo also cultivate *iilyalyaaka or omushokolo* (sorghum), *omakunde* (beans), *omanyangwa* (pumpkin) and *omakanuwa* (watermelon). However, the main food is *mahangu* which is crushed and cooked into stiff porridge. The Aawambo also feed on fruits such as *oombe* (berries), *oongongo* (marula), *oonyandi* (jackal berries) and *oondunga* (palm fruit). Farming greatly depends on the rainy season which lasts for about four to five

[14] More detail is provided at the end of this chapter under the heading Colonial regarding when this shift happened, since the Ovawambo were originally a matrilineal people.
[15] Namibia was first proclaimed as a German colony in 1884. Germany lost Namibia as her colony in 1919 after she was forced by the Treaty of Versailles to relinquish all her colonies. Then Namibia become a colony of the Union of South Africa in 1921 (Eirola 1992:66).

months from December to April (Mendelsohn *et al* 2002:15; cf. Davies 1987 in Kautondokwa 2014:1). With so many resources, a man could easily feed his family members and relatives. It is also a man's duty to tend the family livestock and ensure that they find suitable grazing area (Malan 1995:26; Kanana 2000:6, 24, 34). A man was considered unfit to marry if he did not own his own livestock, which in most cases he got from his father in exchange for working for him (Miettinen 2005:54).

2.5.2 Female Gender Identity and Status

The Ovawambo are both a matrilineal and a patriarchal society, but there is no clear evidence or an early source that explains how this came about. From the beginning, the Ovawambo lived under centralized traditional authorities ruled by both kings and queens. Only those who belonged to the royal matrilineal clan had the right to participate in chieftaincy matters (Hahn *et al* 1966:8), and the king's mother and clan played an important role in the king's leadership. The leadership power was shared among the members of the royal matrilineal family. In some cases, kings were quite autocratic and had the last word in all leadership matters (Soiri 1996:24). No one could influence the king to change his decision except his mother and the royal family. If his mother and royal clan disapproved of any of his decisions, he had to change it. Although the patriarchal system used this leadership style, the matrilineal practice elevated women's status among the Ovawambo. It gave women a greater degree of autonomy and formal authority in local politics, ritual and the control of income and family relations (Wallace & Kinahan 2011:81).

However, patriarchy has an advantage when the father's help is needed, for example, to support the children. The matrilineal system prevented Ovawambo men from having full control over their wives and children. Any harm a man caused his wife or child led to clan conflict. The man's clan had to pay compensation to his wife's clan. Divorce was also easy to obtain if the man failed to fulfill his family duties, for example, being unable to feed his children or make any substantial material transfer at marriage (Becker 2007:25). Soiri (1996:24) also notes that Ovawambo women are regarded as mothers and chief advisors to their husbands. A king without a queen was not permitted to rule in any Ovawambo tribe because both *omupombolume*, a divorced man, and *ehumpuki*, a bachelor, are regarded as weak and ignorant. Therefore, the king or any man could only be seen fit for a leadership position if he was married, because a woman was regarded as a good adviser for the man. Although women were excluded from any military action and in *ekumbu* (cattle raid), they were required to take care of the soldiers and

war victims. Most female Ovawambo rulers still play a major role in taking care of their homes, especially when their husbands work far away in the urban areas. They also take full responsibility for the elderly and disabled people.

The question, therefore, is what weakened the matriarchal system among Ovawambo?[16] The redefinition of traditional gender by colonialists which reinforced male dominance was well accepted by Ovawambo men. Today, different metaphors that show women's position in both community and family life continue to be used. Women are symbolized with a clay pot which represents fragility and shows that they need men's help and support. The symbol of a spoon is also used to characterize women. Just as a spoon serves many purposes, so also is the woman expected to do many household chores. She is also regarded as a child that never grows up but needs the guidance and control of a man who would help and discipline her due to her immaturity. Without a man she could not lead a complete and independent life (Iipinge *et al* 2000:14). Thus, Ovawambo women are always under the care of their fathers and husbands (Iipinge & LeBeau 1997:52).

If a woman's husband dies, then, her eldest son must assume the leadership in the family (Iipinge *et al* 2000:14). Before Namibian political independence, widows also suffered and their rights were taken away after the death of their husbands, especially in the communal areas. If a man died, his widow had no right to remain on the land even if she wished to (Hubbard 2007b:109; 2007b:211). In most cases, when a woman acts as the head of the household, then the man would be regarded as a coward who has been bewitched by his wife (LeBeau *et al* 2004:191). For a man and woman to play the desired gender role in marriage and family life, they have to go through cultural rites of passage, dating and courtship.

2.6 Rites of Passage and Sexuality among the Ovawambo

In Ovawambo culture, marriage is regarded as an arrangement between the kinship groups of both men and women. Marriage arrangement starts with initiation rites, engagement, dating/courtship and wedding (Talavera 2007:47).

2.6.1 Initiation rites

Initiation rites were performed for both boys and girls in their adolescence among the Aawambo, as described below. McKittrick (1999:39) notes that the main aim of initiation rites

[16] For a detailed discussion, see 2.8.1 – Colonialism, at the end of this chapter.

is to prepare the youth for adulthood and for responsible parenthood. At the same time, initiation rites served as a place of formalizing unequal power relations between men and women. The initiation rites for both boys and girls were part of the most important family and tribal ceremonies in Ovamboland. Through the rites, sex became socialized and purified.

2.6.1.1 Boys' circumcision

For boys, the cutting of the foreskin symbolized cleaning and purification. The boys would discard all their old clothes which were burnt to indicate that they have crossed the border from childhood to adulthood. Discarding their old clothes meant that they were no longer children; they had become adults and were expected to behave maturely. The young men were rubbed with white clay mixed with ash. In the same night, they ate the meat of a ritually slaughtered animal and peanuts, which symbolized fertility, and they drank beer. Any boy who was not circumcised was considered to have a defect and was stigmatized, as it was believed that he would never in any way find fulfillment in life. He would not be blessed with children, cattle, or physical well-being, and for the stigma to be removed, he had to undergo circumcision. On the other hand, those who were circumcised enjoyed the same privileges as adult men. They were no longer boys but men. Circumcised men enjoyed great favor and were considered superior to the uncircumcised because they were entitled to participate fully in tribal life. They also received appreciation and honor from women. Through the process of circumcision, the initiates were taught about a man's responsibilities to his family and to the society. They were taught how to control their wives and ensure order in their homes. They were also reminded of some of the marriage taboos, which they needed to sustain to bring peace and fortune to the community and to enjoy the same in their own lives (Tuupainen 1970:52). Today, however, circumcision is no longer regarded so seriously.

2.6.1.2 Efundula /ohango yiitsali - Girls' initiation rite

As in the initiation rite for boys, sex also became socialized through the girls' initiation rite. Girls were taught a symbolic and secret language, which could be used to communicate with their future husbands. During the process of initiation, pregnancy tests were conducted for the girls. Only girls who successfully completed the ceremony could become engaged and give birth to children in a socially approved way. Their children had legitimate status in the society regardless of whether they were born in or out of wedlock. To prevent girls from becoming pregnant outside marriage, marriages were arranged for them while they were still young, usually soon after their first menstrual period. Being pregnant before undergoing initiation

brought shame to the girl, her family, and the entire community because it caused misfortune (Miettinen 2005:50). Girls who became pregnant before going through the initiation ceremony or *efundula*, had to leave their clans and tribes secretly; otherwise, they would be killed. They would escape and stay in a safe place until they delivered their babies. However, such babies, particularly males, were illegitimate and were treated with disrespect; it is not clear why only male children were treated in such a manner (Munyika 2004:220).

After the initiation, their mothers would start to teach them how to respect their future husbands and make themselves ready for sexual intercourse. The main aim was to secure a husband in order to increase the mother's clan. According to Ovawambo oral tradition and myths,[17] children do not belong to their father but to their mother and her clan (Tuupainen 1970:53). It is common, even today, for a woman to ask her brothers and sisters or her family members to help support her children because the father understands that it is not his duty to support his children who supposedly do not "belong" to him. Some Ovawambo men maintain this practice of supporting their sister's children but not their own children (Aarni 1982:26; Isaak 1995:104).

2.6.2 Courtship and dating

Traditionally, the Ovawambo marriage was arranged while girls were young. Children did not discuss sexual matters with their parents or elders. They could play sexual games of hide-and-seek but this usually took place in secret in order to avoid punishment from their parents. Boys and girls, including siblings, were not allowed to sleep or play together as the Aawambo regarded premarital sex as dangerous. Youths who indulged in premarital sex had low status in society when they attained adulthood. It was believed that such youths would be poor and most probably weak, if they were fortunate enough to attain old age. It was strictly forbidden for a girl to become pregnant before marriage (Talavera 2007:47). It was the young man's parents who sought a future wife for him, but the young man could also choose his future wife by himself. Although contact between boys and girls was permitted, they were strictly forbidden to have sexual intercourse before marriage. Dating was not allowed before marriage. In the case of pregnancy and breaking off of an engagement, the young man had to pay a fine of six cattle and the girl had to return all of a man's gifts (*iigonda)* (Tuupainen 1970:54; Munyika

[17] The Oshivambo adage, "*Mondha ka mu zi ezimo*," that is, "The family does not come from the penis," also confirms this idea (Kuusi, cited in Aarni 1982:26). Children belonged to their mother, not to their father. Therefore, there was no relation between a father and his child because he was only the biological father and the genitor. His closest relatives were his sisters; therefore, he would support their children, but not his own (Aarni 1982:26). For this reason, a man would not do any harm to his sisters' children. In some rare cases, even though, a father, for example, raped his own biological daughter, he would not rape a niece.

2004:220). If a girl did become pregnant before marriage, she was at the risk of being burned alive. Sometimes boys who impregnated the girls were also burned (McKittrick 2002:40) but, in many cases, boys were not burned but chased away from the community. In other cases, the girls merely received a beating while the boys were ordered to pay one head of cattle to the girl's family (Talavera 2007:47). If they chose to run away from their community, both the boy and the girl must escape to and stay in a safe place until their baby was delivered (Munyika 2004:220). However, such babies, particularly males, were considered illegitimate and were treated with disrespect; it is not clear why only male children were treated in such a manner (Munyika 2004:220). However, this is no longer a practice among the Ovawambo. It was abolished with the arrival of Christianity and of colonialists in Ovamboland (McKittrick 2002:40, 44).

2.6.3 *Iigonda –Lobola*

Tuupainen (1970:54) reports that the girls' initiation ceremony was important because it preceded the marriage ritual. As there were no strict rules about the initiation age for girls, there were no regulations about the interval between the rite and the engagement. In some cases, a girl was already engaged before participating in the initiation ceremony. In this case, the marriage feast took place soon after the rite. However, if a girl was not yet engaged, she had to wait until she was, and, in some cases, this took more than a year. In the olden days, there was a rule within families, which prohibited the younger brother from getting engaged or married before the older. The same rule applied to sisters. The Aawambo believed that if a young girl got married before her older sister, she would cause childlessness in the older and minimize her chances of getting married. For that reason, parents always did their best to ensure their children married according to age. By choosing the husband, parents played an important role in the life of their daughter. They had the final say about who would be their son or daughter-in-law. The best candidate came from a known family and clan and s/he had to be a disciplined and caring person. Aawambo girls or boys were not allowed to marry individuals from other tribes. Marriage partners came from the Aawambo clan only and children could not reject their parents' choice of a marriage partner even if the candidate did not please them. All these rules were to prevent future crises in the marriage and family.

The engagement gifts comprised the *oshimona* – the traditional necklace made from stones and an ox cord to protect the girl from evil spirits, because it was believed that cattle helped to maintain the relationship between the living and the departed generations of ancestors. There

was also a belt smeared with red ointment as a sexual symbol (Tuupainen 1970:54), which could also be used to make a wish, as it guaranteed good luck for the prospective wife. Additionally, there was a piece of cloth made from animal skin, which symbolized that the boy would take responsibility for the wife's wardrobe when they got married. In Ovawambo custom, it was the husband's duty to provide clothes for his wife. The bridegroom had to pay for his bride's clothes even before marriage. *Iigonda*, in the form of cattle and other goods like clothes, would be given in exchange for the girl. This custom was often seen as purchasing a wife (Talavera 2007:47). However, it establishes a social relationship between the groups and gives the man and his clan certain rights over the woman including sexual access. Due to the payment of *lobola*, women were, and are, still considered the husband's property among the Ovawambo (LeBeau *et al* 2004:191; cf. Lau in Becker 1993:65). All these gifts were given in the presence of the girl's parents and clan/family members.

2.6.4 Marriage planning and preparation

Traditionally, Ovawambo girls married at a young age shortly after their first menstrual period. In most matrilineal societies, a man is required to go and live with or near the wife's family whose members can then keep an eye on his behavior. At a later stage, he may decide to get married and move away. However, the Ovawambo have a different practice. In Ovawambo traditional marriage arrangement, parents would only allow their daughter to marry a young man who is well known to them. The same also applies to the boy's parents. To get married, an Aawambo man needed further consent from the girl's parents. He would then send a notice to the girl's home that he was sending an ox. It meant that the marriage feast should be prepared because he wanted to get married to their daughter. When the prospective bridegroom got a positive answer from the girl's home, he would then send an ox to the bride's parents. The ox was supposed to be big enough (as valuable as the bride) and if it was not of great value, it was returned to the sender. To slaughter the ox, the butcher struck the ox in the heart with a spear and, immediately, the bride's maternal uncle would pour traditional beer on the ox's wound. The bride was then required to drink the beer, which was mixed with the ox's blood. This ritual shows that the woman is now joined to her husband's clan and to her husband's blood. It also symbolizes the combination of man's sperm cells and woman's egg cells in reproduction. Thus, the ritual was meant to ensure fertility in the marriage. The bride's breasts were also smeared with blood, a symbol of sufficient milk for her babies (Poytakirjoja in Tuupainen 1971:27).

However, Christians no longer observe this custom. The purpose of offering the ox was to symbolize that the bride was being taken away from her own kin and brought into a new family. It meant that both the family of the bride and of the groom consented to the marriage and would start to share their clan duties together. It was also a way of expressing gratitude to the bride's parents especially to the mother because she lost blood during the birth of the bride and because they both brought her up. Only after delivering the ox could the handing over of the bride take place and the sexual rights of the bridegroom established. Therefore, giving an ox to the bride's parents signified the ratification of the marriage. The wedding gift played an important role in promoting friendship between the concerned families and their clans. If the custom were to be abolished, the result would be a sharp rise in conflict and disaster in families and marriages. Parents are expected to obey cultural and social norms by offering services to their son or daughter-in-law's family members, neighbors and clans. Through this solidarity which is always motivated by the spirit of *uukwanankali* (compassion and fellowship) the unity among the Ovawambo clans and communities continues to wax stronger and stronger (Tuupainen 1970:27, 50-51, 77).

2.7 Patriarchy and Gender Power Relations in Ovawambo Marriage and Family Life

Although Ovawambo family life is structured around a matrilineal form of kinship, it is also strongly influenced by patriarchy. The matriarchal kin come into the picture only when their relative is seriously abused or killed, but in everyday live patriarchy influences both the relationships between a man and his wife and between a father and his children. Husbands have full authority over their wives in marriage (Miettinen 2005:55). The Ovawambo culture forbids men from performing any task that is considered feminine such as babysitting, cooking, helping in the kitchen, or associating with women all the time. At the same time, women are compelled to perform the so-called "feminine duties" all time (Isaak 1997:104).

The typical Ovawambo men's patriarchal behavior is expressed clearly in polygamous marriage[18] which is a commonly accepted practice among the people. A man could marry as many women as his status in the society dictated. Each wife had her own place in the household where her duties and status are determined by her rank. The practice of polygamy was not uniformly structured; it differed from family to family. In general, however, a man initially

[18] Polygamy is a system in which a man marries more than one wife; it is different from monogamy in which a man is married to only one woman at a time (Thompson & Hickey 1996:168).

started with one wife and then, at some stage, desired a second wife. He would have to go through his first wife who, as the senior, was expected to lead the process of choosing a second wife. All the wives that came after her submitted to her instructions and decisions. Each wife also had a small field where she planted *mahangu* (pearl millet, which the Aawambo use for their stiff porridge) and sorghum. However, polygamy helped economic production in a predominantly agricultural society. The custom encouraged the desire to have more wives and children who would help to produce more food (Tuupainen 1973:69; Kautondokwa 2014:1). The husband as head of the household had his own large field where all his wives and older children worked collectively. He had the right to assign duties to different members of the household and to supervise labor performance. It was the task of women and children to produce crops such as maize or *mahangu* (Wallace 2011:82; Kautondokwa 2014:1). However, none of the produce from the field belonged to them but to the children of the man's sisters. The man would only share the harvest with his wives and children if they had no food and there was no one to help them[19].

Besides cultivating the field, women were (and some are still) expected to fetch water and firewood, prepare food, process grain, feed the family, raise and care for the children, and do all the domestic chores (especially in the rural area). The women also engaged in artwork and crafts such as dressmaking, pottery, weaving and selling baskets, and woodcarving. As one would expect, a married woman is not under the control of her family but of her husband. She cannot take any action without consulting her husband, but the man can make decisions without his wife's consent.

Married women are not to deny their husbands of sexual intercourse. Refusal of sex was a justification for beating (LaFont 2007:246). Beating is considered an appropriate way of disciplining both wife and children but this kind of discipline must not result in serious bodily harm or death. Consequently, the use of a knife, fists or dangerous weapons such as guns is not acceptable. The Ovawambo believe that the man has the right to beat his wife for transgressions such as quarrelling with him, not preparing his meal on time, not washing his clothes, and cheating on him. Wife beating is considered a sign of love (LeBeau *at al* 2004:193). One 45-year-old woman confirmed that, "If the man does not beat you, then he does not love you." (Talavera 2007:47-48; cf. LeBeau & Spence 2004:38-39) Men believe that a woman needs to be slapped on her cheek or beaten with a belt as a sign of love, otherwise she could feel rejected (LeBeau in Reim 2004:193). In other words, a married woman's body is regarded as her man's

[19] This happened, in most cases, when the maternal uncles of the children die.

property (Talavera 2007:3). Therefore, Ovawambo women at times agree to have sexual intercourse because they are afraid of the spanking that refusal would bring. Husbands were formally and informally allowed to have multiple partners, but wives were expected to have only one partner. This means that culturally Ovawambo men do not see the world as women do. Men do not believe that their women are discriminated against and therefore do not see the need for change. Ovawambo men believe that their relationship with women must remain as it was in the generations before them. In the traditional gender structure, women and female children participated in farm work but also worked tirelessly at household chores (Iipinge *et al* 2000:5; LeBeau 2001:192; LeBeau *et al* in Reimers & Spence 2004:4).

The wellbeing of the Aawambo is based on community welfare. Both Miettinen (2005:80-82) and Hiltunen (1993:35) explain that taboos played an important role in promoting peace, order, and desired behavior in the society and among the clans. The most important taboos were those that have to do with the prohibition of bad behavior such as killing or harming one another. The Ovawambo still believe that they can only live in harmony if they continue to practice good behavior by obeying the taboos. Thus, unity between a husband and a wife in marriage was regarded as the unity of two families and two clans. As noted above, the Ovawambo depend on the *aathithi* (ancestors) for blessing, therefore, both husband and wife also need to please the *aathithi* and seek their favor by always observing the given taboos. If something went wrong in a family, the members of the two clans were supposed to come together to solve the problem communally (Miettinen 2005:81). Although they may fail in resolving all problems, the unity of clans and the fear of God through the ancestors help in unifying families and enable marriages to last for long periods. Despite the many lapses in Ovawambo cultural practices, many positive elements of the culture could prove useful to contemporary marriages and families (Munyika 2004:187).

2.7.1 Men as heads of the family and decision-makers

As indicated above, Ovawambo culture is constructed along patriarchal lines, which means that fathers' rule, literally. At the same time, however, the Ovawambo are a matrilineal group. Within the patriarchal system, a man has been expected to have a dominant position over women. The system placed fathers above other family members in the same way that the Ovawambo were ruled by kings or chiefs who were the heads of tribes. The king was an autocrat and all the tribal territory belonged to him. Whoever occupied a plot of land within his district did so merely on loan because it could be taken away from him/her at any time. Everyone was

expected to obey the king except his mother who was the only person who could challenge him freely (Vedder 1938:72). Most men in Ovamboland use a similar authoritarian style of leadership in their households even today. In Ovawambo gender relationships, men and women have defined roles that also lead to a division of labor. In this setting, Ovawambo women do not have a voice, as they are under the control of men. Women must accept male decisions without questioning (Iipinge 2000:2).

Traditionally, Ovawambo women could not own any kind of property in marriage except chickens and millet (Tuupainen 1970:73). The role of head of the family ascribed to the man enables him to control the entire household including all assets and/or possessions such as livestock that the wife brought in as her dowry at the onset of the marriage (Ambunda & De Klerk 2008:48-49). The woman does not have any control over household property and income because she yields such control to her husband at marriage. Most Ovawambo brides get livestock as their dowry, but on reaching the husband's homestead, they lose control of the dowry to the man. Similarly, when the woman is engaged in formal or informal schemes that generate income such as selling *mahangu*, the income is always transferred to the man. Remarkably, in the event of the man's death, his family members take over all his belongings, leaving the wife/wives and children with nothing. The woman could even be ordered by the village headman to leave her field/garden because, after the death of her husband, the field would be sold to another person (Tuupainen 1970:73). This practice still exists among couples who are in customary marriages, especially in the rural areas.

Other valuable assets that a man acquires include houses and the land on which the house is built (Kanana 2000:35). The land belongs to the man as the family head and he has the right to sell plots to interested buyers because, traditionally, it is the men who request and pay for land. Thus, the plot and the house become the man's property and come under his control and authority until his death. After his death, the property returns to the village chief who then sells it to either the deceased's brother or maternal uncle. His wife and children are told to return to their maternal clan with few movable properties (Tuupainen 1970:73; Kanana 2000:34). Women are stereotyped in relation to their domestic, reproductive and household duties, while men are stereotyped with decision-making capacity, as heads of the family and as those with power (Iipinge *et al* 2000:5; LeBeau 2001:192; LeBeau *et al* in Reimers & Spence 2004:4). The Ovawambo economy relied on a mixture of agricultural and pastoral proceeds and this

enhanced the position of men in the family. Some livestock, such as cattle, are more valuable because of their ritual significance (Becker 2010:177).

In Aawambo tradition also, couples did not marry *in community of property*. (Marriage in *community of property* means that all the belongings and the debts of the husband and the wife are put together into what is called a "joint estate".) Both husband and wife have their own property. However, due to the patriarchal ideology behind Ovawambo culture, all the household properties were ceded to the man and his family. A woman could not own any valuable property in marriage besides poultry, but she was not obliged to bring the property she had before marriage to her husband's home (Tuupainen 1970:73). Besides the Ovawambo traditional understanding of gender relationships discussed so far, other external factors also influence the patriarchal stance of Ovawambo men.

2.8 Cultural Aspects of Gender Inequality and the Influence of Christianity and Colonialism

The influence of Christianity and colonialism, as well as various other elements of Ovawambo gender ideologies, constitute three major factors that shape Ovawambo marriages and intimate relationships (LaFont 2007:247). In Namibia, gender inequality was exacerbated by the arrival of Western missionaries and colonial administrators who spread Western ideas of patriarchy that denied women of their rights. Various customary laws instituted by colonial authorities were used to manipulate and discriminate against women. The patriarchal system which was strengthened by local cultural beliefs and biblical teachings reduced women's autonomy. Thus, gender inequality has significantly contributed to a variety of social challenges faced by women in Namibia today including gender-based violence, a high incidence of poverty among women and discriminatory legal practices (LeBeau 2004:7). However, gender inequality is also fuelled by some ideas that are rooted in Christian religion and colonialism.

2.8.1 Christian religion

Thus far, we have shown that Ovawambo gender relationship is characterized by inequality between men and women. One of the strongest factors that drive this difference is patriarchy. Some biblical teachings were also used to endorse the Ovawambo patriarchal practices. LaFont (2007:247) confirms that the arrival of Christianity among the Ovawambo contributed to the inequality between men and women. Christianity was brought to Namibia by missionaries from different European countries namely the British in 1806, the Germans in 1842, and the Finns in

1870. The Ovawambo people were converted to Christianity by the Finnish Missionary Society whose activities resulted in the creation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia, ELCIN (Loytty 1971:20; LaFont 2007:3).

Before missionaries arrived in Ovamboland in 1870, a few women mostly from the royal clan held leadership positions in the community and in family spheres. However, this changed because the Christian doctrine affirmed the patriarchal system. Female leadership in family and society was discouraged because the new religion promoted male power. Accordingly, the missionaries demoted female power and promoted female chastity (LaFont 2007:247), which sat well with Ovawambo men, many of whom easily converted to Christianity and became baptized before the women did. Men also used religion to justify their positions of power and oppressive control in gender relations (Chitando 2010:28-29). Thus, it was through religion and culture that patriarchy received its validation. The two cultures, biblical and African (Ovawambo), have contributed significantly to the abuse and violation of women because when the missionaries converted people to Christianity, they also strengthened the patriarchal system (Hinga 2000:138).

The arrival of the Finnish missionaries brought changes in the local culture because the missionaries viewed the local culture with both interest and suspicion. To produce "good Christians," they deemed it necessary to condemn some local customs, which, in their view, clashed with Christianity. This included the abolition of the traditional polygamous marriage which was replaced by monogamous marriages (Loytty 1971:20). The missionaries trained Christian couples to aspire to great levels of spirituality. They taught the local converts that the aims of a Christian marriage are to develop and train married couples spiritually to attain mutual understanding and unity, to procreate and rear children, and to regulate and adjust sexual behaviors. To attain these aims, three clauses must be fulfilled: (1) Marriage is strictly the union of one man and one woman; (2) Marriage is an inseparable and lifelong union; (3) The mutual love of the married couple is the only right and lasting basis for marriage (Tuupainen 1971:107).

Through conversion, the Finnish missionaries also introduced the ideology of "civilization" to Ovawambo family life. This civilization, which was experienced in 19th century Europe, especially in Germany, and was introduced to the Ovawambo had two basic aims. First, it aimed to introduce the type of work ethic that had developed within the emerging bourgeois-capitalist society in central Europe. Second, it aimed to establish patterns of Christian marriage and family to ensure the sustainable success of Christianization (Becker 1995:101). Through their

doctrine of civilization, new gender roles and criteria for the division of labor were introduced. Boys were taught to do more "masculine" work such as brick making, building and gardening, while girls were taught to do "feminine" chores which were mostly domestic work such as knitting, sewing, cooking and laundry (Melber in Becker 1995:102).

The Bible was used to justify men's dominance over women based on the notion that men were created to dominate women. The Bible's creation story was used to argue that since man was created first by God and given the power to rule the earth, women do not have equal power with men (LeBeau & Spence 2004:51). The text of Genesis 3:16b, which says "…your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you," is also used to justify female subordination. This understanding has long impacted gender relations among the Ovawambo as many Ovawambo men welcomed the Christian teaching which supported their cultural understanding of patriarchy. Most Ovawambo men still quote biblical texts to justify their power over women and promote their sexist culture (LeBeau & Spence 2004:51; LaFont 2007:3). In this way, the missionaries redefined gender by interfacing tradition and Christianity. The new Christian gender constructions copied the existing patriarchal images which were dominant in the missionaries' European gender relations of that time (Becker 1997:177).

2.8.2 Colonialism

Namibia was first colonized by Germany in 1884. Germany then lost its mandate to rule Namibia in 1919 by the Treaty of Versailles of the League of Nations. Namibia then became a colony of Union of South Africa beginning in 1921 (Eirola 1992:66). As noted above, gender inequality in Namibia was exacerbated by the arrival of the colonial administrators who spread western ideas of patriarchy.

The colonial regime caused a major havoc in the Ovawambo intimate relationships (Becker (2007:2, 4). Colonial laws helped the colonial officials spread western patriarchy which put greater emphasis on the male's power in gender relationships. The arrival of colonialism and of the apartheid regime caused a clear division between those perceived as inferior and those who perceived others as inferior, between the oppressor and the oppressed, and between the powerful and the powerless (Wise 2007:331). This division had a negative impact in both social and family life. It is through this gender division of power that the women were regarded as inferior and minors. During the South African colonial era, women were classified as minors. Hence, women were not allowed to enter into legal contracts without their husband's consent.

Women were not allowed access to education, to vote, or to own land. Men were paid higher salaries than women because they were the bread winners and providers (LeBeau et al in Reimers & Spence 2004:3; Becker & Hinz 1995:40; Iipinge and LeBeau 1997:47). Through the colonial regime, men were encouraged to hold a dominant position over women and authority in family, community and the State (Becker 1995:86-87).

Additionally, many customary laws made by colonial authorities were used to manipulate and discriminate against women. Because the Ovawambo operated a matrilineal familial system, their politics was also matrilineal, which meant that inheritance and the royal lineage were received through one's mother's clan (Wallace & Kinahan 2011:75). In spite of the strength of patriarchy in the leadership arena, the matrilineal system promoted women's status among the Ovawambo. It gave some royal women a greater degree of autonomy, formal authority in local politics and ritual, control of family income and relationships (Wallace & Kinahan 2011:81). Consequently, some scholars of Ovawambo culture affirm that the matrilineal family system bestowed equal power with men upon women (Becker 1993:67; LeBeau 2004:2). As mothers and wives, they used their power to get whatever they needed from men, which meant that some women were appointed village chiefs or traditional leaders. The matrilineal system also prevented Ovawambo men from having full control over their wives and children. Any injury he inflicted on his wife or child could lead to clan conflict. The man's clan must pay compensation to his wife's clan. Divorce was also easy to obtain if a man failed to fulfill his familial role, for example, if he failed to feed his children or make any substantial material transfer to his wife's family at marriage (Becker 2007:25). Therefore, the idea behind the matrilineal system afforded a measure of prosperity for women.

However, the arrival of western missionaries and colonial administrators in Namibia in the 19th century led to major changes in Ovawambo social and family life (McKittrick 1999:7; LeBeau 2004:2). The introduction of the German and Portuguese (in Angola) colonial yoke, South African minority white rule and other local threats including inter-tribal wars caused the Ovawambo to develop what is called "a gun culture linked to male power." Men began to participate in wars to defend their country against both internal and external invaders. However, because the Ovawambo lost those battles, they found themselves ruled by German and South African white minority groups, as the colonialists extended their administration to subdue traditional authorities through their Native Commissioners. The alliance between the colonial administrators and male traditional elites influenced ancient traditions, as the two groups began

to promote Western patriarchy which was based on the Western gender ideology of their time, and to regulate power within gender relationships (Becker 1995:123; 2000:177).

In this process, new ideas and practices of femininity and masculinity emerged. The colonial administrators refused to recognize female leadership. They also manipulated the local customary laws to suit their needs. They imposed western patriarchal norms on gender relationships (LaFont 2007:4). Women were considered minors and were not allowed to vote, own property or participate in public decision-making. Neither could women buy expensive commodities such as land, houses or cars without their husband's consent (Amathila 2012:256). This situation was regarded as normal to most Ovawambo women who played important roles in food production and unifying the clans (Soiri 1996:25). Women received lower remunerations than their male counterparts for most labor services (Becker 2000:177; 2007:25; LaFont 2007:247). Women's salaries were lower than those of men who held the same post or did the same job because men were regarded as heads of the family and breadwinners (Amathila 2012:256). A woman needed her husband's consent before she could buy any valuable property or sign any legal document. Subsequently, women lost their position and influence in the administration of traditional authority (Becker 2000:177; 2007:25; LaFont 2007:247).

This redefinition of traditional gender roles by colonial officials and Christian missionaries which reinforced male dominance was well embraced by most Ovawambo men because it suited their cultural view of gender. Thus, the Ovawambo society moved slowly from a matrilineal to a patriarchal system. Most Ovawambo people still adhere to the matrilineal system, even though the situation causes confusion and tension for many Ovawambo intimate relationships. It means that they have to support both their paternal and their maternal relatives. On the one hand, the old cultural norms based on the matrilineal system require men to support their sisters and their sisters' children. On the other hand, the current family laws also force them to support their wives and children. Although some men choose one of these two practices, they suffer when they retire. If they can no longer support their wives and children due to unemployment, the wives could discourage their adult children from supporting their fathers. In such situations, some men seek help from their maternal relatives who would sometimes chase them away and tell them to get support from their wives and children whom they supported when they were well off (Haufiku 2013:4). In this regard, LeBeau (2004:3) argues that western patriarchy strengthened by Ovawambo cultural gender norms and values has a major impact on gender relations today.

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the Ovawambo strongly believed in both God and the ancestors, and that the unity between the living and dead was integrated in Ovawambo morals and taboos. Ovawambo unity also is centered on social communitarianism in which every member is expected to guarantee the wellbeing of his or her fellow human being. We observed that the Ovawambo discover their gender responsibilities and duties from home, in social life and through initiation ceremonies. Through the process of circumcision, initiates were taught about a man's responsibilities to the family and society. Young men were taught how to control their wives and ensure order in their homes, while girls were taught to respect their future husbands through submission and obedience. The marriage relationship between men and women is based on the patriarchal structure. By paying the *lobola*, a man "owned" the woman and she was required to serve him. The man, as the family head, has the final word in family decision-making, a move that was informed by colonial and missionary influence. However, the Ovawambo patriarchal family system also encourages men to abuse their power against their wives, children and themselves because it defines men as exclusive holders of authority in the family, community and state. The Ovawambo patriarchal traditional understanding also places men on top of the hierarchical spectrum while women are subordinated to them.

The external influence of Christianity and colonialism further strengthened the patriarchal power dynamics in Ovawambo gender relationships which became characterized by gender inequality, power imbalance, domination, competition, and control. These characteristics remained for many years and were accepted by both men and women in Ovawambo culture. Although Ovawambo social life is strongly bound by the *uukwanankali* communitarian social belief, this does not seem to apply in some intimate relationships due to gender inequality and patriarchy. It would have been helpful if *uukwanankali* social communality was fully practiced in Ovawambo intimate relationships, although any system that attempts to change cultural norms, which mostly disadvantage women, could be regarded as a threat to men's lives. In the present democratic context, any change that challenges the dominant traditional gender arrangement could lead to gender-based violence especially if it threatens male power and results in a balance of the living standards of men and women. Therefore, one could ask: How do Ovawambo men react when they experience their traditional cornerstones of male identity which is based on hierarchy, power and masculinity being slowly removed by the equality and the family law reform? How do Ovawambo men cope in the paradigm change of the gender laws and roles in the current democratic context in Namibia? This is the gap identified so far

from previous literature. But there exist no studies that offer answers to these questions. Therefore, the following chapter will deal with a review of previous literature on gender role changes, how they negatively and positively affect intimate relationships, and how these changes promote gender-based violence. Because our research focuses on the Ovawambo, we shall pay more attention to studies that offer information on gender role changes among the Ovawambo.

CHAPTER THREE

GENDER IDENTITIES: PARADIGM CHANGE IN OVAWAMBO GENDER RELATIONSHIPS IN LIGHT OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

3.1 Introduction

In Chapter Two, we noted that Ovawambo social life is strongly bound by the belief in *uukwanankali* which is a social communitarian practice in which every member of the community is expected to support and treat fellow human beings with respect. However, this communitarian value is not reflected in some Ovawambo intimate relationships which are characterized by gender inequality and patriarchy. The Ovawambo traditional gender categories promote inequality between men and women because they regard the man as superior to the woman in both marriage and other family relationships. Thus, children are taught early to adhere to their gender roles and fulfill their gender expectations through rites and ceremonies. They also learn to perform their expected masculine duties such as being the breadwinner and community guardians. The socialization process shows that Ovawambo gender relationships have been characterized by gender inequality, power imbalance, domination, competition, and control.

This study also reveals that, besides cultural gender beliefs, Ovawambo gender identities and relationships were also influenced by the external forces of Christianity and colonialism that further strengthened the patriarchal power imbalance in Ovawambo gender relationships. Men continue to perform their roles as decision-makers and heads of the household, whereas women are stereotyped as minor, inferior and weak. Overall, men continue to exercise power in the family setting (Iipinge *et al* 2000:9). However, the Ovawambo gender understanding gradually changed due to the influence of modernization and democratization, as well as the gender politics that emerged in the aftermath of the national struggle for Namibia's political independence. In this chapter, we shall discuss further the factors that brought about the change and the impact on Ovawambo gender relations in light of gender-based violence.

3.2 Gender Politics during the South African Colonial Period and the Exile

Besides social-cultural factors and the colonial regime, the Namibian war and the exile situation also contributed to an increase in gender-based violence. The struggle for political independence in Africa as a whole affected African social life and gender relationships.

Kalichman *et al* (2007 in Raditloaneng 2013:61) argue that the struggle for gender equality was intrinsically woven into the political struggles for independence in many African countries. As people became tired of atrocity and the violation of their rights, they started to resist injustice and fight for their rights and freedom. Many Namibians were forced to fight against both German and South African colonial yokes. One can ask: How did women contribute to the independence of Namibia?

As stated earlier, Namibia was first colonized by the Germans and then by South Africa's apartheid regime. The colonial regime caused havoc in Ovawambo intimate relationships (Becker 2007:2, 4). Colonial laws helped the colonial officers promote western patriarchy which stressed male power in gender relationships. The arrival of colonialism and the apartheid regime caused a clear division between those perceived as inferior and those who perceived others as inferior, between the oppressor and the oppressed, and between the powerful and the powerless (Wise 2007:331). This division had a negative impact on both social and family life, as women were regarded as inferior and minors. During the South African colonial rule, women were classified as minors and were not allowed to enter into legal contracts without the consent of their husbands or male relatives. Women were denied access to education, they were not allowed to vote or to own land, and were paid lower salaries than men who were seen as breadwinners and providers (Becker & Hinz 1995:40; Iipinge & LeBeau 1997:47; LeBeau *et al* in Reimers & Spence 2004:3). The colonial regime encouraged men to dominate women and to serve as heads of the family, community and State (Becker 1995:86-87). These gender disparities remained in place until Namibia's political independence (LeBeau, Iipinge & Conteh 2004:247-248; Becker 2007:2, 4).

Initially, some missionaries acted as agents of the colonial government, but they later changed their views to promote the traditional authorities and their missionary work. At that time, the South African government declared Ovamboland as an ethnic homeland through a five-man commission called the Odendaal Commission of 1962. The commission required all the ethnic people to stay in their homelands, including Ovamboland which consisted of 40 per cent of the total land area, while the rest of Namibia's land remained in the hands of the whites and the government. This situation led to the war that was spearheaded by SWAPO in 1966. In Ovamboland, different forms of sexual punishment against women including rape, sexual torture and sexual slavery occurred at the hands of South African Defense force members (Wallace & Kinahan 2011:296). The whole of northern Namibia including Ovamboland

became a war zone. Some Namibians were forced to join the South African army to fight against their fellow brothers and sisters due to unemployment and poverty.[20]

Under the apartheid regime, both men and women suffered oppression based on race and class. However, women suffered what Akawa (2014: ix) called "double oppression." Besides the injustices of the racist colonial regime, women also suffered due to the Ovawambo patriarchal tradition. In that process, the women's rights movement emerged. The aim of the war was not only to fight for the land, but also to ensure women's liberation from patriarchal ideology and gender inequality (Akawa 2014: xi). Consequently, both men and some women took up arms in the battle for Namibia's political independence (Becker 2010:183). In the process, some women close to the borders went into exile in countries like Zambia and Angola. During the war, women's rights and dignity were not respected by men, both those in Namibia and those in exile. Women were treated as minors because the war remained a male preserve as men made decisions, and the power struggle was mainly between men (Vickers in Akawa 2014:12). Many women were victims of various forms of intimate partner violence including sexual abuse, harassment, and rape (Akawa 2014:13, 24). Therefore, life in exile was tough because of their gender. Some Namibians close to the border who went into exile with their spouses had to share their wives with fellow soldiers or even have them taken away by their commanders. The phrase "no comrade says no to another comrade unless you are an agent" (Akawa 2014:13, 24, 135) was used to justify sexual intercourse with women by some commanders and those in positions of power. The new female arrivals in training camps outside Namibia were mostly targeted. Nathanael (in Akawa 2014:24) narrates that on their first night in camp in exile, some women were taken by the men in high leadership positions as "good-time-girls." This infuriated some of the men because they ultimately lost their girlfriends/wives to the leaders. Nathanael further reports that women were sexually abused as the struggle progressed and some women even sold their bodies to survive the hard times in the camp especially during shortages of food and other basic commodities. Some men also suffered at the hands of fellow senior leaders who assigned them to the battle front area for a period of five months continuously because the leaders had their eyes on their women. Thus, Meintjes and Goldblatt (in Akawa 2014:13) note that women were victims of violence not only by men

[20] Dawes (2014:1) revealed that unemployment deprivation caused some Ovawambo men to join the South Africa Defence Force (SADF) and South West Africa Territorial Force (SWATF) to fight against their fellow Namibians who were fighting for independence through SWAPO. Since they were well paid by the South African government, they were able to maintain their dominant position in the family, and they fought against their own brothers and sisters who were SWAPO soldiers.
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but also by fellow women, while some men also suffered violence at the hands of their fellow men, but women suffered a lot more than men (Akawa 2014:13).

Therefore, SWAPO confronted gender inequality in many ways (Soiri 1996:74-83; Becker 2010:184). In 1976, all the elements of sexism and chauvinism were removed from the SWAPO constitution. But before this removal, women had already been absorbed into the liberation movement's guerrilla force including its command structure since 1970. Although some top in SWAPO officials resisted the idea, some women worked as soldiers, truck drivers and mechanics. Women were also allowed to study what were regarded as male career courses such as law and engineering. Another significant move was made when women in exile formed their own organization called the SWAPO Women Council between 1969 and 1970. The main objective of this organization was to mobilize women to participate in the national struggle and to fight for their rights and equality with men. It also aimed to educate both men and women to develop new attitudes towards one another. Women were encouraged to fight for equal opportunities in all SWAPO spheres (Becker 2010:183). However, Katjavivi (1988:111) reveals that this organization was established by men for women to fight the gender inequality in SWAPO because men were in the majority in SWAPO during its formation. However, inequality was also reflected in SWAPO structures, and women were unwilling to abandon their fight for equality because of the double oppression they experienced. One of the main reasons why Ovawambo women crossed the border to fight for their rights was due to gender inequality. However, some men did not support the idea of equality between men and women (Soiri 1996:89). Therefore, gender cultural norms and power imbalance remained a challenge in gender relations before Namibia's political independence.

3.4 Ovawambo Gender Identity in Post-independent Namibia

The Ovawambo family system had not been shaped by any external influences that could change the structure of the Ovawambo marital and family system until the time of colonization. The laws, customs and beliefs that control Ovawambo family behavior and communication still govern this system. However, socio-economic change and democratization have affected the entire society (Kapolo 2000:23). We have already seen that Christianity, colonialism, and life in exile brought some changes among Ovawambo, but we shall now consider the impact of democratization, as spelled out in the Namibian constitution, on Ovawambo marriage and family relationship.

3.4.1 The new constitution and gender equality

Since Namibia's political independence, the government of the Republic of Namibia did not just declare political independence but also put in place a legal framework that instituted the restructuring of gender roles (LaFont 2007:245). The new constitution and legal reform have reflected the importance of gender equality and the expansion of personal liberty (LeBeau 2004:1). Liberation brought hope of the realization of other forms of freedom such as the restructuring of gender roles and sexual liberation through gender rights laws (LaFont 2007:1).

The Namibian government has worked tirelessly to protect the rights and dignity of all Namibians by adopting and revising various policies and legislation that protect women and children. Although no article in the Namibian Constitution directly addresses the issue of gender-based violence, relevant articles point to the government's stance against gender-based violence and its responsibility towards its citizens. The starting principles for addressing gender-based violence are enclosed in Article 8 (2) (b) which states that, "No person shall be subject to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment." Article 10 also clarifies that "All persons shall be equal before the law" and that "No persons may be discriminated against on the grounds of sex, race, color, ethnic origin, religion, creed or social or economic status" (The Constitution of the Republic of Namibia 1990). Some articles also affirm the fundamental freedom of all Namibian citizens and include protection against torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (Article 8), freedom from discrimination (Article 10), fair judicial procedures (Article 12), freedom to form families through marriage (Article 14), and protection of children (Article 15) (UNAIDS 2013:18).

Several other law reforms were introduced to support affirmative action and decry gender-based violence (Hubbard 2007b:209), thereby affirming women's rights. The reforms called for gender equality in order to guarantee fundamental human rights soon after independence. In August 1990, the Department of Women Affairs (DWA) was established by the office of the President. The DWA as a women's rights agency works hard to empower Namibian women through government and non-governmental agencies in different fields such as law, education, decision-making, gender violence, and the role of the girl child. Later in 2000, the name of the department was changed to the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare. Its aim is to empower women, men, and children and to promote equality between men and women as a prerequisite for full participation in political, legal, social, cultural and economic development (Becker 2010:187; Ruppel 2010:2). The first laws which were reformed were family laws and

included the Married Person's Equality Act, family laws on rape and domestic violence, maintenance paid by men and equal rights to communal land for women (Hubbard 2007a:102-112). These laws are described in depth below.

(1.) Married Person's Equality Act

Before independence, family issues were governed by the inherited Roman-Dutch common law which is an ancient set of legal rules that evolved in a high patriarchal setting (Hubbard 2007b:209). However, on 20 May 1996, the first Namibian President Sam Nujoma signed the Married Person's Equality Bill, which then came into law as Act 1 of 1996. This Act was one of the main demands of the post-independence women's movements, because it did away with men's automatic marital power as well as their position as family head. The bill resulted in highly controversial discussions in Namibian politics and society. Most Ovawambo male parliamentarians across the political spectrum, writers of letters to the editors of Namibian newspapers, and callers to the country's phone-in radio programs opposed the proposed reform in the strongest terms. However, in the end, President Sam Nujoma threw his personal weight behind the contested reform which meant that regardless of male approval, all SWAPO parliamentarians, who were the majority in parliament, had to vote in favor of the new law (Becker 2007:22). Under this new law, the husband's marital power as the head of the family was taken away (Becker 2007:22).

(2.) Family Law on Rape and Domestic Violence

The family law on rape and domestic violence is also called the "law reforms on gender-based violence: bedroom affairs" and it came into effect due to the high level of gender-based violence acts in Namibia (Hubbard 2007a:104). This law contains a broad, gender-neutral definition of rape which covers a range of sexual acts committed in coercive circumstances, thus, moving away from the concept of consent that has historically made the rape survivor feel as if she were the one on the trail (Hubbard 2007a:104). The new rape law was also followed by related piece of legislation on domestic violence called the Combating of Domestic Violence Act 4 of 2003 (Hubbard 2007b:211; cf. LeBeau & Spence 2004:35). This new law is beneficial to rape victims as it calls for protection, counseling and procedures to ensure that the rape survivor provides testimony before the court at the bail hearing. It covers a range of domestic violence acts including sexual violence, harassment and intimidation as well as economic and psychological violence (Hubbard 2007a:105).

(3.) Maintenance Paid by Men

The next major family law reform is that which secures child support from absent fathers. It was difficult for single mothers to support their children alone while the fathers were absent. This issue was affecting children's welfare and women's economic independence. Under the new law, the sharing of expenses between men and women begins during the pregnancy until the child turns 18. The law also provides clear guidelines for deciding how much maintenance should be paid and new methods of enforcement to be used if men fail to pay the maintenance (Hubbard 2007b:211; cf. 2007a:109).

(4.) Equal Rights to Communal Land for Women

Under the old land law, women suffered and their rights were taken away after the death of their husbands, especially in the communal areas. If a man died, his widow had no rights to remain on the land even if she wished to (Hubbard 2007a:109; 2007b:211). Women could not own property or buy expensive assets like land, houses, or cars. Their salaries for the same work were lower than those of men because men were the breadwinners (Amathila 2012:256). The new law is worded in a gender-neutral fashion. Since widowers were not historically forced off their land when their wives died, the new reform laws then offer same protection to widows and protect women's rights to communal land tenure (Hubbard 2007:109; 2007:211).

These laws were introduced to give equal opportunities to women and men in terms of equal pay for equal work (Amathila 2012:256). Additionally, the first Women and Child Protection Unit (WCPU), which was established in 1993 to guarantee women's and children's rights, was changed to the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare in 2012. Its task is to strengthen the response to gender-based violence and to provide and coordinate services for gender-based violence survivors. The Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare has also developed the National Plan of Action (2012-2016) to identify the programs and activities that could be used to address all forms of gender-based violence in Namibia (Kakujaha-Matundu 2016:106; Namibia Country Report 2012:9). The advent of democratic rule created the opportunity for major political, economic and social changes. The new constitution and legal reform support gender equality and the expansion of personal liberty on an equal basis for both males and females, thereby overturning the cultural relational identity between the sexes (LeBeau 2004:1). These laws received strong support from many Namibians, especially the women, because it offered them freedom and autonomy. The question is whether men must change their attitudes due to these gender laws which have empowered and emancipated women or adapt

new norms and values that help them not to abuse their power against women and that are geared to foster human dignity and human rights. How then can these democratic ideas change deep-seated cultural prejudices and fixed gender roles and expectations which men have enjoyed for such a long time? How would men benefit from the implementation of these laws, and how would these family laws guarantee their rights?

3.4.2 Women in Post-independence Namibia

The Namibian constitution considers the family as a space where human rights should be respected. The government tries to redress the disadvantages and abuses experienced by women in pre-Namibia independence. Thus, Namibia's constitution, from its independence, enshrined women's rights by implementing affirmative action policies to guarantee women's social status and roles within the society. The constitution also recognizes equal power relations between men and women in all cultural, social, legal, and economic domains through national and international legislation that promotes gender equality (Iipinge & LeBeau 2005:7). Namibian women now benefit from affirmative action through the Namibia National Gender Policy (NNGP). The implementation of this policy began in 1997, and it serves as the monitoring mechanism for overseeing the implementation of policies relating to women. The NNGP strives to address issues of poverty, rural development, education and training, reproductive health, violence against women and children, economic empowerment, power and decision-making, legal affairs, and issues relating to the girl child. Besides the targeted areas, the ethos of this policy focuses mostly on gender inequality in both public and private domains. Hence, the main objective of the policy is to encourage the government to recognize women's dignity and contribution to both national and family life, which would enable women to start to own property and businesses, get more cash by selling their products, and obtain bank loans (LeBeau & Spence 2004:48).

Although most Namibian women welcomed this policy, they also criticized it. Some women feel that the policy does not adequately safeguard women's dignity in light of unequal gender relations or recognize women as victims in men's hands (LeBeau & Spence 2004:28). Some women therefore regard the policy as weak because they believe it fails to take into account women's strength, skills, abilities, and their influence in the family and community. As a result, the policy has abolished all gender relations' structures that are rooted in cultural ideologies which are regarded as antithetical to the policy (Becker 2010:188-190). One of the reasons for introducing the laws that govern all local elections through affirmative action is to guarantee

equal participation of both men and women in local elections. The implementation of the NNGP resulted in a major change in the National Assembly, the first house of parliament and in the city, town and village councils which previously were constituted only by men. Women had not been allowed to take place in these decision-making bodies.

The Namibian democratic laws[21] have also caused changes in the gender representation in political affairs. According to Becker (2010:187), before independence, most Namibian women were expected to do domestic work, subsistence farming, some secretarial and clerical jobs, nursing, and teaching, but after independence, women now have access to every type of job available in the job market (Becker 2000:186-187). As a result, gender equality has been well implemented among the Ovawambo especially in the area of traditional leadership. In Ovawambo communities, women are already occupying leadership positions as ministers, councilors, judges, school principals, traditional leaders, army commanders, police constables, and town mayors, although their number is still few compared to their male counterparts (Becker 2000:186-187). The Ovakwanyama, which is one of the Ovawambo tribes, is ruled by a queen instead of a king, as is the case in other Ovawambo communities. A number of women serve as headwomen, senior headwomen, traditional councilors and other representation in other political leadership position has also increased. Thus, the changes in gender roles are visible not only in national politics and in the broader Namibian society, but also within traditional structures. Changes in political authority are also inseparably intertwined with changes in traditional gender arrangements (LeBeau & Spence 2004:46; Becker 2010:193-194). Under Ovawambo traditional authorities, only men were elected to rule, but within the current Ovawambo traditional structure, the unanimous decision has been that women also must be represented in all three areas of customary administration, namely, leadership, customary dispute settlement, and substantive reforms (Legal Assistance Centre 2017:181).

According to the demographic and health survey done among married women between ages 35-39 and 40-44 by the Ministry of Health and Social Services (2013:279), the *status quo* has changed in Ovawambo intimate relationships. Women who were 10-20 years' old when, or who were born after, the gender laws were introduced were well informed about the content of the gender equality laws before they got married. Most of the educated married women, especially in urban areas, have the freedom to control their earnings. Once married, some men

[21]Married Person's Equality Bill Act 8, Combating of Rape Act 8, Combating of Domestic Violence Act 4 and Maintenance Act 9. The aim of these acts is to safeguard the well-being of women and children in marriage and family life.

begin to make decisions about family income, but once their wives obtain a higher degree or begin to earn more than their husbands, such wives start to control their own earnings (LeBeau & Spence 2004:40). The survey reveals that women aged 35-39 who control their own earnings are most likely to be the main decision-makers on family income, while women aged 40-44 tend to make joint decisions with their husband. Most Ovawambo women interviewed in the survey revealed that they only use their earnings jointly with their husbands while their children are still small, but when the children grow up and become employed, the women start to depend on them because of the Ovawambo matrilineal family structure. Most educated women also make their own decisions about other household matters such as their own health care, major household purchases, and visits to their family or relatives. This political survey also revealed that only women with high qualifications and those in the high-income brackets participate in all three decision-making patterns (MHSS 2013:279). Waruta (2000:110-111, 123) also argues, as a female representative of the Ovawambo community, that competitiveness as a by-product of Western education has created a situation where most of the married couples, especially the educated one, fear each other. Most men started to fear their educated or wealthier wives because of the economic inequity. Under the new system and laws, a person is valued according to his/her academic and professional qualifications, rather than according to gender. Many educated women, although they can marry, would not want to acquiesce to the traditional role of wife, due to their careers and professions. Such a situation can create acrimony in a patriarchal culture that affords men higher status and authority. This could prompt some men to abuse their power in order to keep their position as family providers and bread winners.

Moreover, many Namibian women feel that women's freedom must not only apply to the area of politics but must also apply to traditional leadership structures. For example, if a queen could rule in the Ovakwanyama community, then, the country could also have a female president and a First Gentleman rather than a First Lady (Becker 2010:193-194; LeBeau & Spence 2004:46).

It is remarkable that the current constitutional gender equality laws have re-shaped the customary norms in certain parts of Ovamboland, especially in the Uukwambi and Ondonga areas, and now tend to promote gender equality. Thus, more women have started to take part in the traditional decision-making bodies, which was not permitted before Namibian political independence. This shows that the status of women has also improved in both rural and urban areas (Ubink 2011:143). The Namibian government is still encouraged by the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, which mandated all the SADC member states to ensure by 2015 at least fifty percent female representation in all areas of public and private sectors. It also calls

for the use of affirmative action and other strategies that would enable women to have equal opportunities with men in political and electoral processes. Some Namibian women now occupy high government positions and these include the first female Prime Minister, two female Deputy-Ministers and the first female Chairperson of the National Council (Nandi-Ndeitwa 2018:38).

However, some women feel that this equality is not yet fully practiced in intimate partnerships, especially in the rural area (LeBeau 2004:6). According to the Employment Equity in Namibia, women are less represented than men in the public sphere area. Whereas in formal employment, women are only 42 percent compared to 58 percent of men (Uusiku 2018:31). Therefore, Upi-Karuaihe (2018:36) calls for an end to inequality between men and women. He additional argues that men need to realize that women are not a threat to them and have not come to take power from them. However, this view contrasts with the 2002 research by LeBeau and Spence (2004:30) among Ovawambo men which studied their perceptions of the gender laws. The Ovawambo men interviewed agreed that it is good for the gender laws to be implemented but that the current laws benefit only women. The problem seems to lie in the public perception of power as a fixed resource in family and marriage, which may then cause men to feel that the gender-related laws were introduced to disempower them (LeBeau and Spence 2004:30). For that reason, Hubbard (2007:227) is of the view that, helping the family issue to move forward effectively can only be possible if both men and women understand different interpretations of power. Hence, it will be helpful if the government would use the family/marriage laws to influence *attitudes against* the new gender arrangement, rather than only insisting on the implementation of the laws. Although these laws and gender policies affect both political and traditional gender structures, they also affect lifelong norms and long-held beliefs about masculinity and benefit the new legally protected women. As a result, the laws tend to disrupt and reconfigure traditional and cultural gender arrangements. So, the goal should not only need to ensure that every law in Namibia is gender-neutral, but to ensure that the past gender discrimination and harmful stereotypes and practices are abolished. Nonetheless, one may ask: how do men understand and benefit from women's emancipation and changes in gender roles? How do men perceive the implementation of these laws, and how do they react to these changes? How do their reactions relate to gender-based violence?

3.4.3 Men's perceptions of and responses to changing norms of gender roles

According to Callaghan (2010:3), thirty-six percent of women in Namibia have experienced either physical (31 percent) or sexual (17 percent) violence by a partner. However, 21 percent of these women never reported these cases to the police. Hence, to address the issue of violence against women, we first need to address the underlying power dynamics behind violence and gender injustice (Callaghan 2010:3). Both Muzvidziwa (2002:163) and Amutenya (2011: iv-v) argue that patriarchal ideology has influenced men to believe in their traditional gendered cultural and social identity as breadwinners, heads of families and providers. Once they realize that they cannot fulfill these roles, their sense of dignity becomes eroded. Consequently, in the post-apartheid era, in which wealth remains in the hands of a few men, and women also have become breadwinners and family providers, it is important to consider men's life experiences and how they live and cope with the current change in gender roles.

It seems that although women's social status has improved since independence, men are more likely to view women's rights in a negative manner (LeBeau 2004:1). According Hubbard (in Melber 2007b:104), men believe that women's rights detract from their rights. They express the feeling of loss of social status as many women continue to benefit from gender equality. Although some men acknowledge that certain customs discriminate against women, some do not think that patriarchy that is informed by culture is wrong. Many men in Namibia argue that women and men have different social and familial problems that did not exist before the gender equality laws were introduced. Hubbard (2007:104) is of the view that the implementation of the laws also caused men to fear that equality was introduced not only to empower women but also to disempower men. Hence, men use the excuse of such perceived difficulties to justify the continued discrimination against women and to justify violence against women (LeBeau 2004:1, 44). Men claim that women's rights have caused an increase in domestic violence. Further, some men claim that women now think that they are heads of the family, which causes their husbands to use their power to put them back in their place (LeBeau 2004:37, 44). Most Namibian men, including Ovawambo men, feel that women's rights have caused confusion and disagreement between couples because new family and gender roles give too much power to women. However, one important fact remains, that is, although men are not happy about the changing legal and social status of women, gender equality reforms continue.

The industrial revolution, modernization and urbanization brought about many rapid changes which created problems and tensions, not only among Namibian men in general, but also

among Ovawambo men which have affected their feelings of selfhood and self-image (Isaak 1997:33). The drastic transitions that took place in social structures, as well as the shifting of long-held beliefs by men, destroyed the defining lines and the very definitions of male identity. Most Ovawambo men feel that both men and women should have equal rights, but they are suspicious of the current laws which appear to favor only women (Mufune 2000:433-434; Morrell 2005:84). Furthermore, one root cause of the problem seems to lie in the public perception of power as a finite resource within families. Thus, there is a contradiction between the expectations and roles that boys and men are raised to fulfill and the realities that they experience in their own lives. This contradiction lies behind the strange combination of power and privilege, pain and powerlessness experienced by men (Kaufman in Tersøl 2006:405). The empowerment of women is viewed by some as leading ineluctably to the disempowerment of men.

Gender-based violence is a serious matter in Namibia which, in most cases, is caused by gender inequality and gender stereotyped roles for women and men. According to LeBeau (2004:5-13), the social roles assigned to women and men contribute to gender-based violence and conflict. In Namibia, the weakening of male dominance is primarily due to the Namibian government's efforts to curb gender inequality which, in most cases, results in gender-based violence. Jo, a 28-year-old Vambo man (in LeBeau & Spence 2004:40) agrees that conflict between Ovawambo men and their wives only arises when a woman is better educated and earns more money than her husband or when the man is retired or unable to provide for the family's needs. Some women could then become abusive towards their husbands. Although women's economic status has improved after Namibia political independence, men's economic position and lifestyle remain largely unchanged (LeBeau & Spence 2004:48). Most Ovawambo men are against the gender equality laws, and they prefer the traditional gender structure. Vambo Tomas' view (cited in LeBeau & Spence (2004:50) seems to represent most Ovawambo men's perception of the gender equality issue. Tomas remarks that:

> This has been too much for us men. Everywhere you go they talk about women's rights. I think it is being overemphasized now! …Women's rights cause problem between families. Because women are now just fighting for their own rights, they no longer recognize us. I do not agree with women being equal to men. I think men should remain as heads of households. Again if we refer to the Bible story, a man, Adam, was created first by God and he was given the power to rule everything on earth! My wife should not have equal rights to me. I remain the head of the household and that's all.

LeBeau and Spence (2004:48) further argue that as long as men view women's rights as a threat to them, this can lead to gender-based violence. Thus, in response, men abuse their power to

defend themselves and to retain their cultural and social gender role identities and expectations. As Kahn (1984 in Basow 1992:353) also points out, power is an integral part of male self-esteem and most men find it difficult to hand it over to women. Therefore, there is a tendency to turn to violence as a way of reasserting their masculinity. They use violence as an instrument to retain power and to control women. The only alternative way to gain power and to feel liberated is to become violent and to respond with aggressive behavior (Louw 2008:387). It is possible that men feel that these gender equality bills disempower them because the laws are powerful and have control over their female partners (Amathila 2012:257). This means that although the Namibian society has gender equality laws, women are still under the patriarchal rule and treated as minors (Amathila 2012:256). Men continue to fight to maintain their hierarchical position and their patriarchal identity as breadwinner, family property owner, head of the family, and controller. Consequently, women become victims in this situation. Therefore, the main problem women face in post-independence Namibia is men's resistance to accept the current gender equality movement. Hence, the prevention of gender-based violence, especially in intimate partner violence, needs to involve both males and females (Jewkes 2002:1426).

3.4.4 Gender-based discrimination in Namibia

Based on current research by the Namibia Law Reform and Development Commission (2014:6-8), incidents of gender-based violence are daily news in most Namibian newspapers and electronic media. Acts of intimate killings have become a daily reality and have become a national problem. Often, the circumstances surrounding these killings are seen as the fault of the victims. Namibia has witnessed an increase in intimate partner violence, especially domestic violence against women at the hands of their male partners (MGECW 2012:10). Although women also perpetrate violence against men in relationships,[22] men are the overwhelming majority of perpetrators because of the support they get from patriarchal rules. Among all the ethnic groups in Namibia, women have lower positions of authority and social status than men. Therefore, gender relations remain a problematic issue in post-independence Namibia (Wallace & Kinahan 2011:309-316), as gender-based violence continue to affect men, women, boys and girls in Namibia.

According to Sister Namibia newspaper (2015:1), one out of every three women in Namibia would have experienced gender-based violence in her lifetime. It is also estimated that one out

[22] See also http://www.namibian.com.na/index.php?page=read&id=38274.

of five women in Namibia lives in an abusive relationship (Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare 2009: xiv). Gender-based violence covers many forms of violence but domestic violence and rape are the most common in Namibia where 90% of the victims are women (Kakujaha-Matundu 2015:105). It has also been noted that women exert pressure on men as both mothers and wives (LeBeau 2004:2-3). In the research conducted by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare in 2007, 69.3% of respondents reveal that gender-based violence is a reality that continues to disturb the peace of couples in intimate relationships (MGECW 2012:23). Gender-based violence remains problematic in Namibia despite government's efforts to eliminate it. A survey done in Namibia indicates that one-third of all responders had experienced gender-based physical violence. Rape is the most prevalent crime (Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare 2013 UNAIDS; 2013:1, 17). However, the rate is quite different for males and females, as 40.5% of females and 27.6% of males are victims (MGECW 2009: xiv). According to a study by the World Health Organization (2005:12-13), over one-third of women in Namibia reported that they experienced physical or sexual violence from their intimate partners. The same study also reveals that 19% of respondents had, since the age of 15, experienced physical violence by a non-partner such as their boyfriends, fathers, teachers and female family members. This was also supported by the 2007/2008 survey of knowledge, attitudes and practices relating to gender-based violence which reveals that there is a high prevalence of gender-based violence in Namibia and that 34% of respondents are victims (MoHSS 2008:245; UNAIDS 2013:8).

Furthermore, the study done by Freeman and Kamwanyah (2015) among working women in Namibia reveals that working women are in danger of gender-based violence in their intimate relationships. Although they are working and do not depend on their husband's salaries, they suffer due to the power imbalances between them and their husbands. Participants regarded power as something which belongs to men but not to women in Namibia (Freeman & Kamwanyah 2015:11, 21). All the gender-based violence incidents in the study occurred 28 years after the introduction of gender equality laws that aim to counteract gender-biased laws. Nonetheless, the question that remains unanswered is: what causes men to abuse their power against women in post-independence Namibia? What does literature say about the possible root causes of and the driving force behind the current gender discrimination in Namibia and among the Ovawambo? So far, literature reveals several possible sources of gender-based violence among the Ovawambo: cultural gender stereotypes, the Ovawambo understanding of masculine identity, the current gender equality laws, emancipation of women, unemployment,

and power abuse. How these factors contribute to the increase in gender-based violence among Ovawambo needs to be probed.

3.4.5 Namibia's constitutional reform on gender inequality as a possible cause of gender-based violence

Thus far, we have noted that gender equality laws have helped women in Namibia to join the workforce. Great changes and transitions in human relationships have caused the understandings of cultures, patriarchal ideology, and current democratization to collide (Munroe 2009:11). Democratization and modernization, as well as the feminist movement, have posed a challenge to gender relationships. Feminist ideologies have taken a critical stance that challenges the patriarchal gender paradigm. Their theoretical understanding aims to change socio-cultural and religious institutions and all structures of domination and patriarchal exploitation (Louw 2008:382-383).

Feminists see the patriarchal gender paradigm as problematic because it associates males with the human characteristics of superiority and domination. At the same time, women are defined as inferior and passive. Hence, feminists try to reconstruct the gender paradigm to include women in full and equal humanity (Ruether 2002:3). Feminist theology also takes feminist critical ideas and construction of gender paradigms into the theological realm. Feminist theologians began to question the patterns of ideology that justify male dominance, female subordination, powerlessness, and cultural imperialism (Louw 2008:383). People start to re-evaluate what it means to be human, to be a man or a woman, and to be a country. This understanding resulted in changes to long-standing traditional gender norms that have been regarded as the foundation of men's identity. It is also argued that, to achieve gender equality, women have to participate in the labor market (Barker & Pawlak 2011:22).

According to Thomson (2002:170), the social and economic environment in which boys and young men grow up is different from that of their fathers and grandfathers who had a clearly defined role as the authority figure and provider in the family setting. Gender power and changing roles are driven by Western education and its concept of progress. Western education has created new values of individual self-improvement and competitiveness that promote female empowerment. Marriage becomes an option when it provides the chance of self-improvement rather than a necessary social institution. Competitiveness as a by-product of Western education has created a situation in which most married couples, especially the educated ones, are threatened by each other. The situation is also fuelled by the pressures and

unsettled emotions that underlie dominant masculinity or other dominant forms of being male which many cultures expect from men. Some men suffer because they fail to live up to the machismo[23] images that their social and cultural milieu expects of them (Sheerattan-Bisnauth 2010:115).

Waruta (2000) has also noted the new Namibian reality that in some current intimate relationships, a person is valued according to their academic and professional qualifications rather than according to gender. Many educated women who could get married may not want to acquiesce to the traditional role of wife due to their career and profession (Barker & Pawlak 2011: 23). Gender stereotypes and identities are also changing with changes in the economic and interpersonal relations between men and women. This has a great impact on children's lives, because the increasing number of female-headed families could mean that their boys could grow up without a positive male role model or choose their own gender identities. The traditional perception of what masculinity means is being questioned because boys and young men grow up facing a world unlike that of their fathers. These changes also cause conflict in marriage relationships in which husbands and wives struggle with marital roles (Balswick & Balswick 1989:153, 154). The changes in women's roles and the discourse about their rights have also affected men's roles and relations (Thomson 2002:17).

According to Mbiti (1990:220), most families are changing gradually from the traditional extended family to the egalitarian family system. The change also affects the marriage contract as it becomes an individual rather than a family and community affair that expresses tribal solidarity in Africa. In this view (UN 2011:1-2) men's understanding of masculinity has been challenged in two ways. On the one hand, women began to join the labor market in growing numbers and men are confronted with new roles that are culturally and socially regarded as a feminine work like rearing children. On the other hand, the pathways to manhood, particularly stable employment, are in flux due to the present global economic recession and ongoing restructuring in the labor market. Thus, one could ask: If a man is culturally and socially regarded as the breadwinner and provider, what happens if he is out of a job or does not have sufficient income to meet the social and cultural expectations of him as a man (Barker & Pawlak 2011:21)? As male dominance becomes threatened by the higher legal status of women, wider

[23] The word machismo refers to a man's attitudes and characteristics of prominently excessive masculinity such as domination, fierceness and bravado which are marked by toughness and aggressiveness (Sheerattan-Bisnauth & Peacock 2010:206). Machismo represents the cultural understanding that masculinity is about violence and dominion (Beynon 2002:163). Sheerattan-Bisnauth *et al.* (2010:206) also sees machismo as an attitude or character trait such as domination, fierceness, bravado, etc., in ways that are showily and histrionically tough.

spread unemployment and poverty, men become insecure regarding their own expected role in family and social lives (LeBeau 2004:186). In any situation of economic instability, nothing damages men's masculinity and self-esteem more than unemployment which strips them of their independence and control over family property and income (Beynon 2002:87). The changing nature of the job market, the end of many forms of career employment on a near global basis, increasing income inequality, and global labor and economic shifts cause most men across the world to live in fear of ambiguity, losing, being dependent, being ashamed, and appearing to be feminine (Barker & Pawlak 2011:24).

When the gender equality laws were introduced in Namibia, most male parliamentarians, including the Ovawambo who were the majority in parliament, opposed them. There was strong debate on the relevance of the laws, especially by Ovawambo male parliamentarians who criticized the laws (LeBeau & Spence 2004). The debate highlights two concerns— first, some men feared that "equality" is not a means to empower women, but rather a way of disempowering men. Second, there was a desire to cling to the perception of tradition and custom as justification for retaining the *status quo* in family relationships (LeBeau & Spence 2004:33). Furthermore Hubbard (2007:211) confirms that male parliamentarians, who were mostly Ovawambo men, resisted the adoption of this bill. Their fears and defensiveness were based on the concern that the gender-neutral Bill did not do enough to protect men, especially against forms of violence such as wives beating their husbands or depriving their husbands of sexual relationships. For this reason, gender-based violence is probably fuelled by the current political and economic tension. The increase in economic inequalities, warfare, nationalism, and insecurity could easily account for the increase in the rate of gender-based violence. The social challenge is that most Namibian men feel marginalized and resentful due to the gender equality laws that call for the protection of women only (NPAGBV 2012:20). They were not ready to accept women as equal partners in marriage and in social relationships (Becker 2000:172-173; LeBeau 2004:5; Hubbard 2007a:102-104; 2007b:210; Amathila 2012:256).

Although these bills may have brought about awareness of the rights of women, they did not stop gender-based violence. Intimate partner violence has increased especially in the last ten years (Amathila 2012:257). LeBeau (2001 in LeBeau & Spence 2004:40) also envisages that the increase in gender-based domestic violence is probably caused by the family law reforms that changed the status of men and women. The laws may have caused men to develop an inferiority complex, as they began to feel threatened by women's increasing social status. Men

started to defend themselves because they felt threatened that most of the law reforms favor women and do not represent the men as well. Some of the laws also contradict certain societal and religious traditions as well as culturally oriented individual beliefs because they challenge male-dominant norms which were shaped by ancient patriarchal ideologies especially in relation to the family (Hubbard 2007b:209-210). After outlining the changes caused by the gender equality laws in this study, three factors have emerged as some great predictors that probably force Ovawambo men to resist the laws and to abuse their power against women. These factors include patriarchal norms that undermine gender equality, women's emancipation, and male unemployment or financial deprivation. We shall probe existing literature for possible links between these factors and increase in gender-based violence, specifically among the Ovawambo.

3.4.5.1 Traditional patriarchal construction of gender versus gender equality

As mentioned above, gender-based violence is used as an umbrella term, and to analyze it in broader terms will clarify the root causes of, and solutions to, violence either at a personal, political or structural level. According to Raditloaneng (2013:61), there are socio-cultural factors that drive gender-based violence. Culture as a way of living from one generation to another can easily influence one generation to adopt the behaviors of a previous generation. In order to understand gender-based violence, it is important to understand the family as a system within a specific culture. Family or marriage is seen as a social system. Everyone within that system is viewed in some way as influencing or contributing to the abuse that occurs in the family. If, according to the ethics of living in a previous generation, it was normal to beat one's wife, then, this norm can easily extend into contemporary family life.

Hence, Minerson *et al* (2011:9-11) suggest that gender-based violence needs to be understood in the light of culture, gender relations, gender inequality, the socialization of men, power and patriarchy and masculinity, rather than of oppression and domination only. Gender-based violence is groomed by behavior, norms and attitudes which develop from socio-cultural views of gender and sexual structures (Sheerattan-Bisnauth 2010:115). It has its roots in a patriarchal social system[24] which is informed by a hierarchical model (Seidler 2006: xiv). The patriarchal

[24] Nürnberger (2016:319-320) notes that the patriarchal society reached back into pre-historic times when humankind was constantly threatened by various predators, diseases, hunger and war. When a woman lost her husband, the deceased was easily replaced by his brother who would continue sustaining the woman and her children as provider and protector. However, women were indispensable and were regarded as valuable members of a family, clan or tribe. Thus, they needed full protection and care not only because they were physically weaker than men, but also because they were sometimes vulnerable, especially during menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth

culture in which men are the dominant figures also influenced the composition of the biblical text. Power and authority are invested in men as leaders of the community while women and children are regarded as minors in both community and family relations (Chitando 2010:28). Thus, Jenkins (1990:11-58) and Nürnberger (2016:320) argue that notions of male dominance and ownership and female subservience are reinforced by a patriarchal social structure which has roots in religion including the Christian faith in which the highest deity was perceived to be male. Many verses of the Bible support patriarchal beliefs and activities because they were written in a patriarchal context. Some men use those verses to justify their position of dominance and power, for example, "…yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you" (Gen 3:16b RSV); "Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord…wives also be subject in everything to their husbands" (Eph 5:22 RSV); or "Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord" (Col 3:18 RSV). These texts are often used to justify men's control over women and to show the result of sin that entered the world, rather than to prescribe what God intended.

Furthermore, many of the authors of the biblical books were men, some of whom were founders of the nation of Israel and were seen as holy and obedient to God. In this way, some texts of the Bible promote oppressive and harmful patriarchal gender relations (Chitando 2010:28-29). The portrayal of God as male, as well as the patriarchal ideology, had a rapid influence over the Christian community. If God is male, then, all God's representatives were considered males. Christ, priests, the pope, emperor, and bishops had to be male because they represented a male God. This is one of the main reasons why most church denominations were hesitant to ordain women as pastors or priests (Nürnberger (2016:320). Accordingly, Wiehe (1998:86) argues that gender-based violence, especially violence in intimate relationships, is driven by male domination and gender inequality (Mogotsi 2015:11). Poling (1991:3, 187-191) states that patriarchal ideology gives men room to abuse women, and it is a major contributor to gender violence because it is based on the idea of female's subordinate position in society (Dobash & Dobash 1998:53-54; Kaldine 2007:236).

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and child rearing. Men continued to act as heads of families, hunters and warriors while women remained in the background to tend the homes and take care of the children and the elderly people. This task of maintaining the clan welfare was a paramount status symbol. Subsequently, men became extremely possessive and jealous of their women and children, and in most ancient cultures, men began to place themselves above women who were rendered subservient to them. Sometimes women and children were regarded as slaves (Ex. 21:2-11). Thus, the gender arrangement was underpinned by mythology, legitimated by religious assumptions and drilled into children from their earliest days.

However, Raditloaneng (2013:66) argues that it is not only women who are abused by men; some men are also abused by women, but such cases go unreported because it is too shameful for African men to report such incidents due to socio-cultural norms (see also Kaldine 2007:230). One of the main factors that contribute to gender-based violence is patriarchy which fuels the male understanding of the need to control and dominate women, children, nature, as well as competition by men to exercise dominance over one another. Patriarchy may be seen as a mass-produced instrument of gender inequality, hierarchy and sexism[25] (Louw 2008:381). For this reason, the feminist movement has called for an end to sexist oppression, as patriarchy confers too much power on men. Women challenge this hierarchal status which causes them to suffer at the hands of men. Equality becomes paramount in the gender debate and is related to basic human rights.

In this regard, the gender debate must take cognizance of the role of patriarchalism (Miller-McLemore 1999:79; Louw 2008:384). Culbertson (1994:22, 12) prefers the term patriarchalism to patriarchy in line with Augusberger (1986 in Culbertson 1992; 1994) who describes it as a product of four interlocking premises: physical power, cultural gender organization, male economic control, and religious influence on gender relationship. These four interlocking justifications which center upon biological, cultural, economic, and religious notions have confirmed until now the unquestioned position of males in society. They also encourage the oppressive behavior and social structures that lead to male dominion over women. The problem with these interlocking positions is that they feed oppressive behavior and social structures and lead to the domination of one gender over the other. Thus, equality between men and women could not be envisioned as long as patriarchal ideology exists (Nürnberger 2016:320).

Patriarchalism encourages men to claim more power over women and to be in control in intimate relationships as well as in discrete acts. It leads to male violence and abuse of power. Male power abuse and violence include physical, visual, verbal, or sexual acts that are experienced by women or girls as a threat, invasion, or assault. Male violence,[26] therefore, puts

[25] Feminism is far more than a movement that seeks to achieve equal rights, individual freedom and economic and social equity for middle-class White women. Instead, a feminist perspective demands a critical analysis of structures and ideologies that rank people as inferior or superior according to various traits of human nature including gender, sexual orientation, class, colour, age, physical ability and so forth. Feminism strives to eradicate sexism and related exploitative classificatory systems and to allow those silenced to join in the cultural activity of defining reality (Miller-McLemore 1999:79).

[26] Violence is a way of expressing or asserting control over another, of establishing one's own autonomy and negating the other person's. It is a way of repudiating dependency while attempting to avoid the consequent feeling of aloneness. It makes the other an object but retains possession of her or him (Benjamin 1983:285).

more emphasis on the theme of power, control and dominance of men over women and children as well as the power to dominate other fellow men. This causes racism, sexism, war, hatred, and economic oppression. Male power and violence creates the fabric that produces gender-based violence and gender inequality.

Nonetheless, Ristock (2002:22) has a different view about the root causes of, and driving forces behind, gender-based violence. He argues that we need to be careful when we talk about gender-based violence as a product of the patriarchal system because not all forms of violence occur in opposite-sex relationships but some occur in same-sex relationships such as lesbian and gay relationships. Muzvidziwa (2002:174) also notes that gender-based violence stems from power and control whilst Girshick (2001:31-35) argues that placing patriarchy at the center stage does not give us a clear picture of the gender violence issue. Hence, she suggests that a critical examination of the question of power over others is needed, a model which accounts for patriarchy, racism, classism, and other forms of oppression. To understand gender-based violence, we need to examine both the intimate details of family life and geopolitical considerations of power and warfare.

Merry (2009:23) also claims that the eradication of gender-based violence which is fuelled by patriarchal ideology, does not only result in empowering and emancipating women economically and politically or strengthening the gender relationship laws, it also challenges the ideology of patriarchy. This can be done by exploring gender violence from the cultural and social perspectives of both offenders and perpetrators because gender-based violence is deeply rooted in cultural understandings of gender and power, whether in marriage or among strangers. For example, the rape of women by soldiers during wartime is based on the understanding of dominance by the rapist/s (Jones 2000:5). However, because the present study focuses on marriage relationships, the scope will be limited to intimate relationships including marriage.

Hautzinger (2007:95) reveals that in the Brazilian context of marriage, men's violence is driven both by efforts to assert their power over their women and a response to their own vulnerability in economic and social terms. Likewise, women are battered by their husbands because they are in a highly subordinated position or because they are contesting their gendered positions of inferiority. Hautzinger's analysis is helpful because it shows women fighting to get rid of their inferior position of submission as well as the domains where men live with substantial constraints on their lives which they manage through violence against their partners.

In Namibia, all the government efforts to curb gender-based violence have so far yielded few results[27] (Akawa 2014: 24). The Namibian government has introduced more laws and programs to challenge gender inequality which is fuelled by patriarchal ideology. These programs are meant to combat various aspects of violence against women and include actions to increase the participation of women in the labor force, reformed national institutions, a ministry of gender equality and child warfare, promoting economic empowerment of women, an increase in women's participation in politics and in key decision-making organs. However, gender-based violence still prevails in most marriages and families. Indeed, Jonera (2014) and Jewkes (2002:1424-1426) point out that some Namibian men regard these laws as a threat and this view is worsened by factors such as poverty, unemployment and high rates of alcoholism, which contribute to violence against women. Some Ovawambo men resist the laws because they believe that they are biased against them but favor women.

It would be helpful if the gender equality laws actually guarantee justice and equal opportunities for both men and women (Culbertson 1992:2). However, it seems that the laws do not emancipate men in intimate relationships who also experience psychological and physical abuse. Lebeau & Spence (2004: 30) concur, stating that some Ovawambo men are feeling threatened and discriminated against by the new laws that emancipated women in family and marriage relationship. They feel that men and women should have equal laws, but that these new laws just com favor women. This indicates that some men believe that gender equality laws have come to replace the patriarchal norms with matriarchal norms and hegemonic masculinity with hegemonic femininity. Although there is a proliferation of gender related policies and legislation, they do not offer lasting solutions to conflict in Ovawambo family life. Men continue to regard the laws as a threat to their social and cultural status (Jonera 2014:1424-1426). According to Shinedima (2017:6), this threat is caused by the patriarchal ideologies which still play a key role in many intimate relationships in Namibia. The patriarchal

[27] It seems that all the Namibian government's efforts to stop or curb GBV do not find any lasting solutions. In 2012 alone 12,000 cases of GBV were reported and this number is increasing on a daily bases with more than 1070 of women raped nation wide. Females, whether adults or juveniles, remain the main victims. In 2013 more than 10,000 cases of assault, with intent to do serious bodily harm were reported. Although there is a proliferation of gender related policies and legislations, the translation of the policies into programmes and the enforcement of the legislations remain an important challenge to addressing gender concerns in the country. The Namibian government has introduced more laws and programmes to combat various aspects of violence against women, actions to increase the participation of women in the labor force, reformed national institutions, ministry of gender equality and child warfare, promoting the economic empowerment of women, an increase in women's participation in politics and in key decision-making organs, but GBV still prevail. It seems laws and efforts are seen as a threat to some men in Namibia. The threats to men's social status, exacerbated by factors such as poverty, unemployment and high rates of alcoholism, contribute to violence against women (Jonera 2014).

influences promote sexism, inequality and violence against women, and as long as a patriarchal understanding defines masculinity, men will not abandon it and women will forever continue to be under their control.

The Namibian constitution promotes equality laws to end patriarchal gender practice in intimate relationships, but men continue to show their resistance because gender equality contradicts patriarchal culture which bestows on men high status and authority (Barker & Pawlak 2011: 23). Thus, male resistance to gender equality will continue to strengthen patriarchy and gender-based violence in intimate relationships. In Namibia, it is assumed that gender-based violence has patriarchal origins and it relies on power, domination and force, probably because most cultures like the Ovawambo often regard men as power agents who need to express anger through violence (LeBeau & Spence 2004:38-39; Talavera 2007:47-48). Thus, patriarchy promotes gender-based violence in a double way. First, it accords a position of superiority to men, which violates women's rights. Second, in a gender equality context, men continue to abuse their power to retain their patriarchal masculine identity. In this push-and-pull marathon between gender equality and patriarchy, violence continues to occur in family settings and makes life very difficult for couples in intimate relationships. Thus, men's power which is influenced by patriarchy appears to be the root cause of acts of gender-based violence, especially violence against women, because it presupposes control over women's bodies and treats them as men's property through practices such as *lobola* payment (Akawa 2014:24). Dayam (2010:34) concludes that gender-based violence could only be eliminated if liberation theology for men begins with an awareness of the uneven power distribution between the sexes. Men's cultural, political and economic power also needs to be examined to curb all hegemonic attitudes, especially in a changing gender role-context.

3.4.5.2 Women's emancipation, men's resistance and fear

Throughout the world, the human community has been characterized by unrestrained structures of injustice, oppression and discrimination which cause millions of people to suffer, especially women and children. One of these unrestrained structures is gender-based violence (Nasimiyu-Wasike 2000:120). Male violence against women and children as well as other fellow men is a major problem in the world today (Poling 2003:1). Gender-based violence has become a societal problem and raises a major counseling challenge to both churches and states (Nasimiyu-Wasike 2000:120). Although men and boys are also victims of gender violence they often choose not to relate their experiences because they are socialized to disregard pain and

not to show their emotions, as doing otherwise is regarded as a sign weakness and cowardice. In the long run, they respond to abuse through violence which means both men and women contribute to the perpetuation of gender-based violence from one generation to another (Legal Assistance Centre 2008:10; MGECW 2008:55; Halweendo 2012:86).

Nonetheless, women suffer from gender discrimination more than men do. Waruta (2000:110-111; 123) and Mbiti (1990:220) argue that women suffer more than men because of the *lobola* that men pay during the wedding negotiations. Some men feel that they own women because they paid *lobola* before their wedding, which they often equate with "buying" a wife like one would buy a pair of shoes or a car. Therefore, they feel they can beat their wives as they wish because the women cost them money. On his part, Jewkes (2002:1426) argues that the major contributing factors to intimate partner violence are modernization and democratization. Modernization places more emphasis on educational qualifications which causes major disruptions, disunity and conflict in marriage and family relationships and can lead to gender-based violence. However, most spouses, especially women in abusive relationships, find themselves in a dilemma about leaving their abusive partners due to economic dependency on the partners.

According to a survey done by MGECW (2008:48-53), the following question had a shocking response: "Under what circumstance, if any, is it culturally acceptable for a husband to strike his wife/long-term partner…?" Males were more likely than women to feel that slapping or something similar was acceptable in most situations. Slapping may be allowed if a woman believes that she has given him a sexual disease, if she has male friends, if he feels that she practices witchcraft, if she leaves the house without telling him, if he feels that she is neglecting the children and if he feels that she is being argumentative. The rise of feminist critical thinking against male violence in 1848 in the United States of America caused women worldwide to gather in support groups. In their meetings, they discovered that they had two common threats, which engender power abuse against women namely patriarchy and gender inequality (Thompson & Hickey 1996:182; Poling 2003:1).

The inequality between men and women has a very long history. One of the practical examples of gender inequality is found in the Roman marriage laws instituted in 753 B.C. According to this law, women were expected to join their husbands in marriage and share all possessions together, but sharing was defined as the woman being ruled over by her husband. She had to obey his wishes and demands. Later, this law influenced the British as well as American

common law. The British common law of the 19th century stipulated that men could beat their wives by imposing the "rule of thumb," which allowed a man to beat his wife with a rod which is not thicker than his thumb. Although this rule was meant to protect women from serious harm, it gave men license to beat them and to violate their rights and dignity. Thus, women and girls are more in danger of gender-based violence due to the patriarchal system and their subordinate status in society and culture as well as their vulnerability to violence due to economic dependency on men and their physical power (Wiehe 1998:86).

It is important to note that the first wave of feminism aimed at eliminating all patriarchal ideologies and to establish equality between the sexes (Thompson & Hickey 1996:182; Poling 2003:1). This led to a new gender transformation which has been experienced in different parts of the world including Namibia where it spelled economic freedom for women. Furthermore, Cohen (1990:195-196) argues that although the feminist movement helped to bring the issue of violence against women into the gender discussion, it does not make life better for men. It is highly possible that its conception would cause men to develop negative ideas and the fear of losing their power.

The Namibian constitution in Articles 10 and 14 recommends that all citizens be accorded equal rights under the law. Men and women must also be treated as equal partners in all aspects of marriage and family lives. All forms of discrimination and sexism are forbidden (Legal Assistance Centre 2001:6). Thus, Tapscott and Hubbard (1991:4) reveal that at Namibia's independence, there were thirteen civil laws and acts that favored only men in Namibia. When the constitution adopted the gender equality laws, these thirteen gender-biased laws were abolished. The constitution further adopted affirmative action policies to enhance women's status and roles in society. In the same vein, the constitution paved the way for equal remuneration and maternity leave payments for women. It also called for equal power relations between men and women in all spheres of social, legal and economic lives (Iipinge 2005:5).

However, most Namibian men fiercely resisted the abolishment of these laws. Since the country's independence, the changes in women's family roles have confused most men including Ovawambo men who consider women's emancipation as a means of stripping them of their manhood and status as heads of households and making them feel threatened by and inferior to women. Some Ovawambo men also believe that there is a crisis in family life because of calls for women's rights and gender equality. Some women now disobey their husbands, especially if they are employed and earn more money than their husbands do. Men

also fear that changes in gender roles and women's economic empowerment diminish their personal power and status, as some women take advantage of the changes to punish men for their past abuse (Hubbard 2007b:226). Men are also afraid of losing face if they abandon the roles that society and culture expect of or assign to them and for which they have been trained. They therefore shun any form of power sharing with women especially in the economic sphere (Hubbard 2007:211). Many men also fear their educated or rich wives for their economic strength (Waruta 2000:110-111). Men's fears can lead to a crisis of masculinity that causes gender-based conflicts and disturbance due to the social and political transformation. The International Violence against Women Movement has noted that gender-based violence emanates from men's sense of entitlement which feeds on patriarchy. Thus, Becker (2000:57) strongly claims that gender-based violence is caused by men's vulnerability based on the international and regional Southern African research on masculinity that revealed that social, political, economic and cultural changes threaten male identities and privileges, which were previously taken for granted.

However, gender violence in Namibia is not restricted to the poor but is found in every social and income group. As men were trained to define their power in a hierarchical way, women's empowerment caused most men to live with feelings of fear, failure, powerlessness and anger (Clinebell 1984:305; Jonera 2014:1). Empowering women could also lead to increase in gender-based violence because men who feel inferior would be persuaded to challenge the *status quo* by using violence in the household to maintain their position (Khandker 1998:76). Men are conditioned to vent their frustration and rage at those who are weak and socially defined as less significant and powerful, that is, women and children. Therefore, gender-based violence is rooted in the unequal distribution of social status and of economic, political and legal power between women and men (Clinebell 1984:305).

Herrera *et al* (2012:17) argue that this imbalance of power causes most men to react in an abusive manner particularly when they realize that they are losing power and authority over women. The inequality of power is the result of one group subscribing to an ideology of domination. Whenever there is inequality of power, that is, whenever one group dominates another, the first group often generates an ideology that facilitates the perpetuation of the dominant position it holds. For men and women, that ideology is sexism based on a patriarchal understanding and it causes men to develop a negative attitude toward women based on their supposed inferiority as a group. LeBeau and Spence (2004:30) stress that some Ovawambo men seem to feel threatened and discriminated against by the new laws that emancipated

women in family and marriage relationships. As a result, high incidents of intimate partner violence have been experienced in marriage and family settings (LeBeau 2004:186).

However, gender-based violence is not only about male power over women, but it includes a wide range of attacks on self-esteem, personal possessions, emotional and financial well-being. Men's feeling of being threatened, economic insecurity, and other indirect harms are seen as contributing factors to men's abuse of their power against women. Thus, any attempt to stop men's violence against women must probe how and why men developed fear in this democratic context (Merry 2009:181-182). Again, Beynon (2002: 15) reveals that men's fear and low self-esteem emanate from their present masculine identity which focuses on achievement, power, prestige and profit seeking. Many men are overwhelmed by anxiety because of their level of achievement, being inept at disclosure, and seemingly being unable to express their feelings. Stress and frustration are part of the reasons why men abuse their power against women and children. The social and cultural image of men as strong, in control and unemotional can prevent them from sharing their problems with anyone and result in violence against women and children (Kaldine 2007:237). This shows that most men are exposed through fragile traditional masculinity and that they need liberation. However, their liberation is not possible as long as they are overwhelmed by the fear of the unknown which serves as a stumbling block. The fears that play a decisive role in promoting patriarchal masculinity include disclosing emotions and being exposed to the affective, losing face, and losing cultural notions of a man's role in society (Louw 2008:386-387).

Culbertson (1992:2) concludes that in this context where patriarchal ideology is challenged by feminism and unreversed gender equality laws, men need to:

> …take feminism seriously and try to figure out who they have been, who they are now, what they need, and how they understand themselves. They need to seek the ways that help them to continue to claim all that is good about maleness and masculinity without perpetuating violence against women.

Similarly, Merry (2009) stresses that men also need to engage in programs that aim to end gender-based violence and to focus more on factors relating to men's personality that produce violence as well as inequalities produced by capitalism, male political hierarchies and inequalities of race and class (Merry 2009:186). Like Merry, Jewkes (2002:1427) concludes that the eradication of gender-based violence is possible through in-depth gathering of information from gender-based violence perpetrators in order to understand the motives behind their crime. Amathila (2012:257) also argues that gender-based violence can be curbed if people change the way male children are raised. Boys need to be trained to show compassion,

abandon masochistic male stereotypes, and taught to respect their mothers and girls of their age. There is an urgent need for men to change for the sake of women, for example, by taking on greater burdens of domestic work and giving up some of their control over household finance and decision-making. Women's liberation from gender inequality can only happen if the issue of power in gender relationships is revisited and men give up some power. Thus far, one may ask: how does a man react if he fails to live according to the socio-cultural expectations of masculinity in his community?

3.4.5.3 Men's experience of economic hardship, masculinity crisis and power abuse

Another cause of gender conflict is the differences in work roles. Before the machine age, the physiological differences between the sexes determined one's task. Being larger and stronger than women, men were expected to do heavy work and women were to take care of the children at home. With the emergence of electronics and computers however, most of the valued work no longer comes in the form of manual labor, but rather as intellectual tasks. This meant that both males and females are equally qualified to work (Balswick & Balswick 1989:153-154). Men as breadwinners and heads of the family must try to acquire more property to retain their hierarchal and decision-making position in the family (Wiehe 1998:86; LeBeau 2004:6) Men's vulnerability due to cultural and social expectations of manhood results in stress and abuse of their power (Akwenye 2017:3). This perspective could easily cause problems in families because more women now contribute more to family income and more women are therefore now heads of their families.

Men's experience of job loss, frustrated expectations of wide-ranging socio-economic change, the insecurities of democratization, and the demands for the democratization of gender relations cause men to feel vulnerable. The current increase in social violence, particularly violence against women, in Namibia is one response (Becker 2000:57). Thus, it is not surprising that since independence, Namibia has experienced a dramatic increase in violence against women. How do men understand this shift in economic paradigm? It seems that the shift has resulted in a masculinity crisis because, on the one hand, men are trying to maintain their hierarchical position as heads of the family and property owners, and on the other hand, they may be unable to contribute to family income as much as women (Wamue-Ngare & Njoroge 2011:13).

In a situation of unemployment, some men who do household chores while being supported by their working wives suffer intense feelings of disempowerment, emasculation, and loss of self-esteem. The situation also leads to a masculinity crisis because such men are unable to fulfill

their duties as providers and protectors (Beynon 2002: 87). Furthermore, Barker & Pawlak (2011:21;24) suggest that men who are financially unstable are easily overwhelmed by shame, stress, depression and lack of social identity. In many parts of the world, unemployment or underemployment, economic stress, and income instability cause mental health problems in some men. Unemployed men not only suffer from loss of income, they experience loss of structure to their day, loss of purpose and loss of masculine identity. Some men die soon after they are retrenched or retired (Culbertson 1994:25-28, 42), while others abuse their physical power to regain and reassert their position. Thus, men's traditional roles as breadwinners and owners of family assets is undermined also by poverty and unemployment (LeBeau 2004:186). Economic deprivation may also drive gender violence because it imposes a strain on family life. The shortage of money affects the man's status as protector and breadwinner, as well as his self-respect. The stress may cause him to resort to violence as an alternative means of exerting his authority over his family (Kaldine 2007:237; Jewkes 2002:1424).

Boys are always encouraged not to show their emotions, for example, by refraining from crying when injured or by always showing a tough exterior. Being caring, empathic, and sensitive to their own and others' emotions is regarded as a feminine trait (Thompson & Hickey 1996:168-169; Wiehe 1998:86). As they grow up, therefore, boys begin to exhibit aggressive attitudes which subsequently may influence relationships between men and women, not only in corporate boardrooms, legislatures, some religious organizations and other social institutions, but also in marital relationships. This shows that one is not born with a gender identity, but it is acquired through social and cultural expectations (Mirsky 1996:27). However, the danger of gender fabrication lies in the fact of gender discrimination. Males are seen as superior while females are expected to take an inferior and submissive position.

Seidler's (1997:24) study of masculinity shows that men's ideas of dominant male identities are always established at the expense of others, and that they can only feel good about themselves if they denigrate others. He notes that hegemonic masculinity and power abuse are the primary source of gender-based violence and, therefore, what is needed is positive masculinity as well as gender justice (see also Becker 2007:23, 33; LaFont 2007:247 & Wise 2007:331; Wamue-Ngare & Njorone 2011:10- 20). Thus, one of the immediate causes of crises in gender/intimate relationships like marriage and family is power abuse which leads to gender-based violence and human rights violations. Gender-based violence is caused by power inequality, as one person has power over the other.

In addition, Olson and Leonard (1996:17) argue that such conflict is caused by long-standing patriarchal cultural beliefs that family authority and decision-making power belong to men. Some men are inclined to feel strong and successful if they are in positions of power over others (Clinebell 1984:305). In Africa, most men have authority and power in family affairs and own all family property including land, livestock, home and all belongings. According to Connell (1987 in Morrell 2001:10), the notion of patriarchal power is analyzed on two levels. The first is gender power, identified as multiple actions that include force and decision by one person over another. The second is cathexis power which relates to the social structure of sexuality and emotions. In addition, Cromwell and Olson (in Wamue-Ngare & Njoroge 2011:12) classify family power into three areas, namely, power bases, power process and power outcomes.

French and Raven (in Wamue-Ngare & Njoroge 2011:12) further consider power bases through a micro system view of family power. Their thorough analysis of power within the family came up with six categories of family power: legitimate power, informational power, referential power, coercive power, expert power, and reward power. Legitimate power is power which is endorsed by the belief system within the family. Information power rests on the person who earns more income, while referential power is the power that projects friendliness in the family. Coercive power has to do with the use of physical and psychological force to impose one's way on others in the family. Expert power has its origins in education, training, or experience that is relevant to the issue at hand, and reward power is used to influence others by providing physical and psychological benefits to those who comply with one's wishes (Wamue-Ngare & Njoroge 2011:12).

In the light of these categories of power, this study recognizes that legitimate, coercive and information power are the root causes of gender-based violence. People in high positions and those who earn more income or control the family income are the ones who abuse others. Thus, power between husband and wife seems to be determined by the income each one contributes to the family (Blood & Wolfe in Wamue-Ngare & Njoroge 2011:12). The one who brings in more money is the one who has power over the other. If a man wishes to remain the family head, he would have to contribute more to the family income in order to win in this gender game. Clearly, economic power and deprivation pose a challenge to marriage and family relationships. While men continue to fight to maintain superiority, women continue to seek emancipation from patriarchal ideology by earning their own income and becoming financially independent (Wamue-Ngare & Njoroge 2011:13).

Gelles (in Jewkes 2002:1424) postulates that there is a link between violence and poverty, but this link can only be mediated through masculine identity. When men find themselves in poverty and are unable to live up to their ideas of successful manhood, the stress causes some of them to be violent towards their partners (Jewkes 2002:1424). The loss of masculine power could result in gender-based violence, possibly from both sides (Kaldine 2007:235).

Nonetheless, it is not clear why unemployment increases the risk of gender-based violence. Is it the low income or other factors that accompany poverty, such as overcrowding or hopelessness that cause the increase? When some men go through financial challenges, they may experience stress, frustration and a sense of inadequacy because they have failed to live up to their cultural and family expectations of them as providers (Krug *et al* 2009:99). In order words, there is a link between masculine identity, male economic vulnerability or unemployment, women's economic empowerment and gender-based violence. Thus, gender-based violence could be fuelled by the ideal image of masculine success which has collapsed in the current democratic context (Jewkes 2002:1424). On the one hand, men fight to retain their position as head of the family using both economic and physical power, while on the other hand, some women feel that the era in which women have to submit to men is gone. Now it is the women's turn to hit back and put an end to their experiences of inferiority. The ongoing drama denotes the conflict between men's physical power and women's economic power which results in intimate partner violence (Kaldine 2007:235).

Gender-based violence seems to be a social and family norm in which men are violent towards women because they are no longer able to control or economically support the women. Gender-based violence in general and intimate partner violence in particular must not only be seen as an expression of male power and dominance over women, but also as being rooted in male vulnerability stemming from social expectations of manhood that are unattainable because of various factors including poverty and the economic vulnerability experienced by men. Since male identity is always associated with the experience of power, men may see any challenge to the exercise of power as a threat to their masculine identity (Jewkes 2002:1424). This suggests that patriarchal ideology and the imbalance of power between men and women are major causes of gender conflict and intimate partner violence.

Louw (2008:385) affirms that all forms of gender-based violence are justified by patriarchal ideologies which include biological, cultural, economic and religious understanding. These patriarchal understandings feed oppressive behavior and social structures and lead to the

domination of women by men. Patriarchalism encourages men to use their power and violent behavior to maintain the position of control in intimate relationships. This causes many women to suffer abuse and male violence which include physical, visual, verbal or sexual acts (Poling 1991:140; Louw 2008:385).

Another root cause of gender-based violence is the arrival of democracy which placed emphasis on gender equality and women's emancipation (Jewkes 2002:1426; Louw 2008:387-388), thereby producing fear and resistance in men. Many men today are overwhelmed by the fear of showing their emotions and the fear of losing status and power. It is understandable that men are overwhelmed by these fears, since poverty and unemployment have become part of the current context, and gender-based violence cases have increased, especially among the Ovawambo, since Namibia's political independence. The male ideology of superiority which authorizes men to discipline women by using force is also one of the contributing factors to gender-based violence. However, in the context of such ideologies, women also endorse male power because most male children grow up with and are taught by their mothers.

3.4.6 Need to transform masculinity

According to Poling (1991:3, 187-191) the main issues in, and the root causes of, gender-based violence that need to be challenged are patriarchy and power. Besides patriarchy and power however, the hierarchical position that places one gender above the other also needs to be challenged. Louw (2008:384-385; 2015:2) explains that gender conflict and violence are centered on patriarchalism which highlights the importance of male power, control in intimate relationships and men's different gender behavior.

Hence, Chitando (2012:75) proposes that in the challenges of violence against women and children there is an urgent call for the transformation of masculinity. Transformation is needed to influence masculine ideologies through deconstructing fixed and stigmatizing discriminatory categories, and by criticizing power relations among people and the hindering factor of threats on male power that is culturally, socially and theological justified (Bons-Storm 1996:25). This means challenging theories that tend to fuel hegemonic masculine identity. It is important to move beyond the hegemonic masculinity that tends to offer a top-down vision that orders the relationships between men and women only in terms of power and subordination and to seek ways to transform present notions of masculinity (Seidler 2006: xix). Gender equality without the transformation of the norms and behaviors that reinforce gender-based violence will not last. This is because the logic of gender-based violence is rooted in gender

stereotypes such as ideas that men are providers, exhibit macho behavior, and are naturally violent (Sida 2015:17).

One of the prevention strategies is to discourage cultural and traditional practices that are informed by conservative and patriarchal value systems that promote gender-based violence (Machisa & Van Dorp 2012:21). This can be done by educating men to change their abusive attitudes and support them in coping with gender role changes without using coercive power. There is also a need to create an enabling environment in which men and women work towards re-defining, re-ordering, re-orienting and thus transforming dominant attitudes towards one another. This requires a gender transformative approach which seeks to identify those gender and cultural norms which violate human rights and dignity and works toward gender equality (Brown *et al* 2005:585-598; Sheerattan-Bisnauth 2010:134; Halweendo 2012:6). Nevertheless, the eradication of harmful masculine ideologies and power abuse by men based on social structures and cultural norms remains a problem unless the traditional norms, social structures and cultural ideologies that back them up are also transformed (Jenkins 1990:11-58; Jewkes 2002:1426).

Various types of research have highlighted the need to transform harmful cultural and social norms that contribute to gender-based violence by transforming masculinity and promoting a new understanding of how to use male power. Studies that call for the transformation of masculinity as a solution to gender-based violence include Lang (in de Mel *et al* 2013: iii; cf. Migliore 1983:49-59; Jenkins 1990:11-58; Brown *et al* 2005:585-598; Owino 2009:74-95; Sheerattan-Bisnauth 2010:134; Halweendo 2012:6-96; Chitando 2013a:6-9; 2013b:667). In the light of the above view, one can say that the prevention of hegemonic masculinity and male power abuse can be achieved by transforming the idea of male power. However, the question is how such a project would be undertaken (Van Klinken 2011:81). What can the ELCIN do to engage men in that transformation project and help them to develop an alternative form of masculinity that is compassionate and liberating, redemptive and constructive (Owino 2009:92; Van Klinken 2011:80)? Therefore, there is an urgent need to probe Ovawambo men's behavior in the post-independence era of law reforms as well as their experiences regarding power and dysfunction and their impact on family wellbeing in order to draw an agenda for a masculinity transformation project.

3.5 Conclusion

This literature review has shown that the primary causes of gender-based violence in Ovawambo family setting are patriarchal ideology and unequal power relations between men and women. Thus, patriarchy is a factor in current intimate partner violence which affects the wellbeing of many marriages and families. Additionally, the effects of Namibia's war, unemployment, and women's emancipation have eroded men's traditional status of patriarchal superiority and caused them to feel vulnerable and to develop a fear of being ruled by women. As both Ovawambo men and women learn to exercise their power towards one another in a compassionate manner and with less emphasis on dominance, they will find it easier to live in peace and harmony in their intimate relationships. However, patriarchal ideology remains a huge obstacle in current gender relationships.

Patriarchy has bestowed power disproportionately on men, and men abuse this power. Men therefore need to learn to use their power in constructive ways.

In sum, the findings on the root causes of gender-based violence show that men abuse their power over women in most cases when they realize that they are in danger of losing that power or control, especially in cultures that are shaped by patriarchal ideology. Introducing new laws or empowering women alone will not resolve the current gender conflict. Rather, influencing the negative attitudes to be transformed by a new approach to gender-based violence will also be helpful (Khandker 1998:76). The strategy is to transform masculinity by redefining the notion of masculinity in order to assist men to use their power in constructive and compassionate ways that would benefit them, their wives and family as well as the community.

Most of the above literature on masculinity and gender-based violence proposes the urgent need to tackle the issue of gender-based violence and male transformation, but from different perspectives and in different contexts. For instance, Ezra Chitando emphasizes that research efforts in religious studies in Africa be directed towards the transformation of masculinity to have a new approach to power. However, men need to be supported during this process of masculinity transformation because it is not easy for them to lose what they culturally feel make them real men. But none of the literature offers proposals about how men can be in this regard. None of the above literature addresses the link between emancipation of women by the law in Namibia and the increase in domestic gender-based violence. None of the research in Namibia has been done among the Ovawambo men to listen to their experience after the gender equality laws have been implemented and what motivated their violent behavior towards

women. None of the existing literature considered the root causes of gender-based violence and how it poses a danger to men's lives and their family members' lives among the Ovawambo community, and how the church could help in this crisis. Therefore, there is an urgent need for research among the Ovawambo men to listen to their life experiences in intimate relationships since the emancipation and empowerment of women, and this research review discloses a gap in the literature that needs to be filled. Hence, this study will seek to contribute to supportive paradigms that liberate and transform males from the ideology of power abuse and their psychological struggle in post-independence Namibia. There is a need to adopt a theoretical approach that can be used to transform Ovawambo hegemonic masculine identity and attitudes that pose harm to intimate relationships and violate human rights and dignity.

In the next chapter, we shall consider the *theopaschitic* theory as a theoretical framework for this study. Based on the *theopaschitic* understanding of God's power, this study could contribute to the transforming of Ovawambo men's traditional understanding of manhood and masculinity which is based on dominant authoritarianism and competitiveness. It could also help liberate men from personal psychological issues that affect their male identities and self-esteem in the current changing socio-economic context, so that they will be better able to shift from hegemonic and dominating masculinity to compassionate and redemptive masculinity.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEOPASCHITIC THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, we reviewed literature on the root causes of gender-based violence. Most studies reveal that the root causes of gender-based violence include patriarchal ideologies and unequal power relations between men and women. Patriarchy is a major contributing factor to acts of violence in current intimate relationships which affect many marriages and families. Two other factors, namely unemployment and women's emancipation, also have negative implications for men because they deny men their traditional status of patriarchal superiority and cause them to feel vulnerable. In this chapter, the theoretical framework for this study is presented. A theoretical framework outlines an idea or approach that is grounded on a paradigm[28] and it is used to view and gather knowledge and to explore basic ways of addressing a nominated topic (Matthews & Ross 2010:34). The theoretical framework is the study map that helps to guide the researcher through a territory which may appear alien and dangerous (Tolan 2003:1). It is the compass that directs the researcher to an important problem and the procedures needed to solve that problem (Marlow 2001 in Matthews & Ross 2010:34). According to Kaniki (2006:20, a theoretical framework helps us to sharpen and define more clearly a research problem. It also helps us to stick to the path and prevent the study from falling into our own insecurities (Tolan 2003:1).

As noted in Chapter One, this study aims to investigate the root causes of gender-based violence in Ovawambo intimate relationships in a way that could help transform the hegemonic masculine identity of Ovawambo men and the tendency to abuse their power against women. In a gender-based violence and power abuse context, masculine transformation can be one of the possible solutions to transforming people's mindset. Oduyoye (2001:222) asserts that transforming and reconstructing are the key concepts in gender conflict solution in African theology because people realize that the situation in Africa calls for more than development, and that change by itself is in insufficient. Power is a concept least associated with women, but

[28] According to Bryman (1988 in Matthews & Ross 2010:34), a paradigm is "a cluster of beliefs and dictates which, for scientists in a particular discipline, influence what should be studied, how research should be done, how results should be interpreted…"

one that rules women's lives in all its aspects. It is also a word to which the Christian Testament has called attention and which has generated much theological discourse.

Power means ability, skill and know-how and the strength to do something or to make something happen. The phrase "transforming power" therefore has two meanings. First, it refers to that power which transforms and second, to the notion of changing the meaning of the way power is conserved and applied (2001:224). Further, Oduyoye (2001:242) explains that the relationship between men and women can only be healthy if we understand human power in the light of the transforming power of God. This can only be possible if we understand our fundamental being in the light of our creator God in whose image we are created. Therefore, this study will present first a theological understanding of the images of God and metaphorical theology. Secondly, it will employ *theopaschitic* theory in the light of the theology of the cross. The assumption is that *theopaschitic* theory reframed by the image of the suffering God could be employed to transform men's understanding of power and enable them to shift from harmful hegemonic masculinities to compassionate and redeeming masculine identities. To do this, first we shall review the theology of the cross[29] and resurrection as articulated by Luther, Moltmann and Louw in order to map out an understanding of the suffering of God (*theopaschitic*) as a theoretical framework for this study. The proposed *theopaschitic* model could bring about a new paradigm shift in Ovawambo men's understanding of power so that power is seen as love, serving, healing and sharing. In the Ovawambo gender-based violence context, we need to focus more on human persons in relation to God, to fellow human beings and to the world around them. However, we can only speak about and understand God when we speak about him in the form of metaphors. Therefore, this study will adapt first the theology of *imago Dei*, metaphorical theory, and theology of the cross before we discuss the implication of the *theopaschitic* model for this study.

4.2 Theology of the *Imago Dei*—Humanity in the Image of God

In Genesis 1:26-28, we find a record of the origin of human beings. God said,

> Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them, and God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the

[29] The cross as a sign of the suffering of God in the passion of Christ demonstrates how God acts against all unjust suffering as well as the promise of God's identification with the oppressed (Migliore 1991:121).

> fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth (RSV).

According to Bongmba (2007:45), these verses reveal that human beings come from God and live under God's care. The text also shows the relationship between God and humans, a relationship which came about as a result of the covenant that God made with the people of Israel and through the redemptive acts of Jesus on the cross. Therefore, the image of God (*imago Dei*) shows a close relationship between between God and human beings and this compels us to develop a good relationship with one another as well. As we live in communion with God, so we ought also to have good communion with ourselves. Bongmba also shows that to bear God's image means to be his representative and to reflect his love and compassion in human fellowship (*koinonia*). Migliore (1991) maintains that the term "image of God" has been interpreted in three main ways—as physical resemblance to God; capacity to reason, and dominion over the earth. However, these three characterizations do not bring lasting peace on the earth but various forms of exploitation of nature and human beings through patriarchy, racism, colonialism, and other means primarily because some people believe that they have the freedom to do what they please. This freedom of human beings in respect to activities becomes problematic because it affects the relationship between them and God. Therefore, this condition can only be normalized when the "image of God" represents human life in relationship with God and other creatures. This means that human beings must reflect God's life of solidarity with his people and other creatures (Migliore 1991:121). Human beings are created to relate to God. The uniqueness of human beings is in their being God's counterparts (Grenz 2001:196). This relationship was also demonstrated by Jesus through his earthly ministry (Migliore 1991:121-122).

In the New Testament, human beings are called to adopt the image of Christ, who is also the full image of God because he is God (Col 1:15 RSV). As the incarnate Jesus lived in solidarity with the poor and sinners, human beings, especially God's followers, are called to reflect this solidarity towards one another by being for God and for others in daily life. The reason is that the image of God expresses self-transcending life in relationship with others who need our support and whose help we also need in order to be what God intends us to be. Human beings are created not to manipulate or misuse power against fellow human beings or nature, but to respect and care for others (Migliore 1991:120-121; 123). The image of God encourages us to make the right choices between good and bad. Human beings are expected to help other people who have been hurt by life (Inbody 1997:142) and to help every individual to enjoy his/her

rights and dignity to their fullest. The image of God compels us to reflect, in our relationships, the loving mutuality which we experience from God (Baab 2011:524); it calls for an ethics of love and compassion. The image of God motivates us to show compassion and care in the face of all acts of violence. Although the term "image of God" does not speak directly to the issue of gender-based violence, it calls us to honor one another as human beings who bear the image of God in us.

Migliore argues that to be human in the image of God represents a relationship of solidarity, mutual respect and love between God and human beings as well as between humans and other humans (Migliore 1991:121-122). This understanding helps both men and women to live in equality and harmony because they both have the image of God. It could wipe away all forms of gender hierarchy, discrimination, sexism and patriarchal ideology (Bongmba 2007:48, 69). In this way, pastoral care aims to care for humanity in its total being (both physical and spiritual). This holistic act of caring (which includes caring for the environment where human beings live) is vital because it cares for the whole human life which is created by God and belongs to God (Louw 1998:22). However, the understanding of the term the image of God requires the use of metaphors. McFague (1987:33) remarks that theology cannot properly speak about God without using the metaphors. However, in using this innate power of God-language to guide and to shape people's beliefs and actions, we are challenged to make a clear distinction between appropriate and inappropriate images of God.[30] Hence, metaphoric theology can offer greater and better insight into behavioral issues, actions and re-assessing God images (Louw 1998:345).

4.3 Metaphorical Theology

The word metaphor is derived from the Greek word *metaphorein* which connotes the sense of transferring of meaning from one subject to another. In a metaphorical sense, one meaning is illuminated by attaching to it some of the meanings of a related item (Louw 1998:84). According to McFague (1983:194), metaphorical theology attempts to understand theological or religious language through symbols and their characters. Metaphorical theology helps us to

[30] According to Louw (1998:341), the difference between inappropriate (omnipotence, pantokrator, tyrrany) and appropriate God-images (el saddaj, loving-kindness and compassion) and between destructive and constructive God-images is not regarded as some moral problem. Rather, it has great impact in people's behaviors and has ethical implications, as it can lead to right or wrong behavior. The inappropriate image of God can cause infantile behavior which leads to doubt, anxiety and aggression. It can also cause people to act according to what they regard as God's character, that is, of a despot and powerful giant. On the other hand, appropriate images of God can easily enrich, empowering people's faith and relationship with God.

understand God through the symbols that are well-known to us and that help us to understand the being of God as well as his relationship with us. It connects God's purpose with our real-life experience (Louw 2000:46). In this study, metaphor is regarded as a symbol that is used to transfer meaning from one object to another. According to Soskise (in Hick 1993:99), using a metaphor means that "there is a transfer of meaning." One term is illuminated by attaching to it some of the associations of another, implying that metaphor is "that trope, or figure of speech, in which we speak of one thing in terms suggestive of another" (Louw 1998a:84). Metaphorical theology is an attempt to take the meaning-dimension of God-language and context seriously; it helps us to understand the process of naming God in terms of real-life issues and human predicaments. Metaphorical theology is an attempt to understand theological or religious language on the basis of metaphor and its characteristics as distinct from the traditional basis of religious language understood as symbol and its characteristics (McFague 1983:194). Keller (cited in Claassens 2012:3) explains that Christianity was spoken in many tongues of empire-nations and languages colonized by Rome and before that by Greek and Babylon which had first dispersed the Jews in the imperial space, and that this can also affect our current understanding of some Bible texts.

4.3.1 Different cultural schemata of interpretation—quest for appropriate metaphor

Considering that in acts of gender-based violence, women and children suffer more than men due to power abuse, insight from theological anthropology is needed. From the beginning of Christianity, the emphasis was laid on the Judeo-Christian heritage. The image of God was considered to be the cornerstone of ideas about who human beings are as well as their relationship to God, other humans, and the entire world context (Peacock 2010:22). However, Louw (2015:1) opines that we need to be attentive to the static, ontological, and metaphysical schemata of interpretation, which stemmed from Hellenistic thinking and their impact on God images in our Christian life. In the same vein, McFague (1987:63) also argues that there are many zombie metaphors[31] (like those that depict God as monarch, patriarch and liberator-warrior) which have imperialistic connotations that contribute to patriarchal meanings and spread conflict between men and women. Indeed, Louw (2000:5-6) further affirms that most of the God images we currently use in our daily Christian lives reflect cultural images and philosophical terminologies which portray God in imperialistic omnipotence and as a powerful giant. Louw (2000) is of the view that many terms in Christianity that promote the theology of

[31] Zombie category refers to those biblical interpretations that help us to understand God, but that no longer do justice to our current political and socio-economic context (Louw 2015:1).

omnipotence were borrowed from Babylonian, Roman and Greek Empires. The theology of omnipotence perceives God more as an imperialistic force (God as Caesar), a Hellenistic Pantokrator (strength and violent power), and a Roman despot than one with a vulnerable identification with our human predicament and misery (God as Friend, Partner and Companion for life). These traditional theological terminologies which reflect more an imperialistic understanding of dominion and force than a sacrificial understanding of servanthood and vulnerability could affect people's behavior and faith (Louw 1998:341; 2000:4-5; Keller in Claassens 2012:3). Thus, Louw (2000:6-7) outlines seven schemata that have been used in Christian doctrine to direct people's vision and desire, as illustrated in the following diagram.

Table 1: Seven schemata for Christian doctrine

No	Name of the Schema	Explanation of schema
1.	The Hellenistic schema	God is regarded as root cause of all things and events. He is viewed in terms of immutability and apathy. Suffering does not affect God at all: God's immutability and the principle of causality.
2.	The metaphysical schema	God's transcendence is understood as being remote from historical events. Essentially, revelation implies God's concealment. Behind revelation 'another God' exists. The otherness of God therefore introduces an ontological schism between God and our human existence: God's transcendence - God as ultimate Being.
3.	The imperialistic model	According to the Constantine paradigm, God's kingdom should be understood in terms of militant power. God reigns as a 'Caesar' and determines every sphere of life. Ever since, it has been a real danger to fashion God in the image of the 'cultural gods' – the imperial rulers of the Egyptian, Persian and Roman empires. The church gave unto God the attributes which belonged to Caesar. The church becomes a cultural institution with God as the official Head of a powerful establishment: God's omnipotence – God as Pantokrator.
4	The patriarchal model	God acts as a great Patriarch and dominates human beings. Therefore, God's actions in suffering are regarded in terms of purification/edification and retribution. As Patriarch, human beings face a very stern God: God as an authoritarian father.
5.	The hierarchical model	Life is viewed as an ordered system. At stake are position and differentiation. The latter is structured in terms of importance, status and position along the lines of class differences. In such a model, the tension between superiority and inferiority determines people's understanding of God: God as royal King, Lord and ruling Judge.
6.	The economic and materialistic schema of wealth, achievement, development and affluence	God becomes an official and public idol: a God who safeguards prosperity. He is then hijacked to serve our selfish needs. Belief becomes a religion – it is misused as good investment to bypass tragedy. The kingdom of God becomes a stock exchange: God as director and Manager.
7.	The political and societal schema	Due to the role of liberation theology, God becomes a liberating God who sides with the oppressed, take care of the underdog as

		well as those discriminated against. The kingdom of God is then interpreted in terms of the exodus theme and our human dream for freedom and endeavor for justice by means of violent intervention: God, the Liberator and 'Freedom Fighter'.

Source: (Louw 2000:6-7)

Based on these schemas that try to interpret God, one can easily perceive that some God images have been misused to serve people's selfish purposes and the human need to gain power over the powerless. Our Christian understanding has placed more power in God for condemning and punishment rather than for comforting, transforming, celebration and the embrace of life. Some metaphors such as King, Ruler and Liberator-Warrior are being misused or misappropriated by some men to violate women (Louw 1998:341; 2000: 4-5; Keller in Claassens 2012:3). We are therefore challenged to design an appropriate theological paradigm for pastoral care that can be used to dismantle the paradigm of power, patriarchal politics, and hegemonic masculine identities (Louw 2000:4-5, 8). There is a need to search for metaphors that depict and reflect the images of God as caring for and supporting those who are experiencing problems or pain and live in the valley of unjust power structures. These metaphors also help in transforming and deconstructing all prevalent hierarchical understandings of a male God as depicted by patriarchal cultures. Those metaphors which portray God as a destroyer, punisher, and violent God need to be challenged through the use of metaphors that depict a compassionate, liberating and transformative God that is a nurturing, supporting and caregiving God (Claassens 2012:10-11, 17). God's liberating characterization finds its clarity in incarnational (Christ becomes human) theology. Incarnational thinking reveals how God in Christ identified himself with human suffering and becomes our co-sufferer (Louw 2008:430). The crucifixion of Christ shows how God identifies himself with our predicament (Louw 2000:33). In Christ's redemptive work we see not the immutability of a dead abstraction, but God's perfect, and steadfast love (Migliore 1983:64-65). The theology of the cross is not about impotence, because the powerlessness of the cross is the paradigm of God's different mode of power which includes power of identification, participation, endurance, and transformation (Inbody 1997:180).

Similarly, McFague (1987:19) argues that to portray God with traditional metaphors from Greco-Roman culture causes the most unsatisfactory scenario in current theological understanding, because those metaphors are more hierarchical and dualistic. To portray God as a king, ruler and almighty is to present him as an omnipotent male. In this context of gender conflict, there is an urgent need for metaphors that replace depictions of greed with compassion, selfishness with care, and competitiveness with cooperation. This context needs

metaphors that can help human beings respect human rights instead of serving structures and systems that are excessively harmful to human relationship (Tengatenga 2010:9). Subsequently, a paradigm shift from omni-categories to pathos-categories is desired in order to understand God's power in more appropriate ways and to address issues such as human suffering, dignity, justice, and power abuse in current gender-based violence contexts (Louw 2015:1).

4.3.2 Role of metaphorical theology in gender conflict contexts

According to Fiorenza (1976:39), the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures have their origin in a patriarchal society. These Scriptures also preserved the androcentric (male-centered) traditions of their culture. In current contexts, both men and women find themselves in a dilemma. On the one hand, they seek to remain faithful to the life-giving truth of biblical revelation. On the other hand, they seek to free themselves from all patriarchal traditions and sexist concepts that hinder their human and Christian liberation. Hence, the interpretation and understanding of the androcentric traditions of the Bible remain a major theological task for all Christians today. To accomplish this task, one needs to consider the methods of historical-critical scholarship. Historical-critical scholarship has taught us the importance of understanding the historical setting, the cultural environment, the literary forms and the specific language of a text if we interpret and teach or preach the Bible. The study of androcentric traditions in the Bible, therefore, has to observe not only the original intention of the texts but also the androcentric history of their interpretation (Von Rad 1962:40; Mollenkott 1988:40).

Although some texts of the Old Testament probably indicate the context of a matriarchal or matrilineal society (Isaiah 42:14; Isaiah 49: 15; Isaiah 66:13; Mathew 23:37; Luke 13:34), the patriarchal character of the Hebrew culture is undisputed. Israel as a nation and as a religious community was constituted by male-dominated families, and full membership in it was reserved for the adult male. In the Hebrew patriarchal society, women were totally dependent on their fathers and husbands. As we read in Numbers 30:2-12, this complete dependency and subordination of a daughter or a wife is well demonstrated not only in familial-cultural affairs but also in religious matters (Von Rad 1962:16, 41-42). Hence, the current gender conflict in Namibia is not only promoted by cultural and socio-economic factors but also by the Christian religion. The Ovawambo men interviewees confirmed that:

> …The Bible shows that God first created Adam and then Eve. Adam was to rule over Eve because he was the head of Eve… (Adam A:24/10/2016).

> We need to stick to what our culture and the Bible say about gender relationships… (Inmate A: 17/10/2016)

> …Both the Bible and culture are clear on this matter – a woman must submit to her husband (Pastor L: 21/01/2017).

Clearly, the biblical texts are being misused to promote the patriarchal model of power, which enforces hierarchy and distance between men and women (Louw 1998:82). Although other metaphors than these such as God the father/mother may be used to interpret the caring, mercy, compassion and love relationship between God and human beings, these metaphors may also have negative connotations especially to children who have experienced abuse from their parents. They may cause a child to misunderstand God as an abuser like his/her parents (Louw 1998:82). As we have observed in some Third World contexts today, many husbands do abuse their wives and children and are violent towards their fellow men. This compels us to ask ourselves if we still need a redeemed image of God as Father, since the human analogue seems to be failing so badly (Grey 2001:10).

However, when we use both feminine and masculine metaphors for God, we are not trying to reinforce stereotyped sex roles of a particular culture. Instead, we are trying to reflect a spectrum of those metaphors, so that our images of ourselves and of God can be expanded. We can do this because we are made in God's image (theomorphic) but God is not the one who was made in human image (anthropomorphic). As human beings, we are able to relate to God in trust, love and sympathy, using a wide range of human experiences to express this faith (Von Rad 1962:17-18, 109). This shows that it is not easy to identify an image of God that could produce lasting transformation of the mindset of Ovawambo men. However, in the context of gender-based violence, which is fuelled by patriarchal ideology, we need to identify those metaphors in Scriptures which illuminate the images which depict God's compassion, care and love. Instead of images of omnipotence and hierarchical structures of the power of God, we need to search for images that show God as compassionate, life-partner and companion. In the shepherd metaphor God reveal his sensitivity and compassion through Jesus's sacrificial and redeeming act on the cross. In his suffering and death, Jesus ended the power of destruction. This reveals that Jesus as the suffering servant and our life partner gave his life vicariously for us. God is the loving father who brings comfort, hope, and compassionate love to his people as revealed in story of the prodigal son. *"But while he was yet at a distance, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him"* (Luke 15:20 RSV). Human beings are invited to reflect on God through such images that portray them as God's representatives (Louw 2000: 49, 51-52 148; Claassens 2012:4).

In the present context where more violence happens between races, nations, tribes and, more importantly, between one gender and another, this innate power of God-language which shapes people's beliefs and actions challenges us to consider some alternative way of speaking about God. Our choice of a metaphorical model implies that our thinking and arguing follow the lines of a hermeneutical paradigm (Louw 2000:45). In contrast to an explanatory model, a metaphorical model attempts to clarify the importance and significance of concepts within the relationship. The metaphorical model is so exploratory because it aims to understand the Being of God in terms of a metaphysical ontology. Its aim is to understand the meaning and significance of the name "God" within different contexts. Metaphors invite us to speak about God symbolically in terms of what we know in our context. This helps us to transfer and consider some qualities associated with a specific concept we know (Louw 2000:84). It enhances the dynamic interplay between God and all the social pain that people experience now. It creates a fresh and open approach that can help to heal gender relationships and promote gender justice and peace. What is needed is to identify metaphors in Scriptures which shed light on those images which depict God in terms of identification with human needs and suffering.

The current gender violence pattern which feeds on hierarchical structure, patriarchal structure, power abuse, domination, self-destructive tendencies, threats, and dominant authoritarianism needs to be challenged through the metaphorical model we adopt. The need to search for the metaphor that helps us to reinterpret patriarchal power and that helps us to share the power we have is a central part of this study. The implication of a metaphorical model in violent contexts is that it helps in conveying those images of God that portray the components of compassion, partnership, commitment and intimacy. The possible metaphors that convey the pastoral dimension of God's involvement in history include servant, wisdom, Paraclete, mourner, mother, midwife, and friend. These metaphors represent the components of partnership, companionship, commitment, and intimacy, and they reveal God's pathos, identification with and understanding of human predicaments. Through these metaphors, we clearly see God's friendship in his relationship with humans and the entire creation because they connect God's purpose for human existence with real life situation (Louw 2000:39). These metaphos also contribute a rich possibilities of an alternative image of God that is rooted not on death and destruction, but on deep-seated compassion more especially in the context of those suffer due to the gender-based violence gender injustice (Claassens 2012:7).

Although understanding these metaphors could help to end the vicious violence in Ovawambo families, the issue of patriarchy and power remains problematic. Hence, this study places emphasis on the *theopaschitic* (suffering God) theory as a metaphor that displays God's concern, care, generosity, compassion and partnership, companionship and friendship. The metaphors of God as a mutual partner with humans have been clearly illustrated in the death and resurrection of Jesus (Louw 2000:85-86). Based on this understanding, the theology of the suffering God (*theopaschitic*) could bring about a paradigm shift in the notion of power abuse and discrimination between men and women. In other words, addressing the issue of gender-based violence implies that we are dealing with the issue of power. Human beings can stop abusing our power against others if they understand first how God exercises his power in relationship with humans. Thus, we need to study first the theology of the cross, because the fellowship (*koinonia*) with and compassion of God are defined by the cross and the resurrection (Inbody 1997:146). However, before we discuss the details of the *theopaschitic* model as a theoretical framework of this study, we first need to probe its full meaning based on the theology of the cross.

4.5 The Suffering and Crucified God—A Theology of the Cross

In the context of gender-based violence and discrimination where men often abuse their power against women, men require new knowledge and understanding of how they should exercise their power. This study predicts that theology based on the suffering of God in line with the theology of the cross can transform basic assumptions about the issue of power abuse. Through the theology of the cross, we understand how God suffered (*theopaschitic*) metaphorically in Jesus's suffering on the cross in order to reveal his solidarity with the human predicament and to identify with human suffering as vulnerable faithfulness and overwhelming pathos. *Theopaschitic* theory, as a result, can emerge from the understanding of the image of a suffering God and could help men to shift from harmful hegemonic masculinity to compassionate and redeeming masculine identities.

4.5.1 Luther's theology of the cross

According to Luther's theology of the cross, the crucifixion of Jesus represents the transition between God and human suffering (Althaus 1966:27). This is classified under the existential model which helps us to understand ourselves as well as God in terms of Christ's suffering (Louw 2000:75). The existential model can be understood first in reference to Luther's

argument in the Heidelberg Controversy,[32] which focused on the hiddenness and revelation of God. Luther illustrated his point with Jesus's response to the statement "Show us the father" in John 14:8, that is, "He who has seen me has seen the father." From this statement, Luther taught that true theology and knowledge of God are to be found in the suffering of Christ on the cross (*theologia crucis*). Thus, the theology of the cross is the reverse of the theology of glory as illustrated in the following table.

Table 2: Theology of glory and theology of the cross

THEOLOGY OF GLORY	THEOLOGY OF THE CROSS
God is visible	God is hidden
Sight	Faith
Acceptable to human reason	Offensive to human reason
God works in power	God works in weakness
Human will is free	Human will is enslaved to sin

Source: Welton (2015:4)

The table above shows that the theology of the cross works with a standard that is contrary to that of the theology of glory regarding human knowledge of both God and himself/herself. The standard is the cross. While the theology of glory seeks to know God directly through God's divine power, wisdom and glory, the theology of the cross recognizes God as hidden in Jesus's suffering and in all that the theology of glory regards as weakness and foolishness (Althaus 1966:28). As a result, we can know God not through works but through the cross and the suffering of Jesus. However, Luther further points out that the Cross and suffering do not only point to Christ's cross and suffering, but also to the Christian's cross. For Luther, the cross of Christ and the cross of the Christian are intertwined (Von Loewenich 1976:19-20). There is a deep correlation between the suffering of Christ in whom God makes himself known and the suffering of human beings who enter into communion with God through this suffering. Luther's transition from the cross of Christ to the suffering of the Christian and from the weakness of God in Christ to the demolition of man's moralistic self-confidence is significant in yet another way. The transition shows that the knowledge of God is not theoretical knowledge but a matter of the whole human existence.

To understand the reality of cross, we need to know ourselves as crucified with Christ first. Luther understands the cross as the means by which God meets us in the death of his son.

[32] The Heidelberg disputation occurred in 1518 in Germany. The controversy focused on the contrast between the theology of the cross and the theology of glory. Luther regarded the theology of glory, which knows God from his works, as only a fake theology. He argued that true theology and theologians only know and understand God from his sufferings (Althaus 1966:25-26).

However, this can only be possible if we (human beings) experience Christ's death in our own death (Althaus 1966:28). The significance of the theology of the cross here is that we cannot separate Christ's suffering from God's suffering. The essential motivation in this paschitic formula is that it links our human suffering to God's identification with our pain and misery (Louw 2000:76) because God can be found in suffering and the cross (Von Loewenich 1976:20). True theology and recognition of God are in the crucified Christ. For Luther, theology can only be authentic if it is illumined by the wisdom of cross.[33] The cross is the standard for measuring all genuine theological knowledge including the reality of God, his grace, his salvation and his power (Althaus 1966:28). Thus, Luther's theology of the cross turns our attention to the cross of Jesus. Our life problems and our helplessness then force us to search for this God. Our faith helps us to reach out to our God. To this, Louw (2000:77) explains that faith becomes the human existential escape from life's predicament and despair in turning to God. Further, Luther (in Althaus 1966:30, 33) shows that the cross does not reveal to us the power of God as omnipotence but God as helplessness. Therefore, faith helps us to break through the reality of our experience of the world.

4.5.1.1 God's suffering from a human existential dimension

Althaus (1966:33) reveals that Luther understands helplessness (*Anfechtung*)[34] as an essential characteristic of Christian existence, and it is a part of his theology of the cross. The Christian's faith is in danger because it stands between the reality of life and rational experience. To believe means to live in a state of contradiction between the empirical realities and to trust God who is hidden. Faith must endure being contradicted by reason and experience. Faith must break through the reality of this world by fixing its sights on the word of promise. Additionally, Louw (2000:78) adds that in this way, "Faith discovers God's strength which is hidden under apparent weakness; his wisdom under apparent folly; the future glory of Christians under their present suffering."

Nürnberger (2005) writes extensively about Luther's arguments. In brief, Nürnberger says that Luther also argued that human faith can help us to identify God through his suffering in Jesus. God revealed his purpose in Jesus's crucifixion, thus, he refers to God as *Deus nudus* (the

[33] However, this does not mean that women must continue suffering and they must not react to brutal force as a way of accepting the suffering as sacrificial. Jesus suffered to end all injustice including gender-based violence and to end all acts of oppression in social and family relationships.

[34] *Anfechtung* is the German term that has been translated variously as trial, temptations, assault, perplexity, doubt and anxiety (Althaus 1966:28). Louw (2000:77) explained that the word *Anfechtung* also covers other terms such as affliction, hopelessness and helplessness.

naked God). God is naked in his suffering despite his immeasurable power and majesty on the cross. That way, God revealed his plan for us through Christ. In Jesus, God reveals clearly that, in his innermost being, God is the limitless power of unconditional love. In Jesus's suffering, God reveals himself in human life as Immanuel with limitless power and unconditional love. His creative and transformative activity, the strictness and harshness of his will, his patience and mercy are all expressions of his innermost being as demonstrated on the cross. God's true motives, grace and compassion are revealed in the cross of Jesus. However, when we look at the cross of Jesus, what we see is doom and gloom which means that God reveals his redemptive plan under the guise of a terrible catastrophe. Therefore, Christ's crucifixion becomes also true in our world, church and family life. As we find wonderful manifestation of excellence and goodness, fellowship of love and compassion, we can also find endless misery and deprivation. Thus, we do not need to look to the world or to our fellow human beings, but to look to God in order to see what he wants to do in us, through us and among us (Nürnberger 2005:17, 25).

4.5.1.2 The implication of Luther's theology of the cross in a gender-based violence context

As noted above, Luther's theology of the cross focuses on God and human suffering. Luther argued that God is hidden but present in the humility and shame of the cross as well as in human predicaments. This model links God's involvement through the shame of the cross with our human problems of failure and helplessness (Luther 31:165). This produces a new understanding that if God can transform the catastrophe of the cross of Christ to the salvation of humankind, then he can also transform our own little catastrophes, including men's harmful behaviors and chauvinism, into what is good for humanity. Luther believes that God's grace makes it possible for human beings to become more miserable (Nürnberger 2005:44). Thus, Luther's model of the interpretation of the cross can help men to recognize God's presence in their climate of confusion. It can assist men to reinterpret their patriarchal understanding of power from the perspective of God's redeeming power (Luther 31:165). However, one can ask: how can God suffer in and for himself? Louw (2000:79) explains that in the cross, God suffered in oneness with Christ and the Holy Spirit because of their inseparable unity. In what follows, God's suffering in the Trinitarian life and how it touches his inner being will be clarified in Moltmann's interpretation of the theology of the cross.

4.5.2 Moltmann and theology of the cross

Moltmann's theology was deeply influenced by his experience of growing up in Nazi Germany and as a war prisoner in England. Of that experience, he writes that:

> As well as developing a political theology, I have resolved to think more intensively than I have done up to now about the meaning of the cross of Christ for theology, for the church and for society. In a civilization that glorifies success and happiness and is blind to the sufferings of others, people's eyes can be opened to the truth if they remember that at the centre of the Christian faith stands an unsuccessful, tormented Christ, dying in forsakenness. The recollection that God raised this crucified Christ and made him the hope of the world must lead the churches to break their alliances with the powerful and to enter into the solidarity of the humiliated (Moltmann 1974: ix).

Moltmann tries to look at human life through the lens of Christ dying on the cross. Through Christ's suffering and dying on the cross, God demonstrates his passionate love for his lost creatures as a companion-in-suffering in life's crises. Hence, one can only understand God suffering (*theopaschitic*) through Christ's suffering on the cross (Moltmann (1992:243). Both Luther and Moltmann agree that God was crucified in Christ's crucifixion (Louw 2000:86). This understanding challenges the views of some Greek philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle whose knowledge of God is in the form of apatheia.[35] They describe God's metaphysical and ethical perfection in the form of apatheia. Plato describes God as the one who needs nothing because He is unchangeable; he needs no service or friend because friendship occurs where love is offered in return. As a perfect Being, God does not have emotions like compassion, mercy, anger, hate, or greed.

However, in Moltmann's theology of the cross, God is revealed in the form of pathos.[36] The pathos of God is revealed in the history of His nation Israel through covenant and the mighty act of liberation. God's divine pathos is revealed in His relationship with his people and the entire creation. God takes human beings seriously when He suffers on the cross through His son (Moltmann 1974:267-268, 271). Therefore, the theology of the cross is linked to God and to the real human misery and anguish through the pain and suffering of Jesus Christ. Moltmann (1990:25) shows that the theology of the cross is relevant evidence to our human misery and anguish. In his pathos, God goes outside His mightiness to meet his people and make himself

[35] *Apatheia* means incapable of being affected by something outside or of extrinsic influence. In ancient times, God was regarded as an immutable God who has nothing to do with his people. He is alone and is not affected by anything outside himself. He is not moved by any problem human beings encounter in their lives. During that period, God was understood as immovable, apathetic and unchanging (Moltmann 1974:267; Louw 2000:86).
[36] *Pathos* which also means pity, represents compassion, love, and solidarity (Moltmann 1974:267) and reveals the compassionate nature of God, who acts in loving solidarity with human suffering (Louw 2000:86)

a partner in a covenant with his people. The theology of the cross could help humans to understand God's position in their problems. Moltman understands the theology of the cross as a liberating theology that rescues human beings from life's discrepancies because through it, God becomes capable of suffering. The whole creation, liberation of his nation from Egyptian slavery, his covenant with his nation Israel, and his own suffering on the cross originate from his pathos. However, one may ask: what really happened on the cross between Christ and God his father?

4.5.2.1 "The godforsaken" Jesus and God

God does not encounter humans as God but in the form of a human being, that is, through the incarnate and crucified Son (Moltman 1990:119). Jesus was born to face his passion and his mission on the earth was accomplished when he was abandoned on the cross. Thus, we cannot talk about the incarnation of God without talking about Jesus's crucifixion. Moltmann's Trinitarian theology is based more on Psalm 22:1-2, which says, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" This text is usually understood as the cry of Jesus in the form of a prayer when he was about to die on the cross. When Jesus cried, "My God," his cry was not to the covenant God but to his own Father who has a strong and lasting relationship with him. Jesus was not calling for the compassion of his Father for himself, but for the revelation of the righteousness of the God who promised "not to forsake the work of his hands" (Moltmann 1974:150). Louw (2000:89) develops this argument with his claim that forsakenness is the primary issue in the interpretation of the theology of the cross. Being forsaken is the primary hermeneutics of the theology of the cross because it tries to reframe God metaphors in terms of suffering and closeness.

However, if this is the case, one can ask: "Why did God forsake Christ on the cross?" As Paul wrote in his epistle to the Romans: "He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all; how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?!" (Rom 8:32; Moltmann 1993:23). Paul also insists that "God was in Christ" (2 Cor 5:19), which implies that God himself suffered and died in Jesus. God not only acted in the crucifixion of Jesus or sorrowfully allowed it to happen, but he was himself active with his own being in the dying Jesus and he suffered with him. God did this because he has reconciled the world to himself through the cross of Jesus. He made himself visible in the cross of Christ (Moltmann 1974:190). However, it is the compassion of God the Father that forced him to lose his Son to gain humanity. The Son died in god-forsakenness to bear the evil of the human condition and the compassionate

Father suffered because he 'lost' his Son for our sake on the cross. In this way, God's compassion is revealed as a power and force that accepts the poor, heals the broken-hearted, and releases the captives. This depiction of God replaces the traditional image of God as passive and incapable of suffering with that of vulnerability, passion, and friendship. Although Moltmann struggled to show how God was involved in the anguish of humanity, he maintained that God began his endless suffering with humans when he surrendered his son on the cross (Hege 2010:1). God was not absent, silent and uninvolved in the godforsakenness of Jesus on the cross, but he acted in Jesus his son by raising him up from the dead. In Christ's passion, God the Father also suffered the pains of abandonment. In the death of the Son, death came upon God himself and the Father suffered the death of his Son in his love for forsaken humanity. Thus, what happened on the cross is an event between God and the Son for the salvation of humankind. In this action, God the Father delivered up his Son to suffering and to a godless death; God was acting in himself in this manner of suffering and dying in order to open up in him life and freedom for sinners.

Moltmann (1974) reveals that creation, new creation, and resurrection are external works of God against chaos, violence, discrimination, war, and death. The suffering and dying of Jesus are seen as the dying of the Son of God, and the work of God towards himself is the passion of God. God overcame himself, passed judgment on himself and assigned to himself the fate that men should rightly endure. This shows that God is not God for himself but for us, because He is love. It is the unconditioned and boundless love which comes from the grief of the Father and the dying of the Son that reaches forsaken human beings in order to create in them the possibility and the force of new life. This shows God's compassion towards human beings as a true Father who cares for his people. God took upon himself the unforgivable sin and the guilt for which there is no atonement, together with the rejection and anger that cannot be turned away, to make humankind righteous before him. God became the crucified God so that we might become free human beings before him. However, Jesus's death cannot be understood only as the death *of* God but also as death *in* God (Moltmann 1974:192-193, 207, 245).

4.5.2.2 Trinitarian theology of the cross

St. Paul recounts that God gave up his son Jesus, let him suffer, and made him sin for human beings (2 Cor. 2.21; Gal.3.13). Due to the strong unity between God the Father and Son (John 1:1-5), the suffering of the Son also affects God the Father. In this abandoning and forsakenness process, which represents God's compassion, God the Father forsakes himself (Moltmann

1974:245). Since Jesus was forsaken by his Father on the cross, it means that the Father forsook the Son 'for us' and to become the Father of the forsaken. The Father delivered up the Son in order that through him he became the Father of those who have been delivered up (Rom. 1:18ff.). As the Son suffered the forsakenness of death, the Father too suffered the death of the Son. Therefore, the pain of the Father corresponds to the death of the Son (Moltmann 1990:81). In the surrender of the Son, the father also surrendered himself but not in the same way. The Son suffered dying; the Father suffered the death of the Son. The grief of the Father here is just as important as the death of the Son. God as the Father of Jesus Christ suffered the death of his fatherhood in the death of the Son.

However, Moltmann (1974:40, 245) understands that Jesus's crucifixion did not happen between man and man but, in God's trinity, between God and his son Jesus. In the Trinitarian event, God forsook and abandoned his son whom he trusted (Mk 15:34). Thus, Jesus was obedient to his Father's will and, in the same process, the Father also surrendered his beloved Son to death (Gal 2:20; Rom 8:32). In this way, both Father and Son suffered in different ways. Hence, the doctrine of the two natures of God is needed to be understood as a reciprocal relationship between two qualitatively different natures, the divine and human natures. Divine nature is incapable of suffering while human nature is capable of suffering. However, Moltmann's theology of the cross does not only help us to understand God in terms of pathos, solidarity, and the intrinsic dialectic in God (the cross events in God, between God and God), but also in an extrinsic dialectic outside God (the historical events between the cross and resurrection).

4.5.2.3 From a theology of the crucified God to a theology of hope

The cross does not only provide the historical basis for, but also reveals the reality of, the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Hence, Christian theology only acquires its unique character and value in the death of Christ Jesus. This raises and increases our hope in him (Louw 2000:83-84) because his death took place on our behalf and for us. In Christ's suffering, God acted on behalf of helpless human beings as their representative in life predicaments. Through Christ's suffering and death, the Christ who was raised from the dead before us becomes the Christ for us. The God who suffers on our behalf becomes the God for us. In the risen Christ, God brings righteousness and life to the unrighteous and the dying. In this way, the cross of Christ modifies the resurrection of Christ under the conditions of the suffering of the world to change the world from death through the liberating love of God.

Human beings can only live in hope if the power of resurrection starts to produce new life in them to help them to live, by virtue of being raised by God, and to be his representatives on the earth. To be the representatives of God and Christ is only possible if Christ's death and resurrection bring new hope in their hopelessness and if God's power that brings new life to Christ through his resurrection also helps them to promote life rather than death. This happens because Christ's compassionate and reconciling power of his suffering and death is the power of resurrection and not of death. Thus, we need to be transformed by this power to shift from death and from abusing our power against one another to become the servants and agents of life in all things we do (Moltmann 1974:182-187).

God, through his suffering love, overcomes and transforms deadly human brute power into compassionate power (Moltmann 1990:33). Moltmann's theology of the cross aims to make theology an agent that can help human beings to respond to the current threats in life. God's compassionate love through Christ's suffering is the definitive point of identity for Christian theology which tries to bring pastoral comfort and liberation. The theology of the cross and resurrection is the pure liberating theology of God, which aims to break all distress of suffering in human discrepancies and inhuman schisms. However, it can only liberate if human beings are being transformed by the act of God's solidarity with humans and the compassionate act of God on the cross (Louw 2000:84).

4.5.2.4 Moltmann's theology of the cross in a gender-based violence context

The theology of the cross inflames our understanding to go beyond the limit of the doctrine of salvation and to probe the revolution needed regarding the concept of God. It also helps us to shift from personal salvation to the liberation of the whole humankind and its new relationship in the face of real crises and threats to life (Moltmann 1974:4). Moltmann's interpretation of the theology of the cross has significance in that it compels us to exercise liberation ministry among ourselves. It transforms our understanding of how to exercise our power towards one another. It forces human beings to shift from abusing their power to helping one another to have life. It compels us to liberate our fellow human beings by recognizing their rights and dignity and by feeding them and protecting them from all of life's threats (Mt 25:31-46). This shows that God's love towards human beings is not represented by sovereign grace but through his suffering in his Son Jesus Christ (Louw 2000:97-98). With respect to God's omnipotence, this means the limitation of God's sovereign power.

God's self-humiliation is completed and perfected in the passion and death of Jesus the Son. God's emptiness (*kenosis*) is realized on the cross (Moltmann 1990:119). Louw (2000:83-84) insists that the theology of the cross, through the lens of Moltmann's theology, helps in reframing our traditional understanding of the Trinity in the form of metaphysical speculation. Through Moltmann's theology, the Trinity is redefined in the terms of the most essential components of rejection, forsakenness and loneliness.

The theology of the cross helps both Ovawambo men and women to understand God in terms of the suffering and solidarity in our life predicaments. It also portrays God in terms of a living God who rose from the dead to raise us from every kind of deadly issue in this life. The sole omnipotence which God possesses (and we were created in his image) is the almighty power of suffering love as revealed in Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection. Hence, the suffering of God with the world, from the world, and for the world is the highest expression of his creative love, which seeks to be fulfilled in all human fellowship. Human beings are now to reflect this compassionate love which liberates, delivers and redeems by aiming to reach its fulfillment in the love that is bliss. However, this can only happen if our love liberates us as well as our fellow human beings who suffer due to our wrong understanding of power (Moltmann 1990:31:60). Therefore, one may ask: what is the implication of the theology of the cross in human predicaments and suffering?

4.5.3 Louw and theology of the cross

Louw's (1998a) theology of the cross is pastoral hermeneutics based on a theology of affirmation (a theology of the cross and resurrection), which is centered on the vulnerability and faithfulness of God. According to Louw (1998a:95, 97), practical theology is "the hermeneutics of God's encounter with human beings and their world." The hermeneutical method involves "the interpretation of the meaning of the interaction between God and humanity, edification of the church, and becoming engaged in praxis through communities of faith in order to transform the world or to impart meaning in life." Thus, a pastor should try to link the story of salvation to the story of the parishioners' struggle, agony, suffering and joy (Louw 1998a:256). The significance of the theology of the cross relates not only to God's suffering through Christ's crucifixion, but also to God's pathos which overwhelms his whole authenticity and identity (Louw 2000:98).

Like Moltmann, Louw also stresses that God suffered in Christ with and on behalf of human beings. Accordingly, God's love and compassion are revealed through his humiliation, affliction and misery on the cross. God in his suffering does not only reconcile the whole world to himself, but he also suffers with his creation. The Old and the New Testament both reveal God's compassionate and liberating acts in the history of redemptive and covenantal fellowship with human beings. God gives himself away on behalf of his people revealing his compassion and grief. Christ's suffering on the cross cannot be separated from God's compassionate intervention, identification with, and involvement in human life through his death and suffering, but this revelation is revealed by the Spirit in terms of the resurrection, in which God's weakness was revealed as power. The involvement of God in human predicaments and anguish produces new relationships and understanding with God and with our fellow human beings. The knowledge of the cross helps us to understand our being before God who revealed his compassion, grace and pity in our crises.

Hence, a new understanding of the cross results in a new vision of God in his vulnerability and woundedness. In this new vision, God is also portrayed in terms of the power of resurrection. Through Christ's resurrection, God brings life rather than death, and wants this life to rule in all human spheres. This vision helps us to understand God's power, not in the sense of bringing death and destruction, but in terms of support, solidarity and compassion (Louw 2000:99-100, 113). Louw's hermeneutical model therefore affirms that God's power is not coercion but a persuading, transforming and healing power (Louw 2000:64). In this way, God's power (God's omnipotence) is distinguished in terms of grace, mercy, and sacrifice (Louw 2000:70). Louw's model could help us, therefore, to reframe the notion of God's power as faithfulness, suffering, grace, and transforming power.

4.5.3.1 Louw's theology of the cross in a gender-based violence context

According to Louw (1998a:95, 97), practical theology is "the hermeneutics of God's encounter with human beings and their world." Louw's model which reframes the notion of God's power as faithfulness, suffering, grace, and transforming power could also help to transform men's understanding of power from a spiritual perspective. Louw's theology of affirmation offers men a theological framework that could help them to gain courage in this context of ever-shifting social and cultural norms (Louw 2008:31-32). The significance of the model in relation to men's psychological resistance lies in the fact that it attends to the human predicament at a deeper and broader existential level from the perspective of a theology of affirmation based on

God's vulnerability and faithfulness (Louw 2000:80; 82, 105; 2005:23-25). Louw's theology of affirmation (a theology of the cross and resurrection), that embraces the vulnerability, compassion, pathos and faithfulness of God towards humankind shows that God, through the suffering of Christ, experienced weakness as a sign of power. The hermeneutics of God's weakness and suffering (*theopaschitism*) in the theology of the cross could help both men and women to find meaning and identity in violent and confusing contexts (Louw 2000:80, 82, 105). With this understanding, let us now turn to the *theopaschitic* model.

4.6 Theopaschitic Theology

One of the reasons gender-based violence persists among the Ovawambo after 28 years of political independence and after the new government enforced laws to protect the rights of women is due to the patriarchal and sexist culture in which they live (Hinga 2000:145; Gillham 2012:94). Although the Ovawambo society is traditionally ruled by African communitarian values, it seems such values do not affect gender relationships positively. It is morally right for the husband and wife to be faithful to each other, care for each other and each to do his or her duty for the welfare of the whole family without quarrelling or fighting (Mbiti 1975:176). However, some Ovawambo couples abuse one another instead of doing what is right and good for their own sake and for their community. This shows that the Ovawambo *uukwanankali* communitarian concept has failed to promote rights and justice in Ovawambo intimate relationships.

Furthermore, although Ovawambo families have been influenced by the gender equality laws, it seems most men operate according to traditional norms when relating to their wives. This is a clear indication that gender legislations alone cannot curb the current rate of gender violence in Ovawambo intimate relationships. The modern culture is more inclined to gender equity, while the traditional culture that feeds on patriarchy benefits men (Shinedima 2017:6). In the present gender violence context, there is an urgent need to transform the hegemonic masculinity which stems from a patriarchal understanding and from sexism. Religion can play a role in this transformation process as it has also been used to promote hegemonic masculinity. For example, since some men quote the Bible to defend their authority against women, the same Bible can be used therefore to challenge men to adopt new approaches to power (Chitando 2012:76). Thus far, literature reveals that the key factor in gender-based violence among the Ovawambo lies in the Ovawambo traditional gender structure which is founded on patriarchy and sexism. Hence, issues of power and inequality remain problematic in Ovawambo intimate

relationships which are threatened by patriarchal understanding and are influenced by religious teachings.

According to Louw (2011:46-47), due to new spiritual and philosophical phenomena like apatheism and anatheism, there is a need for answers regarding the appropriateness of existing categories for God within the framework of pastoral theology. Such answers may be found in the paradigm shift from omni-categories to pathos-categories. The paradigm shift could help in dealing with issues such as human suffering, dignity, gender-based violence and justice. In this regard, *theopaschitic* theology (from authoritarian power to compassion and vulnerability) could play a decisive role in the reframing of existing static God-images which emerged predominantly from the Roman-Greco world.

Theopaschitism is the theory or doctrine by which theology tries to employ a more passionate approach to our understanding of God's presence within the reality of human suffering such as injustice, poverty, stigmatization, discrimination, stereotyping, illness, violence, the abuse of power, tsunamis, or catastrophes. A *theopaschitic* approach which puts emphasis on divine pathos, acceptance and understanding helps us to view God not as static and absolute but as dynamic, thereby opening up the future for human existence (Louw 2011:46-47). Through the *theopaschitic* paradigm, the notion of a "sustainable God" is introduced in order to reframe God's compassionate presence – *ta splanchna*[37] – which denotes pity, compassion and love as well as God's divine involvement with the human predicament of suffering in terms of a continuum of infinitive interventions (infiniscience and the pneumatology of to-be-with) (Louw 2015:1-2; cf. 2000:33).

The English word "compassion," which means a sympathetic consciousness of another's distress, together with a desire to alleviate it, is far too weak to express the emotion that moved Jesus. The word is derived from Latin '*pati*', which means to suffer and the prefix 'cum' means to bear alongside (Nolan 1995:35). The Greek term used for compassion is '*splagchon*', which has the connotation of tender affection from the inward part while the

[37] *Ta splanchna* is the Hebrew word which expresses the strong feeling of mercy and compassion expressed from the intestines. It is based on the root *rhm* which means to have compassion or *hnn* which means to be gracious. In Greek, the terms *splanchnon* refers to the entrails' valuable parts, the heart, lungs, liver and kidneys. During a sacrifice, these parts were removed for the sacrificial meal. In a metaphoric speech, *ta splanchna* expresses compassion, pity and love. Within the messianic context of Christ's salvific mission, *ta splanchna* expresses compassion as an indication of God's divine involvement with the human predicament of suffering. It reveals God's character within the messianic involvement and engagement within human suffering. Hence, *ta splanchna* is connected to suffering, illness and health, violence and injustice, dying and mourning, loss and grief, burnout and hunger, estrangement and remorse (Louw 2011:48).

verb '*splagchnizomai*' is derived from the noun '*splagchnon*', which means intestines, bowels, entrails or heart, that is to say, the inward parts from which strong emotions seem to arise. Jesus was moved with compassion and pity for, felt sorry for, and his heart went out to the people. In the Hebrew text, the word compassion is rendered, *'racham'*, which means deep mercies and connotes the redemptive empowerment which is the exercise of love that honors the integrity and dignity of each life (Scalise 2011:418-419). So, we prefer *ta splanchna* here because it expresses compassion as an indication of God's divine involvement with the human predicament of suffering (Louw 2011:48).

However, Louw (2015:2) notes that pastoral theology is currently challenged by increasing social crises, especially those which violate human rights and dignity. Therefore, one can ask how we should reflect on the connection, even the disconnection, between power and the engagement of the pastoral ministry in the context of the search for meaning and human dignity. What is meant by compassion when the caring ministry connects the undeserved suffering of human beings and the chaotic abuse of power to the theological notion of the "power of God" and the compassion of God's kenotic love? The quest for theological clarity on God's compassion is caused by the many current burning social issues such as the acts of gender violence that occur in many families in Namibia. Hence, there is an urgent need for a hermeneutical deconstruction of power, framed by a top-down approach to hierarchical and patriarchal thinking of Hellenistic (*pantokrator*) and imperiaristic worlds. In this regard, the reframing of God-images in a practical theological reflection on life issues becomes vital. In practical theology, God should be portrayed more in terms of compassion and active verbs than in substantial, powerful nouns (Louw 2015:2).

Further, Lama, Tutu & Abrams (2016) express that, we can show our compassion when we feel motivated to help fellow human beings in suffering and pain. Compassion enhances empathy and encourages us to act in kindness and generosity. The Hebrew word for compassion is *rachamim* and is from the root word for womb, *rechem*. Compassion has a strong connection to the womb of a mother who gives life to the unborn baby. Through compassion, human beings become the givers and nurturers of life. Compassion also means suffering with; it stirs us to be concerned about another's wellbeing and survival and to suffer together with them to survive. It is compassion that moves us to help those experiencing difficult times and helps us to love one another as men and women (Lama, Tutu & Abrams 2016:252-253). In this

regard, Inbody tries to revise the concept of divine power as a metaphysical and theological concept and to relate it to social relationships and suffering:

> God's power is God's identification with the suffering of the world, and includes God's vulnerability, God's powerlessness and God's compassion. God's power is the power of resurrection and transformation which brings new life out of the suffering and evil of the world (Inbody 1997:140).

Consequently, God's omnipotence is not against the world, but it is a power which opposes all life threats and nullifies all powers which are against life. Human beings as created in His image are the reflection of God who exercises his power by bringing life in its fullest. Human beings are reminded here to love and show his compassion to fellow human beings and the entire creation of God (Berkhof 1979:135). We therefore understand God's power in terms of a suffering *theopaschitic* paradigm, which shows us who God is and what is meant by God's power. God's power is not an omnipotent force but, rather, on the cross of Christ, God identifies with suffering and shows His compassion whereby He proclaims that suffering and power abuse are directly opposed to His will (Louw 2011:48). In the *theopaschitic* model, God is no more seen in the form of sovereignty (power), but in the form of solidarity.

Theopaschitic theology, therefore, could play a fundamental role in shaping male identity by creating a paradigm shift from existing cultural convictions about the dominant position of men that relies on "power of threat" and "dominant authoritarianism" to what could be called "compassionate power." This understanding could help to reform the male identity to shift from the notion of power as force, control, domination and threat, to power as love, serving, healing and sharing. The reinterpretation of power could help Ovawambo men to view their power in the light of God's power, which is not employed through violent force but steadfast faithfulness, mercy and compassion. When male power is re-interpreted as an expression of faithfulness, servanthood, mercy, grace, love, and compassion, then the homestead becomes a place of harmony, unconditional love and peace, where family members can experience intimacy, trust, openness, understanding and respect. The *theopaschitic* understanding of God's power could help in transforming Ovawambo men's traditional understanding of manhood and masculinity which is based on dominant authoritarianism and competitiveness. It could liberate men from personal psychological issues and help them to retain their male identities and self-esteem in the present role-shifting socio-economic context. It could also help Ovawambo men to shift from hegemonic masculinity to compassionate and solidarity masculinity.

The interplay between the suffering God – *theopaschitism* – and Ovawambo male identity and gender inequality could help men to shift from a hierarchical, oppressive and dominating view of power to viewing power as fellowship, compassion and sharing (Peacock 2010:39). The *theopaschitism* theory could play an innovative role in transforming men's hegemonic masculine identity because it could encourage men to construct their masculine identity on the power of identification, compassion and transformation, instead of on patriarchy, machismo and brute power. In a gender inequality context, the *theopaschitism* model could also promote compassionate partnership (*koinonia*) and mutuality between men and women because both have common *koinonia* that they share in Jesus Christ. Hence, the common fellowship in Christ could become the model of communion between men and women (Peacock 2010:39).

In the gender-based violence context of the Ovawambo, increasing gender-related violence is an indicator of a crisis which needs to be addressed and investigated. Therefore, this study will take the perspective of change in terms of the new legal system in Namibia, new economic power that is gender wise and more inclusive, and the Namibian context which is to some extent shifting towards abandoning traditional perceptions of male domination. The study has noted the dynamics of the fear of losing power among men, which may be a contributing factor to gender violence in present-day Namibia. However, there is no available research on the living conditions of Ovawambo men after the implementation of the gender equality laws. Given that present gender laws in Namibia are an irreversible social reality, the study therefore aims to probe men's experiences after the implementation of the gender legislation. Hence, the study considers first whether *theopaschitic* theory could result in men's transformation in a harmonious and peaceful way, as well as in a shift from hegemonic masculinity to a compassionate masculine identity. Second, this study tries to determine whether the Ovawambo *uukwanankali* communitarian concept could be integrated with *theopaschitic* theology to help men shift from dominant and destructive tendencies towards compassion, gender justice and fellowship between men and women. In this way, the present study hopes to contribute towards bridging the gap in Ovawambo cultural norms and contemporary gender laws.

4.7 Conclusion

The present chapter has considered the idea of a theoretical framework as a study compass or map that guides the researcher through the research field. The theoretical framework is an instrument that helps the researcher to solve a particular problem without losing direction

towards the end. Thus, the theoretical framework for this study is based on the metaphorical theory and *theopaschitic* theology. The framework also integrates the hermeneutical approach that helps to analyze the pastoral, anthropological, and theological understanding of God's vulnerability through the theology of the cross. Three interpretations of the theology of the cross and of resurrection are examined in detail to determine whether they could lead to a paradigm shift in men's conception of power and masculinity as strength, dominant authoritarianism competitiveness and control to that of power as vulnerability, service, compassion and solidarity. Both Luther's and Moltmann's views reveal God's closeness to his people. Luther reveals God through the suffering of Christ that reveals him not as a passive God but a God of passion and compassion. Moltmann's ontological model reveals God's pathos which moves outside of him as he enters into a relationship with his people. Through this pathos, God humiliates himself in Christ's passion and death.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, we highlighted the need to transform Ovawambo male identity using the theology of the cross and *theopaschitic* theology as a theological framework. The theology of the cross and *theopashitic* theology could help the transformation process of Ovawambo male identity through the reinterpretation of power. Men can be encouraged to view their power in the light of God's power, which is not analogous to violent force but to steadfast faithfulness, mercy, and compassion. In order to accomplish that goal, this chapter will present the design and methodology that will help to draw a new framework for masculinity issues (Morrell 2001: xiv). This chapter therefore outlines the following main components of research—practical theological method, research design, research methodology and data management.

5.2 Practical Theological Goal of Study

This study employs practical theology, particularly pastoral care, as a tool that may be used to tackle gender and intimate partner violence among the Ovawambo. Practical theology deals with social problems that affect people in the various social settings of which one is a part, either within the context of the church or through the involvement of the church (Heitink 1993:208). Practical theology is a transformation tool because it aims to bring a difference not just to people, but also to the understandings and situations in the contemporary world. It is socio-politically aware and committed to engaging with real problems from the grass-roots perspective (Reader 2008:7). According to Firet (in Heitink 1993:129-130), practical theology does not deal with human action in a general sense, but with the action that has to do with the maintenance of the relationship between God and humanity as well as between humanity and God. Therefore, practical theology as a theory of action can only be useful if it contains the following elements: it must deal with concrete domains of action; it must analyze the context of the actions and the actions themselves in the present situation and with regard to their potentiality; it does these on the basis of an empiricism-transcending critical theory with the purpose of developing action models and strategies for the various domains of actions.

In contemporary situations where human beings are endangered by life changing issues such as war, poverty, xenophobia, gender-based violence, intimate partner violence, power abuse, corruption, and political uncertainty, practical theology can play a transforming and liberating role. Practical theology is no longer regarded as an ecclesiastical practice (saying the words) but it designs praxis theories and strategies (doing action) for action as part of social and personal transformation (Louw 2000:91). Swinton and Mowat (2006:60) describe practical theology as, "critical, theological reflection on the practices of the Church as they interact with the world, with a view to ensuring and enabling faithful participation in God's redemptive practice in, to, and for the world." For Louw (2008:71), practical theology deals with the praxis of God, that is, God's salvific and eschatological involvement and engagement with the trajectories of human lives and the suffering of human beings.

In the context of theological reflection (i.e. the human attempt to express and portray the presence and will of God in such a way that meaning in life and comfort is contextually disclosed and discovered), practical theology is both a hermeneutical and communicative endeavor. In this regard, practical theology is connected to the praxis and will of God within the encounter of God and human beings (Louw 2008:71). It helps us to interpret the good news of God's kingdom and salvation in terms of human experience/reality and social context in ways that the substance of our Christian faith would contribute to a life of meaning and quality. Practical theology helps the church to fulfill its prophetic role more meaningfully by denouncing, in word and deed, those factors that oppress human beings; scorn love, support and peace; and lead the human family into crisis (Louw 1998:2). Hence, practical theology, as an agent of transformation of the political, cultural and social environment, can help in the transformation process of Ovawambo men's abusive identity. Practical theology can also help us to develop a framework that would help to transform male identity and the notion of power among the Ovawambo so that men experience compassionate masculinity, gender liberation, and harmony in marriage and family life.

5.3 Practical Theological Methodology

Although several other scholars such as (Tracy 1983; Newton 1991; Browning 1996) employ practical theological methodology, this study will follow the approaches outlined by Louw (1998) and Osmer (2008), which promote an interaction between theory and praxis (see also Thomas 2012:9). The approaches by Louw and Osmer are rooted in practical theology which is a mutually critical connection between the interpreted theory and praxis of the Christian faith

and the interpreted theory and praxis of the current situation (Tracy 1983:76; Thomas 2012:9). Louw (1998:95) defines practical theology as the

> hermeneutic of God's encounter with human beings and their world. This encounter results in communicative faith actions. Thus, this is the reason why the praxis of the Christian faith and the practice of the church became the object of research in practical theology.

Louw's view above corresponds with Newton's (1991:186) assertion that:

> Practical theology is a critical and constructive reflection within a living community about human experience and interaction, involving a correlation of the Christian story and other perspectives, leading to an interpretation of meaning and value, and resulting in everyday guidelines and skills for the formation of persons and community.

It involves the description of lived experience, critical awareness of perspectives and interest, correlation of perspectives from culture and the Christian tradition, interpretation of meaning and value, critique of interpretation and guidelines and specific plans for a particular community (Newton 1991:186-187). Osmer (2008:4) maintains that practical theology aims to interpret various situations by considering the surrounding events, the drawing forces that make things happen, what ought to happen, and people's possible responses to the changes. The methodology therefore concerns itself with an encounter between God and humanity, the interpretation of the interactions between God and His people, and it is concerned with the dialogue and encounter between God and human beings (Louw 1998:4). According to Burkhart (in Louw 2011:4), practical theology is the art of overcoming the distance between human life and what it is meant to be. In terms of recent developments, practical theology is viewed as an action science which tries to connect the Christian faith to the praxis and context of our modern or postmodern society (Heitink 1999:18).

Additionally, Louw (2011:3-4) stresses that in order to follow the hermeneutical and networking thinking, practical theology should rethink its theological foundation. If networking thinking and systemic thinking are becoming the dominant philosophical paradigm in globalization, then, the search for differentiation and identity becomes exceptionally important. In this respect even ontological thinking with its emphasis on essence and being becomes most applicable and important. It helps practical theology to pose anew the questions regarding the unique identity of practical theology and its understanding of the praxis of God. Hence, the *theopaschitic* approach can help practical theological thinking to reformulate the notion of "theology" in praxis thinking. In order to reformulate or even reconstruct theory formation in practical theology, the assumption is that "being" qualities should not be formulated in terms of metaphysical substantial thinking but in terms of ontological passion

thinking. This makes practical theology the hermeneutics of God's encounter with human beings and their context. Louw, after presenting a survey of developments in the field of practical theology, proposed various models (Louw 1998:95-96) such as the personality-oriented model, the official model, the application model, an empirical model, the ecclesiological model and the phenomenological model. These various models offer basic frameworks which are necessary for understanding practical theology and which also offer sufficient guidance for doing research in practical theology. This study will use the phenomenological model because of its situation analysis. The situation analysis[38] forms the important methodological framework of this model. Osmer describes the problem with this model as "an over reliance on the social sciences as a source of substantive theological reflection." If practical theology is to be brought back to its fundamental theological character, then, it should be made aware of its primary function: "That task is the reflective dimension of piety, the attempt to understand God and the world in relation to God" (Osmer 1990:225). Practical theology thus becomes a hermeneutical event, involved with understanding and interpreting the God-human interaction. "In short, practical theological reflection is an interpretive process which takes place in the midst of the situations and seeks to understand and shape those situations according to the discernment of God's will" (Osmer 1990:227).

Additionally, Newton (1991:187) notes that practical theology must be based on the theological interpretation of the unheard voices of both personal and community life for the purpose of continual transformation of faith in the true God of love and power towards renewed ministry practice. Hence, the phenomenological model of practical theology discussed above will be implemented in this research. The phenomenological model which is based on the interpretation of the text and the transformation of the people and their world will be employed to explain and interpret the nature of masculine identity among the Ovawambo. It will also help us to use and interpret theological concepts about God's relation to human experience that lead

[38] Louw views the term "analysis" as referring to perception and interpretation (1998:318). One of its functions is to observe the activity of God in individual lives and relate this encounter to the goal of wholeness as the person's ultimate need (Heuer 1987:8). A pastoral analysis therefore is concerned with the procedures of analysis and interpretation regarding growth in faith in both the parishioner's spirituality and faith. It then applies faith and understanding of God to the existential problems within a social and life context. It puts more emphasis on these three components: faith, religion and God-images. The analysis of God-images or God concepts plays a crucial role because it assesses God-images which could either play a constructive role in a parishioner's behavior or be a disruptive factor, caused by irrational images of God. Through that process, mature faith and true healing can emerge that includes healing, caring for people, integration, reconciliation and life care (Louw 1998:319).

to strategies of transforming and liberating men. It is assumed here that the phenomenological model can help in transforming and reframing Ovawambo men's ideas of masculinity which are based on dominant and authoritarian forms of masculinity that are destructive to families.

5.4 Research Design

Durrheim (2006) says that a research design is the general approach one uses to solve a research problem. A research design is a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between the research questions and the implementation of the research (2006:9). According to Smith (2008:152), research in practical theology often begins by examining first the present situation, before formulating a biblical model of what should be done which culminates in developing a practical response. As this research falls within the field of practical theology, it began by examining the historical background of the Ovawambo male identity and how it has been influenced by global culture and its democratic social context. It then proceeded to probe Ovawambo men's experiences after family and gender laws were introduced in post-independence Namibia. In-depth interviews and focus group[39] discussions were then conducted in order to determine the root causes of gender-based violence and power abuse in Ovawambo intimate relationships. The goal was to come up with a framework that could be used to support and liberate men from hegemonic, hierarchical and abusive masculinity. We will address the research problem using the following major steps.

5.4.1 Qualitative empirical research

The empirical study was conducted at the Oluno Correctional Facility and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) in Auala dioceses which are situated respectively in the Oshana and Oshikoto local government areas in northern Namibia region. The research was conducted in two parishes, Onguta in the Oshana region and Oniipa, situated at the political border between the Oshikoto and Oshana regions (some members of Oniipa Parish live in Oshana, while others are in the Oshikoto region). The Oshana region was chosen purposefully because it is at the center of Ovamboland where most Ovawambo come for employment opportunities. The Oshana region is therefore a highly cosmopolitan area and this sometimes results in cultural and social-economic conflicts. Although it is the smallest of the 13 regions in the country, Oshana has the fifth largest population and the second largest population density

[39] The focus group is a data collection method which tries to bring together a group of five to thirteen people who have a common knowledge or some common skills about an issue that is connected to the research topic, to participate in a desired discussion on that topic, which is facilitated by the researcher (Matthews & Ross 2010:476).

in the country. It also has a high unemployment rate. The second motive behind the choice of Oshana is that the Namibia Demographic Health Survey (NDHS) shows that, of the 13 regions, the Oshana region records the second highest rate of gender-based violence cases in Namibia (Mogotsi 2015:12; *The Namibian* 2016:1). Currently, the region has been experiencing social, political, and religious conflict that has torn many families apart (Shilunga 2007: 5).

In this study, a qualitative empirical approach, focusing on an interpretive-phenomenological model, will be adopted. The primary goal of qualitative research is to approach the world in order to understand, describe, and sometimes to explain social phenomena by analyzing experiences of individuals or groups, by analytical interactions and communication, or by analyzing documents (Flick 2007:1). Hence, this method enables the researcher to explore the Ovawambo men's experiences, their interpretation of reality, and their understanding of society in terms of the meanings which they assign to the social practices (Babbie & Mouton 2001:33; Merriam 2009:24). The aim is to contribute to the current attempt to curb gender-based violence in Namibia as the whirlwind of change continues to sweep through family and gender relationships.

5.4.2 Research site and access procedure

This study adopts a qualitative approach which is more proficient at portraying issues of meaning in the participants' context. Qualitative research is distinguished from quantitative research because it is conducted in the natural setting of the social actors and it focuses on process rather than outcome while emphasizing the actors' perspectives (Flick 2007: x). Qualitative research also stresses the *why* of a question or topic rather than the *how* (Jones 2011:547). It focuses on stories and accounts which include subjective understanding, feelings, opinions and beliefs (Matthews & Ross 2010:142). In qualitative research, the researcher tries to investigate an issue or problem from the participants' viewpoints (Jones 2011:547). It also aims to understand in depth the description of actions and events rather than the explanation of human behavior. Its main concern is to understand social action in terms of its specific context rather than attempting to generalize about some theoretical population (Babbie & Mouton 1998:270). In addition, the aim of a qualitative research is to describe and understand particular events in a concrete way in the context where they happen (Babbie & Mouton 2001:272). Understanding the background of the event or the desired research situation helps to clarify the research. Swinton and Mowat define the qualitative method as a method that considers the unique ways through which individuals and communities inhabit the world. In connection with practical theology, they state that:

> Qualitative research assumes that the world is not simply out there waiting to be discovered. Rather, it recognized the world as the locus of a complex interpretive process within which human beings struggle to make sense of their experiences including their experience of God. Identifying and developing understandings of these meanings is the primary task of qualitative research (Swinton & Mowat 2006:29-30).

The nature of the desired research problem is not abstract but it is directly linked to the individual or groups experiencing a social or human problem (Cresswell 2009:232) or to particular field in which the research is supposed to be taking place (Strydom 2005:282). The qualitative research method is employed in this study to investigate the life experiences of Ovawambo men in family and marriage relationships. Focus group interviews and semi-structured individual interviews were conducted to guide this research. The research also employed participatory observation as the researcher was born into, and grew up, in Ovawambo culture and served as a church minister for a period of 16 years in Ovawamboland. As noted in Chapter One, purposive sampling method is used and the participants in this research are selected only from the research field because they have rich knowledge of the socio-cultural life of the Ovawambo. They are selected according to the nature of the research as follows:

- From the Oluno Correctional Facility, selected participants are Ovawambo men who are married or in intimate relationships but who physically abused their spouses.
- From the Onguta and Oniipa parishes, only men who got married before Namibia's political independence were asked to participate in this study.
- In the semi-structured interviews, participants were selected from among Ovawambo ELCIN pastors who have had a minimum of five years' experience in counseling work and are married.

Thus, all the participants have experienced married life. The choice of this group is to enable us to obtain in-depth information about the root causes of gender-based violence in Ovawambo intimate relationships. The interviews are conducted in the Oshivambo language in order to enable the participants to express themselves clearly.

5.5 Research Methodology

Research methodology has to do with the research process and the kind of tools and procedures to be followed during data collection (Babbie & Mouton 2008:75). The word methodology is derived from the Greek *meta,* which means after, usually used in English to mean "beyond" in the sense of more developed or a higher order and *hodos,* which means way or means. A method is therefore the systematic means by which something is accomplished whereas a methodology is the study or theory of the way that methods are used (Dunne *et al* 2005:165). It is the strategy, plan of action, and the process or design behind the choice and use of

particular methods which link the choice and use of methods to the desired outcome (Crotty 1998:3). A research methodology is a strategy of enquiry and philosophy or general principles behind a particular research, which moves from the underlying assumptions to research design and data collection (Hall & Hall 1996:29). This study therefore employs the methods outline below.

5.5.1 Procedure for data collection

The basic requirement for interviewing is to have a series of structured questions directed to generate the correct answers. However, obtaining a correct answer depends on the interviewee. To get a rich interview result, it is important to have the right interviewees, those who have special information that is needed based on the research goal (Dunne 1995:5). The secretary of the ELCIN eastern dioceses assisted the researcher to inform the ELCIN pastors of the research and invite those who met the criteria (pastors who had at least a minimum of five years' experience in marriage and family counseling work in their parish) to meet the researcher. However, the researcher was also able to make alternative arrangements with the pastors who were unable to meet with the group within the research time framework.

Regarding the focus group interviews, the researcher employed the same criteria. The prison commissioner and pastors from selected parishes assisted the researcher to request volunteers who met the research criteria (as will be indicated under the sampling of participants) to meet with the researcher in order to participate in the interviews. Since the aim of this research is to investigate the root causes of gender-based violence by listening to people's life stories, a purposive sample was needed to generate the most fruitful results from the focus group (Morgan 1998:56). The participants were selected based on sampling recruitment criteria. The population of this study comprised of 40 participants—six male prisoners, fourteen married men, ten male and ten female pastors. The ten male and ten female pastors were selected to capture different possible dimensions of gender conflict, to balance information and for triangulation.[40]

5.5.2 Methods of data collection

Data collection is the practical task of designing a framework that helps the researcher to gather data that would be used to address the research question or hypothesis. Data

[40] According to Matthews and Ross (2010:480), triangulation is the "measure of research quality, meaning that if different types of data are collected to address the same research question, each set of data can be used to check the finding from the other."

collection is carried out within time, spatial and resource constraints (Matthews & Ross 2010:181). This study used semi-structured interviews, observation and focus group discussions.

5.5.2.1 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews are interviews which are organized around the areas of particular interest, while ensuring considerable flexibility in scope and depth (Dicicco-Bloom & Crabtree 2006:315). The interview also helps the research "to gain initial group data, which produces an overall group narrative and then to seek more data on specific components of the narratives" (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2011:177). A semi-structured interview is used to collect data when the researcher is interested in people's experience, behavior and understanding, and to ascertain how and why they experience and understand the social world in a particular way. Therefore, the researcher adopted semi-structured interviews to capture Ovawambo men's experiences, behaviors, and viewpoints as well as how and why they behave in a particular way or understand the use of power in intimate relationships. The focus is on the information gathered from the inmates and married men about the root causes of gender-based violence, especially in intimate relationships, and what the participants say about their experiences and attitudes in intimate relationships (Matthews & Ross 2010:221). Semi-structured one-on-one interviews were conducted with a total sampling of 20 ELCIN eastern dioceses pastors (which included ten males and ten females) who had spent at least five years of their ministry among the Ovawambo and who were also married. These were selected because of their ministry experience and knowledge about gender-based violence, as well as their daily counseling work among their parishioners. Their responses offered rich information that reflects their long experience in ministry and exposed the key factors behind gender-based violence.

5.5.2.2 Focus group discussion

According to Morgan (1998:6), the focus group is a research technique that aims to collect information through group interaction on a topic of interest as determined by the researcher. The main aim of the focus group is to know what people really think and feel about a specific issue (Krueger & Casey 2000:7). Kroll, Barbour and Harris (2007 cited by Strydom, de Vos, Fouché & Delport 2011:361) agree that this approach is effective because it generates complex information at a low cost in a minimum amount of time. Another advantage of using the focus group is that it provides an opportunity for participants to learn from each other and also to

resolve important dilemmas with which they are confronted. This method is also a quick and cheap way of collecting information from many participants at the same time (Bless 2013:201).

However, the problem with this approach is that if the discussion is not properly organized and directed, only the opinions of those who dominate the discussion will be heard (Kumar 2012:128). Thus, the skills and experience of the facilitator in balancing the discussion are important for the quality of data collected. The facilitator also ensures that a safe environment for communication is created, everyone in the group has an opportunity to share his/her ideas, and the group does not prevent some members from expressing their ideas (Bless 2013:201). Hence, focus group interviews were used to gather the qualitative data about Ovawambo men's life experiences and understanding of marriage or intimate relationships as well as why they experience their current socio-cultural context in certain ways (Matthews & Ross 2010:236).

Many African peoples make constant use of small or large groups to address concerns within the communities; therefore, the focus group method of data collection is not necessarily strange to many people in Africa. However, due to the limited time that the focus group has to get all the participants' views, this study engaged with only a small number of participants— six inmates for the Oluno Correctional Facility focus group and seven members each for the Onguta and Oniipa focus groups (Strydom, de Vos, Fouché & Delport 2011:361; Bless 2013:201).

The three focus group participants included (a) six male perpetrators of gender-based violence acts from the Oluno Correctional Facility and (b) fourteen married men (seven from Onguta Parish and seven from Oniipa Parish). The Oluno prison was selected because it is the largest and only rehabilitating prison in northern-central Namibia where most Ovawambo people live. Most gender-based violence perpetrators are remanded for rehabilitation and correction at Oluno. The participants were selected through purposive sampling, the criteria being that only Ovawambo males who were married or in intimate relationships, abused their power against women, or engaged in gender-based violence, and were willing to narrate their experiences qualified for interview. In the case in which a participant became emotional, for instance, began to cry, the researcher would pause for a while and then amicably refer the participant to a counselor if necessary. The two focus groups in Oniipa and Onguta parishes included men who got married before Namibia's political independence in 1990. The participants who were selected through purposive sampling were men who had been married for at least 26 years. The selected participants were only those who experienced gender-based violence in their lives.

The aim was to acquire a balanced and clear picture of Ovawambo marriages before and after the country's independence.

To control the group members, the interview discussions were restricted to the interview questions and the scope of the research. For effective interface, the focus group discussion included five participants and it lasted for about ninety minutes. The interviews were audiotaped and transcribed and were conducted at times convenient for the interviewees.

5.5.2.3 Participant observation

The main aim of participant observation is to obtain intimate knowledge of the culture of a certain group of people where research is planned in their natural setting. The participant observation needs to be extended over a long period of time which is less than a year. Furthermore, participant observation must be based on social anthropology and must take part in a specific cultural setting for a long time (Matthews & Ross 2010:257). The present researcher employed participatory observation because he belongs to the Ovawambo group of people who are the subjects of this research. As the researcher is a Vambo man who went through Ovawambo cultural masculinity training, the researcher tries to draw from his own socio-cultural reality and interpretation and to show how these practices originate and change over time. The researcher has also been a member of, and a pastor with, the ELCIN for 27 years, an experience which has enabled him to acquire more knowledge of Ovawambo intimate partner violence and the masculinity crisis. Having been in the pastoral ministry since 2000, I have observed various gender-based violence incidents in which women are usually the victims. I know of many incidents in which women were killed by their husbands and girls killed by their boyfriends. In some cases, men killed their wives and then killed themselves. I also counseled many men who reported to me that they were being abused by their wives when they retired from their jobs. I also experienced many divorce cases in which women decided to leave their abusive relationships.

5.5.3 Purposive sampling of research participants

The researcher wrote letters requesting permission to conduct the research to both the Oluno Correctional Facility and the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN). The researcher also submitted copies of the same letters to the two parish councils where the focus groups interviews were eventually conducted, as well as to the ten pastors who were involved in one-on-one interviews. The researcher then waited for permission from both

the Oluno Correctional Facility and ELCIN church. Permission to conduct the research is one of the requirements needed to complete the application for ethical clearance from the University of KwaZulu-Natal before one can embark on human research. The Department of Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics committee reviewed the ethical clearance forms before permitting the researcher to proceed with the gathering of data from prisoners, the married men, and the pastors. The purposive sampling was to help the participants to share their ideas and knowledge about the research topic which seeks to explore the driving force behind gender-based violence and its relation to unemployment, abuse of power and changes in Namibia's constitution that affect gender roles among the Ovawambo. Therefore, 40 participants were selected, based on the criteria for selection which required that:

- Participants be gender-based violence perpetrators, married or in intimate relationships;
- Men who got married before Namibia's political independence;
- Married ELCIN pastors who have had at least five years' experience in counseling work.

5.5.4 Data management

Data management refers to the systematic, adequate storage and retrieval of data and of preliminary analyses. Well-organized data management is transparent and facilitates the possibility for the leaders to see what has transpired during the data collection and analysis. Therefore, only through proper data management will the collected information help the leaders to understand the purpose and the findings of the research. In this research, data management is divided into two parts—the data transcription procedure and data analysis methods (Boeije 2012:72).

5.5.4.1 Data transcription procedure

Silverman (1993:9) states that data transcription is used to understand how participants organize their talk. Data transcription is part of the data preparation. In this study, the transcription was obtained from tape recordings of both focus groups and face-to-face interviews. The data is transcribed by using a computer. For the security of the data, the researcher employed a security code which was known only to him. All interviews were transcribed as soon as possible after the interview. This helped the researcher to scrutinize the recordings and to observe possible gaps which needed clarification. There was constant interaction between the researcher and his supervisor that enabled them to come up with

follow-up questions, which were also recorded and transcribed (Haufiku 2014.40). The researcher was also on the lookout for some of the data which became altered during the transcription of the recordings. No verbal behavior such as facial expression, posture, tone, rhythm and intonation was overlooked. To avoid losing information, the researcher created elaborate memos in which he described impressions, observations and oddities (Boeije 2010:73). The sound recordings were transcribed in order to enable us to work with written texts by using the data analysis method below.

5.5.4.2 Methods of data analysis

The research employed thematic analysis for the qualitative data. According to Boyatzis (1998:16), thematic analysis is a method used in research to identify, analyze and report the theme within the data. It also helps in describing the data in a more comprehensive way. Braun and Clarke (2006:77) add that thematic analysis is data-driven in order to help the theme to be directly formed from the original data that could easily develop the unique coding form. Hence, the analysis started with the listening to the tape, reading and re-reading the descriptions of the informants' life experiences, and taking important statements from the descriptions. The informants' descriptions were divided into meaning units, categories and themes. The findings were then referred back to informants in order to correlate them with their experiences and what they shared with researcher. Lastly, the revisions obtained from the informants were combined to form the final descriptions. The connecting principle was observed throughout in order to warrant the trustworthiness of the findings. However, the researcher is aware of the protection of the interviewees' rights and well-being, therefore, the information obtained remains confidential and the names of participants are not mentioned, but fictitious names are used. The recorded interviews were also kept in a secure place that was arranged by the supervisor. The information from the Digital Voice Recording of the dissertation will be destroyed through incineration five years after the thesis has been evaluated. The findings of this research will not be used in any way for performance appraisals or disciplinary procedures.

5.6 Limitations of the Study

First, as mentioned in Chapter Two, the term "gender-based violence" encompasses many issues in human relationships including woman trafficking. This study is based only on Intimate Partners Violence (IPV). Second, the study focuses only on Ovawambo men's experiences of family life after women's emancipation and the gender equality laws were

introduced. However, the result of the research may be generalized to offer help beyond Ovamboland and Namibia, wherever people experience similar problems.

5.7 Validity and Reliability

According to Hall and Hall (1996:43), one way of determining the validity of research is to consider the evidence and how the research was carried out. The validity is also ensured by checking whether anything could have interfered with the research process and confused the result as well as the nature of the connection between the evidence and the generalization. In this interpretive research, the researcher is interested in understanding the Ovawambo men's experiences in terms of their own interpretations of reality and their understanding of society from the meanings which they assign to the social practices (Babbie & Mouton 2001:33; Merriam 2009:24). The qualitative method enabled the researcher to investigate untold stories of Ovawambo men's life experiences in marriage and family life through semi-structured interviews and focus groups. However, one of the conditions that helped to ensure the credibility of this research is organizing the "tactics to help ensure honesty in informants" (Shenton 2004:66). One of the tactics used was to tell the participants before they signed the informed consent form that "they have the right to withdraw from the study at any point, and they should not even be required to disclose an explanation to the investigator" (Shenton 2004:67). The participants in this study were offered the right to abstain, and only those willing to participate were included in the study.

Ensuring credibility also included using different methods such as field notes, focus group interviews, and individual interviews. The triangulation with data sources was used by triangulating participants' viewpoints and experiences against those of others. After a week, the researcher went back to the focus group members to do a follow-up, in-depth, one-on-one interview with all the focus group participants. The follow-up, open-ended, one-on-one interview questions were constructed based on the responses obtained from the focus group. This helped the focus group members to confirm whether what the researcher wrote corresponded with what they told him or to decide whether they needed to offer additional information. In other words, they could confirm or dispute and change some findings. If they agreed with the data obtained from them, then, the information from the research participants is considered valid and credible rather than the researcher's subjective ideas (Shenton 2004:105). In addition, this study used purposive sampling to select its participants in order to

minimize the range of specific information that can be obtained from and about Ovawambo intimate relationships (Babbie & Mouton 2001:277).

5.8 Confidentiality and Ethical Considerations

Since a qualitative inquiry is first and foremost research on human subjects, it is important that the rights and welfare of participants are protected (Milacci 2011:548). Hence, a number of ethical issues were taken into consideration in this research. Firstly, the researcher obtained permission from the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Research Ethics Committee to carry out the research before starting data collection. Appointments were made with all research participants, in both the face-to-face interviews and the focus groups, in order to inform the participants about what would be required of them before the research began, without arousing any suspicion. The participants were informed about the purpose of the proposed research, the importance of the research, the qualifications and experience of the researcher, the possibility of their having any discomfort, whether physical or psychological, and their freedom of participation and their right to withdraw from the study at any point in time. Each person who agreed to participate in the research was asked to sign a statement of informed consent before the interview started. The statement indicates that the participant was taking part in the research of his/her own free will and had full rights to withdraw anytime they wished (Hallonsten 2012:40-41). The information obtained remains confidential and the anonymity of the participants in the research is also assured through the use of pseudonyms. The researcher was cautious not to reflect his own intention, selection of words, and follow-up questions (Walker 1998:242).

Regarding the focus group interviews, it was not easy to keep data collected in group settings confidential. Therefore, the researcher took time to remind the participants of the importance of keeping the discussions confidential. Participants were also informed that confidentiality would be maintained; they were told who would have access to the data; that each participant's anonymity would be maintained in the storage data during the analysis and in reporting the information. During the presentation of focus group findings, the data used in the report was reviewed carefully to ensure that there was no information that could point to the identity of the participants (Hennink 2007:410). Beyond these professional guidelines, we Christians are guided by a higher ethical standard that is rooted in the belief that all human beings are created in the image of God and they have value (Gen.1-2). This means that Christian researchers are obliged to obey the command, "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Mk. 12:31), to treat others

as one would want to be treated (Mt. 7:12) and to ensure that participants' interests, rather than only the researcher's professional or research interests, are protected (Milacci 2011:548).

5.9 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the following main components of research: practical theological method, research design, research methodology, and data management. The research design and methodology guided us toward achieving the goal of this study. With the research methodology, this study moved from the underlying assumptions to its design and data collection (Hall & Hall 1996:29) and thereby developed a strategy that could help to influence and transform Ovawambo masculine identity. Therefore, the next chapter will look at the presentation of data. This will help to investigate the current life experience of Ovawambo married men in Ovawambo family life.

CHAPTER SIX

PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

6.1 Introduction

As noted in Chapter 4, this serves as an empirical study and presentation of research findings. This research will examine the historical background of Ovawambo male identity and how it has been influenced by global culture and the democratic social context. The aim of this chapter will be to investigate the impact of gender equality laws and gender roles changes among Ovawambo men. It aims to hear the untold voices of married men about their life experience and expectations in their relationship with their wives in this social transition. Only Ovawambo men will be taken into consideration. The research relies on information obtained from ELCIN pastors in the Eastern Diocese as well as real life experiences of Ovawambo men after family and gender laws were introduced in post-independent Namibia. Their experiences can be used to find solutions to the problem of gender-based violence in intimate relationships.

This study used the purposive sampling to help the participants share their ideas and knowledge about the research topic. The focus of the study is to explore the driving force behind gender-based violence and its relation to unemployment, abuse of power, and changes in Namibia's constitution that affect gender roles among the Ovawambo. The research adopts thematic analysis to identify and interpret themes and main ideas of the research respondents. The researcher will use the participants' direct life experiences and expectations. This chapter, therefore, presents the research findings from the focus group discussions and in-depth interviews which were used in data collection.

The study consists of three focus groups and 20 one-on-one pastors' interviews. The research relies on information obtained from real life experiences of Ovawambo men and ELCIN pastors in the Eastern Diocese after family and gender laws were introduced in post-independent Namibia. The focus group interviews consisted of four sets of questions. The first question related to traditional Ovawambo masculine identity. The male interviewees were asked to relate their experiences of the traditional preparation for manhood and how they were expected to reflect their manhood and masculine identity in intimate gender relationships. They were also asked to comment on the consequences of failure to fulfill the expected masculine roles and duties in the community and family settings, in order to determine why Ovawambo

men subscribe to cultural dictates. The second question was about the traditional roles of Ovawambo men in family life and the effect of democratization and modernization on family life in Namibia. The third question was about their experiences and responses to the implementation of gender-equality laws that have emancipated women and brought changes in gender roles. The fourth question concerns Ovawambo men's understanding of the root causes of gender-based violence.

The one-on-one pastors' interview consisted of five sets of question. The first question was about the pastor's experience in marriage relationships after the implementation of the gender equality laws. The second and third questions asked about the seriousness of gender-based violence in ELCIN marriages and its effect on couples and other family members. The fourth question sought the male participants' views on gender-based violence, whereas the fifth question sought the opinion of the female participants about the root causes of gender-based violence. The sixth question asked for information about the preventive measures in place at the ELCIN church ministry that can help to ease or eradicate gender-based violence. The answers to these questions helped to forge a link between gender-based violence and Ovawambo manhood and masculine identities, implementation of gender equality laws, unemployment and power abuse. Below, the results of the three focus groups are presented before the results from the pastors' interview. The results are structured as follows: 1) the Oluno Inmates' focus group; 2) Oniipa focus group; 3) Onguta focus group and 4) Pastors' in-depth interviews.

6.2 Findings from Focus Groups and One-on-one Pastors' Interviews

6.2.1 Oluno Correctional Facility focus group

1. How are Ovawambo men expected to play their cultural masculine roles in the community, marriage and family life? How do they acquire their male identity and what happens if one fails to fulfill this duty?

All interviewees in the Oluno focus group agreed that every Vambo man is expected to prove to his parents, wife and children, and to the community at large that he is truly a man and the head of his family. Thus, he must ensure that he erects his own house and own livestock and other property. Inmate C stated that:

> In Ovawambo social life, a man needs to prove his maleness through different activities which include getting married, erecting his own house, and acquiring all needed household utensils including baskets, axes and hoes, and preparing land for cultivation. He must also have enough livestock. In times of drought and famine, it is the man's duty to ensure that his family members

> and livestock have food to eat. Men also have to provide the animal skin that is used in making dresses and garments. In modern times, it is the men's duty to buy clothes for their wives and children (17/10/2016).

All interviewees agree that a man needs to be trained before he can accomplish these masculine duties. Therefore, training males to become brave is a major aspect of Ovawambo family life. The training begins from childhood as confirmed by Inmate D:

> Boys are taught by their fathers, uncles or elder brothers to do some jobs at home like taking care of the calves, cultivating land, erecting or repairing broken fences (*enkolo*) for the *mahangu* field… (17/10/2016).

However, some men do sometimes fail to live up to the socio-cultural expectations. Such men are generally regarded as cowards and worthless. Inmate C said:

> Every Vambo man must make sure that he performs and fulfils his duties as a man, otherwise, he must suffer the consequence of being called a coward, which is not a good label because only weak, worthless, poor men deserve to be so-called. A man is called *omukatalume* (coward) when he does not have cattle or a large field, has a small house, is not patient, spends too time in his parents' house after his wedding or depends too much on the property of his wife/wives (17/10/2016).

Nonetheless, this does not mean that such a man has completely lost his position as head of the family. He is expected to continue to lead his household even when he is financially or materially deprived because as a man, he is created to rule and to hold the leading position in family. Inmate E explained that:

> Being a family head is something a man got from God his creator from the beginning. If a woman earns more money than her husband, it does not mean that she automatically becomes family head. I must always be the head whether I have something to offer my family or not. This is my cultural inheritance. If my grandfather and grandmother as well as my mother and father lived like this, why cannot my wife and I? My wife must follow my instructions day and night…if this an abuse, then, it does not mean men are the one who abuse women, but God is it the one who abuses them because he created men to rule over women (17/10/2016).

The above views show that all participants understood that every Vambo man proves his masculinity to his family and community through his possessions. A man needs to work hard to acquire property and confirm his manhood. Thus parents, older brothers, and the community join hands to teach and help every boy to attain manhood and avoid cowardly behavior. All participants agreed that Ovawambo men are moulded in such a way that they should keep all challenges they face a secret. For a man to share his problems is regarded as a sign of weakness. A man must endure every hard time and challenge without saying anything. Whatever a man faces, although it is very hard to bear, he needs to remain silent, to avoid being regarded as a coward. By doing this man is proving his manhood.

2. In Ovawambo culture, men are regarded as family head, breadwinner and controller of family assets. It is also normal for men to exercise control over all family matters, especially in terms of intimate relationships, property ownership and major decision-making. However, there has been an immense change in gender relations after Namibia's political independence. What types of change do you experience in your intimate relationship? How do the changes affect your masculine identity and how do you cope with and respond to these changes?

Thus far, we have shown Ovawambo traditional views of gender relationships in marriage and family life. Women were regarded as secondary citizens to men who were seen as family heads, owners of family property, breadwinners and family decision-makers. Traditionally, a Vambo man had the final say in every family matter but he also ensured that he had enough provision for his family and that his fellow men regarded him as brave. Equality between man and woman did not exist. The man must lead and the woman must follow. Patriarchal ideology played a huge role in marriage relationships. However, things changed when Namibia got her political independence. The new Namibian government adopted a democratic ideology which brought the colonial era to an end and changed marriage and gender relationships through the gender equality laws. The introduction of the gender equality laws was welcomed in the beginning because the laws helped women to claim their rights and dignity in gender relationships and to exercise equal decision-making power in family affairs, like their male counterparts. The laws enjoined couples to agree on where they would live, the number of children they would have, and how to share other family responsibilities.

In the past, women had no right to acquire property such as houses, cars or farms, but the gender equality laws freed them to buy and own property. Although the laws guaranteed the rights and dignity of both men and women, the implementation of the laws has caused mixed feelings among Ovawambo men. Inmate A noted that:

> The introduction of the gender equality laws was considered good in the beginning, but later, we men realized that these laws have nothing good to offer us. The laws were meant to recolonize us. After Namibia's political independence, the gender laws sounded pleasant in our ears when we listened to them because they promote equality between men and women and abolished the discrimination rules that made our mother slaves in our fathers' hands. We expected these laws to help both men and women to understand one another physically, spiritually and economically, as well as to handle issues between women and men that cause conflict and abuse in family life. We thought it was a good idea to implement these laws because it was not good for our mothers to be treated like slaves by our fathers, even though our forefathers and mothers managed to live together and raise their children without any serious violence. However, the problem is not really the gender equality laws themselves but in the way women and men understand them (17/10/2016).

Furthermore, Inmate C regards the current gender laws as a threat and the source of conflict in marriages and intimate relationships among the Ovawambo because it is contrary to the traditional Ovawambo gender relationship structure:

> Gender equality laws have caused much harm in our homes. Although men are the heads of the family as the Bible and our culture say, most of our women no longer adhere to this norm. In Oshivambo culture, when a man as the head of the family gives a command, every member of his household obeys. When a man speaks, the woman keeps quiet and obeys his instructions, whether she likes it or not. But in current marriage relationships, there is much rivalry. Our women always shout and threaten that they will report us to the police. This constant quarrel causes me as a man to become angry and I use my physical power to silence my wife. So, these attitudes of disrespect cause much conflict (17/10/2016).

Thus, all Oluno participants reject the gender equality laws which they regard as a threat to their position as family head and to their self-worth:

> Most Ovawambo men believe that it is abnormal for a man to depend on his wife's resources; the woman should depend on her man. But today, we men suffer a lot because our wives earn more salaries than we do and we are ashamed or uncomfortable to ask any help from them. Our women also expect too much from us which forces some men to steal in order to maintain the *status quo* (Inmate E:17/10/2016).

The implementation of gender equality laws in Namibia has caused a drastic change in gender relations in the sense that women have gained economic independence and rights. Almost all participants felt that the gender equality laws cause their wives to disrespect them. Some women lose interest in and respect for their men, especially when they start to earn income like men. They no longer need their men's support, ideas and property. Inmate D revealed that:

> Some women also try to marry poor men in order to control them. Since more women are receiving higher salaries than men, they can easily get bank loans and afford to buy expensive property including houses, farms, cars or shopping malls. In such a scenario, the men's hands are tied and their mouths are shut. Any claim the man makes as the head of the family elicits a response like, "This is my house, this is my car, this is my property... with my qualifications and assets I can live my life without your help. You are worthless" (17/10/2016).

All interviewees also believe that the equality laws have caused serious havoc in intimate relationships between men and women. Ovawambo people or their other fellow Namibians would have fared better without these laws which undermine men and give more power to women. Some men regard the laws as a secondary form of colonization under the guise of democracy because they undermine Ovawambo culture and Christian teachings. The negative impacts of the laws on men are reflected in their complaints of being persecuted and having fewer rights than women. Most interviewees feel threatened by the laws which cause their wives to disrespect them. The change also causes fear and confusion in some men and promotes conflict in many Ovawambo marriages, as some men resort to abusing their power against women:

> The modern Namibian women are quite different from the traditional ones because they are well protected by the law. Whatever leadership positions men held in government or under the traditional authorities have been taken away by the current law. Under the former South African government, men were well regarded and valued as heads of the family. But under the present democratic government, men have lost everything to women. We men are left with nothing in our hands. Every law in Namibia is simply against us. The present government does not consider our interest. We are punished while women are well-protected and treated as saints. This gender related law reforms demand that we fold our arms and let our wives rule and control us in every direction. If we are now threatened like this and regarded as useless old dogs, we must defend ourselves. We must show the present lawmakers that we also have rights like women. We did not create the cultural gender laws which stipulate that women must live under the supervision of men no matter how rich they are. We found them like that. It is not our fault that women were not given the leadership position in family and society; God organized this himself. So, we don't deserve the present punishment that we are subjected to. Everywhere you go, you only hear about women's rights. When will our society start to preach about men's rights? We must reclaim back our rights as heads of the family and breadwinners which have been overruled slowly by the present gender laws which favor women (Inmate C:17/10/2016).

The view above shows that many Ovawambo men are affected both physically and psychologically by women's financial freedom, especially when the man experiences a financial setback due to unemployment, retirement or retrenchment. In some cases, the woman forgets all the support she received from her husband before his financial difficulty:

> This idea of 50/50 gender equality is rather problematic in marriage. Some women understand gender equality as freedom from men's control. Some well-educated Ovawambo women tell their husbands: "If you do not do my bidding, I shall kick you out of this house, because it is mine." It is traumatic for a man who in the beginning used to support his wife but is now being told that he would be kicked out of the house. Women are no longer interested in getting married for love but would rather marry a man because of his money and property. They do not enter into a relationship with men for love but for their own hidden benefit. But Namibian women need to stop leaving their husbands when they get old or lose their jobs (Inmate E: 17/10/2016).

All participants in the Oluno focus group agree that Ovawambo intimate relationships have been transformed by the gender equality laws. Most of the research participants feel threatened by the current gender laws and women's economic emancipation which has forced some men to lose their leadership position in the family. The situation produces low self-esteem and feelings of rejection in some men who come under pressure to regain what they believe that they have lost. In the process, some men abuse their power against their wives. Similarly, women also try to fight back to retain the gains of independence which include gender equality and their full rights as equal partners to men. Some men feel trapped by gender equality that gives women the power to rule their lives without men's interference. They all agree that they could not retain their position of breadwinner because of the low incomes they earn. Some men's salaries are too small to compare with what their wives get. Some women expect their husbands to fulfill their duties in providing for the family. They are not ready to share the

family burdens with their husbands. This causes some men to live in state of shock and fear because of their failure to perform their duties as heads of families.

4. In Ovawambo culture, if the married woman does not obey her husband, what actions should be taken to make her agree?

Although Namibian law forbids a man to beat his wife or use a weapon like a knife, spear or his fist, most participants agree that in Ovawambo culture, the disrespectful woman is punished with a small stick or belt, but the punishment must not cause major injuries. It is culturally acceptable for a man to beat or discipline his disrespectful wife as noted by several interviewees:

> Yes, some men, like I, killed their wives because women do not know that it is disrespectful to quarrel with men especially in public places. On other hand, we men do not know how to talk especially when we are angry. Our women enjoy talking back. So, in most cases, women win and silence men, which is not a good thing. When men try to redeem their pride, they also silence women but by slapping or kicking them, which eventually leads to a fight in many cases, like mine. In the end, the woman loses because she is not as strong as the man and she could end up being injured or dead. Nowadays men are being provoked to anger because of women's ill-mannered behaviors (Inmate D:17/10/2016).
>
> Sometimes, women were beaten and sent back to their parents which were a shame to her relatives who would then try to return her to her husband. Women also got married for survival and security for their children and for themselves. So, to send a woman back to her parents' home caused her to lose all the benefits she enjoyed in her marriage. Most women also endured suffering at the hands of their husbands just to survive. Then, their husbands saw this as an opportunity to abuse them even more without any fear (Inmate B:17/10/2016).
>
> Gender-based violence is a problem to both men and women. No one is happy about it. But it is wrong for our government to label men merely as abusers of women. Women always need to be disciplined by men because God placed them in the care of men. There is no way a woman would become the head of the family, for men must continue to be the head of women. Let us do what God told us to do – to rule because we are the heads of families (Inmate E:17/10/2016).
>
> Let us remember also that in Oshivambo marriage, especially in a polygamous marriage, wife beating was a sign of love… (Inmate C:17/10/2016).

All members of the Oluno Correctional services come to an agreement that wife-beating is something accepted in the Ovawambo culture. It was culturally accepted to discipline a rude wife or a child to bring order in their home. The Bible is against a man who spares the rod to the one he loves. Culturally, wife beating was regarded as a sign of love among Ovawambo.

4. Statistics shows that gender-based violence and family conflict are at an alarming stage in Namibia, as most men abuse their power against women especially among the Ovawambo. What could be the contributing factor to this problem?

Five out of six interviewees believe that the root causes of gender-based violence in Ovawambo gender relationships today are the introduction of the gender equality laws and women's economic emancipation which have had a negative impact on family life. Some women regard the laws as license for a power tussle with men. According to Inmate D, some men choose to defend themselves against these laws because the government has failed to abolish or repeal them. Inmate D narrated his story thus:

> I'm in this prison because I shot my fiancée when she insulted me before a large crowd of people. She was not ready to keep quiet; culture demands that a woman be silent when she has a quarrel with her husband… Our government introduced these laws against us; and our wives again introduced more laws against us. But we will never ever let ourselves be ruled by women. Let the government give them more money and well-paid jobs but we will never kneel before our women. Just inform them that the more they strengthen the gender equality laws against men, the more prisons they need to build to accommodate us. However, some women's organizations in Namibia and some married women do not approve of these laws, which are celebrated mostly by single women. How on earth can you implement a law on behalf of married couples if you are not married? Our government encourages the slavery of men through these laws by not educating people about the implications of the laws. Everyone just implements the laws as he or she understands it. So, in the end, men suffer more. The current marriage and family conflict also show that our boys will suffer in their marriage more than we have done. Most Ovawambo men are tempted to think that things were better under the colonial rule by the minority South African whites because we at least had our full family rights. But after independence we have ended up losing our rights again (17/10/2016).

Many Ovawambo men regard the gender laws as biased against men. Most participants argue that although these laws were created to free all women from exploitation and inequality at the hands of men, this is no longer the case. They believe that the gender laws were introduced to render them as slaves of women and prisoners of the law:

> Some women even expect their husbands to kneel before them if they need something from them. But this is a taboo in Ovawambo culture. To kneel before a woman? …mhuuu, I have never heard a hen crow. Clearly, most Ovawambo men are confused and demoralized; they don't understand this changing gender role situation. It seems the gender equality laws have come to destroy our marriage relationships and to put us all in prison (Inmate D).

Inmate C explained that some women interpret the laws as permitting an exchange of power and leadership with men; therefore, they try to repay their husbands with the same abuse that they had suffered in the past.

> Indeed, most Ovawambo women today believe that it is their turn to do what their husbands did to them because they have been empowered by gender equality laws. Although they support the idea of equality between men and women, they do not really understand the meaning and the content of the laws. Only women are satisfied with the laws, which they believe permit them to repay the men with the same ill-treatment that they had meted out in the past in the name of culture. Thus, some women now beat their husbands because they also were beaten; some cheat on their men because they were cheated on. Some women also build their private vacation homes far from their marital homes and they stay there alone without their husbands' approval. So, women understand that these laws come to free them from men's abuse and also put men under their control (17/10/2016).

Inmate C further pointed out that physical abuse is the result of the emotional abuse that most women inflict on their husbands in secret:

> …Most women now abuse their husbands secretly, and that is why their husbands respond by abusing them in public. Our women abuse us emotionally, then, we react by abusing them physically. However, our gender policies do not regard emotional but only physical abuse as serious abuse. I have been sentenced to 19 years' imprisonment because I killed my wife. Yes, I committed the crime, but I suffered emotionally first in the hands of my wife. When I got tired of the situation, I reacted aggressively towards her until I killed her. So, to get married is to bring yourself closer to your wife's emotional abuse (Inmate C:17/10/2016).

Most interviewees agreed that the gender equality laws were introduced to overthrow the patriarchal ideology which placed women under the control of men. However, when women become financially emancipated, some of them began to repay their husbands with the abuse they had experienced from them. It seems that some women now try to reverse the patriarchal ideas through their financial freedom. The process has caused some men to feel threatened and ashamed. In a patriarchal system, the family economy is placed in the man's hands but in the current democratic order, the family economy is controlled by both men and women. In some cases, women have become the family breadwinner and financial controller. This change has negative impact on some Ovawambo men who then resort to violence against women:

> We Ovawambo men are alarmed by the current state of gender relationship in Namibia, especially in our marriage, as well as by the new laws which place women above us causing some of us to live like women and women to act as men. We experience long-suffering in our marriages. But this was not the original arrangement. The woman remained under her husband's leadership and not the other way around. Yes, this happens because we earn less income than they do (Inmate F:17/10/2016).

> My wife earned more income than I did. Therefore, she started getting fed up with me. One day she tried to poison me, so that my children would become orphans and qualify for the government's social grant. I noticed it early. Then I refused to eat the food she tried to give me…Luckily, she had a good job even though I had lost mine. Then she tried to act as the boss in our home. She refused to give me any money until I forced her, because I had provided for her needs when I was working in Walvis Bay. She enjoyed my money but refused to share hers with me…This is the main reason I killed her. Being financially dependent on a woman is unacceptable (Inmate E:17/10/2016).

Furthermore, some participants believe that the current family problems are caused by the changes in marital laws that took effect after Namibia's political independence. Through the gender equality laws, most Ovawambo men lost their position as head of the family and breadwinner. Their wives then began to lose respect for them and refused to submit to them. Inmate C said:

> In Oshivambo culture, when a man as the head of the family gives a command, every member of his household obeys. When a man speaks, the woman keeps quiet and obeys his instructions, whether she likes it or not. But in current marriage relationships, there is much rivalry. Our women always shout and threaten that they will report us to the police. This constant quarrel

> causes me as a man to become angry and I use my physical power to silence my wife. So, these attitudes of disrespect cause much conflict (17/10/2016).

Only two participants agreed that some men abused alcohol, which causes conflict in most marriages among the Ovawambo. To answer the question of why some men abuse alcohol, some participants disclosed that:

> Alcohol abused is preventing most men to stand to their own legs. We spend too much money on beer, and that encourages us to abuse our power. Abusing our money leads to abusing our power against our wives. It is true that most of our marriage conflicts are caused by our women, but alcohol is the main problem from our side as men. If your wife provokes you, you cannot control yourself because you are under the influence of alcohol. It is just better if all bottles shops were shut down in Namibia. This will save most men in Namibia and close the prisons doors. (Inmate B: 17/10/2016).

The above information reveals that the Ovawambo men have lost their courage to be in the position of family leadership as their fathers were. The resulting stress causes them to try to get back what they feel they have lost. In this process, some men abuse their power against their wives. All members agreed that one of the pressing reasons men abuse their power is because the current gender laws are against Ovawambo culture and the biblical understanding they have adopted from Christian teachings. Most of the interviewees felt that the present government did wrong by implementing the gender equality laws, without first teaching people what gender equality means. They feel that these laws have abolished some good norms which are still supposed to be used to balance the living standard of present marriages and family relationship. This shows that most of the Ovawambo do not support these equality laws and recent gender role changes in marriage and family relationship. Ovawambo men still want to live according to the Ovawambo culture, so they use their power to continue to exercise their traditional masculine roles which are based on hegemony.

6.2.2 Oniipa Parish focus group

1. How are Ovawambo men expected to play their cultural masculine roles in the community, marriage and family life? How do they acquire their male identity and what happens if one fails to fulfill this duty?

In modern times, it is still a men's duty to buy clothes for their wives and children as well as to fulfill other family responsibilities like paying water bills and electricity. But this becomes heavy in current Ovawambo due to the economic shortage in some men's lives:

> A poor or weak man would not easily get a wife among the Ovawambo because all women want brave and rich men. Nowadays, marriage is rated according to the man's possessions. Rich men deserve to be respected in marriage but poor men are disregarded (Adam A: 24/10/2016).

The boy child acquires his masculine identity from his childhood. Boys are taught by their parents, older brothers and peers. Adam G observed that:

> When a boy child is born into a family, whenever his mother carries him in the baby carrier (*ondhikwa*), she must carry a stick that indicates that she is carrying a child who is expected to become brave. This is the starting point of manhood. When a baby boy is two years' old, he is taught to carry his stick wherever he goes. Boys are also expected to carry sticks in the community. It is believed that a man must not walk empty-handed because he is the protector of the family and of its women. From the beginning, boys are taught not to cry or show any emotion as girls and women do. A man shows his bravery by concealing his emotions, even if he feels pain. Crying is a sign of weakness and cowardice (24/10/2016).

A Vambo boy also goes through initiation ceremonies like *epitotanda* (circumcision ceremony) through which his manhood and masculine identity are proven and strengthened. Adam B narrated that:

> At the age of 14-15 years, boys are expected to go through the ritual of circumcision in which the foreskins of their penises are cut off with a sharp knife without any medication. Through this ritual, they learn to endure pain without losing hope. Boys are discouraged from playing with girls. Rather, they must learn to engage in bullying and wrestling matches. Boys get all the instruction pertaining to manhood and playing the role of the family head in the future from their fathers or uncles. They are also taught to maintain family property such as livestock, farm produce and homes because the man is the family property owner (24/10/2016).

In Ovawambo culture, a man is expected to fulfill his duties as protector of and provider for his family because he is regarded as an axe:

> The male symbol is an axe, which is a symbol of power and bravery, because he is expected to cut down a tree to erect his house. Thus, boys are referred to as "axes" (*omumati ekuya*) from an early age because they are expected to become house builders and owners (Adam: 24/10/2016).
>
> When a boy is about thirteen or fourteen years, he is taught to perform major tasks –dig the well, take care of the livestock and take them to the cattle posts among the wild animals (Adam B: 24/10/2016).

In the Ovawambo social life, a man needs to prove his maleness through different activities which include getting married, erecting his own house, acquiring all needed household utensils such as baskets, axes and hoes, and preparing the field for cultivation. He must also have enough livestock. In times of drought and famine, it is the man's duty to ensure that his family members and livestock have food to eat. Men also have to provide the animal skin that is used in making dresses and garments. In modern times, it is the men's duty to buy clothes for their wives and children:

> Every Vambo man is expected by his community, family members and peers to get married, erect a house, cultivate a large *mahangu* (pearl millet) or maize field and *iigandhi* or *omashisha* (corn barns). He must have abundant livestock including cattle, sheep, goats, donkeys and

> horses and know how to dig a well to provide water for his family and livestock. He should also be able to hunt and farm to provide his family with meat, milk, butter and *mahangu* (pearl millet). As a hunter, he is taught to feed a dog that will help him to hunt wild animals like springboks and rabbits. His house must be erected with big and strong planks. He must also be able to take care of his wife and children. The wife must be fully clothed with traditional Ovawambo dresses and jewelry such as *omihanga*, *onyoka* and *eteta*. In addition, he must care for his clan members, neighbors and the elderly people in his community and protect young girls from being abused by wayward boys (Adam C: 24/10/2016).

Thus, the participants disclosed that boys in the Ovawambo cultural life are taught about some activities that they need to know and do to prove their manhood. By doing these things that include taking care of the calves, cultivating the land, erecting or repairing the thorn fence (enkolo) for the mahangu field, he is taught how to oversee family affairs in his life. Furthermore, from the age of 14, boys begin to be taught some more difficult jobs that help them to endure painful situations, like taking part in the male initiation ceremony called *etanda,* being cattle herdsman, and collecting salt from *ekango* (a salt pan). They are also taught some of the gender ethics and male duties in the family to avoid cowardice. They learn that they must not be in a lower position than woman.

2. In Ovawambo culture, men are regarded as family head, breadwinner and controller of family assets. It is also normal for men to exercise control over all family matters especially in terms of intimate relationship, property ownership and major decision-making. However, there has been an immense change in gender relations after Namibia's political independence. What types of change do you experience in your intimate relationship? How do the changes affect your masculine identity and how do you cope with and respond to these changes?

From the above responses, it is clear that the findings from the Oniipa focus group correspond with those from the Oluno focus group. Adam D and Adam G express great resistance towards the changes in family relationships:

> In many marriages today, the partner with the higher income is the boss. But this is very contrary to our culture and to Christian teaching. What is needed is a sharing attitude. Both husband and wife need to share their incomes equally but the man must remain the head. It is not even good for the woman to earn more income than the man because she is not the head of the family (24/10/2016).

> Due to low income or unemployment, some Ovawambo men easily get angry. They are frustrated and they try to silence anyone who requests any help from their hands. Yes, they are breadwinners, and family members bring their requests to them, but they become angry because they have nothing to offer (Adam G:24/10/2016).

Although the man is regarded as the family head, it seems that it is no longer easy to perform that role in the present democratic context. Most Ovawambo men feel threatened by the notion of gender equality and think that when women become empowered, they are likely to misuse

their power against their husbands. The gender laws also cause some men to shun their role as head of the family.

> My position as breadwinner has been taken away by these genders laws, or let me say women's laws, which place women in well-paying jobs, and at the same time our wives still expect us to perform our duty as breadwinners. There is no way you can do this. So, we keep quiet, let them buy all the provisions and pay all family bills (Adam D: 24/10/2016).

All participants in the Oniipa focus group experienced tremendous change in their intimate relationships and in their respective communities due to the gender equality laws which bestow on women the full rights to acquire and use property contrary to Ovawambo norms, which accord only men the right to acquire and use family property. The situation has caused some men fear and confusion and has resulted in conflict in many Ovawambo marriages and in the workplace:

> Just imagine! I'm the one who proposed to my wife and fulfilled all the requirements to marry her. All family responsibilities rested on my shoulders. Now I'm told, based on these stupid laws, that my wife is an equal partner with me after 36 years of marriage. My wife is now free to disrespect my family rules just because of these laws. I cannot accept this nonsense. Thus, I must do everything to maintain my position as the head of the family, for these laws have caused a lot of abuse in today's family life (Adam A: 24/10/2016).

> In the past, most men managed to control family property and take care of all family members. But after the implementation of these laws that granted women equal rights with us, conflicts, unsettled disputes and power abuse began to plague many marriages. Men know how to balance things and remain calm in any situation, but women do not. When a woman earns more money than her husband does, she wants everyone to know that she is the boss. But our foremothers were not like today's women; they were humble before their husbands. The arrogance of modern women produces shame and fear in most Ovawambo men (Adam F: 24/10/2016).

Another change in social life after Namibia's political independence is in the area of gender roles. Although both men and women were expected to perform some of their social and family duties according to their gender, such gender definitions changed after independence, and gender roles are now based on modern rather than traditional norms. These two ways of doing things produced tension in gender relation ethics. Some Ovawambo gender practices have been replaced by modern practices. Although some women now enjoy their freedom after this radical change in marriage and intimate relationships, a number of women and men suffer the consequences of the conflict. Adam G and Adam B argued:

> In this game of gender rivalry, a lasting solution can only be achieved if there is no conflict between the new and the old. The European ideas on how man and woman should live together will not help African people who rely on their culture to live in peace. It is culture that helped the Ovawambo to survive for many generations. What is needed is the transformation of Ovawambo people's minds, not a change in their gender roles and duties. It is not good to take away a man's power as the breadwinner or head of the family. What is needed is to encourage men to continue to be the head of the family and to take care of, provide for, and protect the entire family (24/10/2016).

> If you want to experience hell on earth, just try to depend on a woman's wealth. Women are not like us; they are different. When we talk about this we are made to marry in community of property. We fool ourselves that we have a common purpose, but this is far from the truth. A woman comes to a man only to get babies and cash. A man combines his assets with his wife's, but women do not like a common purse when they are wealthier. Thus, only men are poor in the current context, while women will remain rich forever … (24/10/2016).

The transition from culture to democracy has affected Ovawambo marriages very badly. The view expressed by Adam A below seems to summarize the thoughts of the other men:

> Our cultural heritage has been there for a long time without causing any problems for us. The problem we have now is caused by women who want to live in two worlds. On the one hand, they are Wambo, and on the other hand, they try to live like Europeans. No one can serve two masters at the same time; either he hates one and loves another. This double practice is the root cause of all marriage problems. It will be good for our women to stick to their cultural gender roles rather than to an unknown culture (24/10/2016).

All participants agree that gender relationships changed when Namibia became politically independent. The new Namibian government has adopted a democratic ideology. The new democratic government not only brought the colonial era to an end, but it also brought changes in gender relationships. Many changes have been experienced in gender and marriage relationship among the Ovawambo. One of the factors that brought this change is the implementation of gender equality laws. Oniipa participants regard these laws as going against the creation of human being. They also believe that equality between males and females goes against biblical teachings. They feel that even nature itself does not agree with equality between male and female. All participants also agreed that the implementation of these laws has brought mixed feelings among the Ovawambo men because they empower women against men. All participants perceive them as a threat and conflict-producer in marriage. Five participants support the claim that most of the Ovawambo men are now suffering at the hands of their wives and children. This suffering includes, primarily, those who have no job, are retrenched, or are retired. Some men are treated badly after retirement. All participants believe that Ovawambo men are currently threatened by gender equality laws because they favor women, so they start abusing their power against women. Participants believe that man is not cruel, by nature, against woman. He just becomes aggressive when he realizes that gender-based laws are not in his favor.

3. In Ovawambo culture, if a married woman does not obey her husband, what actions should be taken to make her conform?

Most participants in the Oniipa focus group agreed that Ovawambo men discipline their wives by beating them with a stick called *ontondokela luuma*. The name of the stick suggests that it may only be used if there is a serious problem at home. Adam A explained that:

> In the past, most Ovawambo men owned one or two sticks called *ontondokela luuma.* The main aim of this stick is to discipline the wife at home. Most Ovawambo women know this stick and wherever they are, they like to say don't lead me into error, because I shall be beaten by my husband with *ontondokela luuma* (24/10/2016).

Most of the interviewees felt that the present government introduced the gender equality laws without educating the people as to what gender equality means prior to the laws' implementation. They argued that the laws disregard some good norms which should have been used to balance the *status quo* in modern marriages and family relationships. Adam B noted that:

> In Ovawambo marriages, especially in polygamous marriages, wife beating was a sign of love. Rich men often married more than one wife and the rich man would only care for the most loved wife by correcting her when she did something wrong. If her husband had little interest in her, he would not react when she did something wrong because he did not find her desirable. If the favorite wife did something wrong, she could be punished severely (24/10/2016).

Similarly, Adam D opined that:

> …The abolishment of corporal punishment, both in schools and in marriages, has caused much harm to our intimate relationships because women and children now do whatever they like without fear. Beating your wife or your child is not a bad thing; it is only wrong if it causes serious injury like breaking her arm or killing her. Even in the Bible, Proverbs 13:24 says, "He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him." This means he who also spares his wife a rod hates her, but the one who loves her is careful to discipline her (24/10/2016).

Most participants revealed that it is culturally accepted for a man to discipline his wife if she fails to obey him. Male B states that this understanding does not only stem from the Ovawambo culture but also from the Bible:

> Women behave like children in most cases. In Proverbs 13:24, we are told, "Whoever spares the rod hates their children, but the one who loves their children is careful to discipline them. So, love goes hand-in-hand with discipline. Our forefathers instilled discipline in their homes because men were in full control of their families. But in Ovawambo intimate partner relationships today, the law is on the side of women and we men are feeling constrained by these laws which make it difficult to enforce discipline in our homes and to keep our wives on track as our foreparents did in the past… (24/10/2016).

So, all participants agreed that, wife beating was cultural accepted in Ovawambo culture and it was regarded as a good action against any misbehaving woman. If the current gender laws are against wife beating, then it seems that they are against what is culturally accepted among the Ovawambo.

4. Statistics show that gender-based violence and family conflict are at an alarming stage in Namibia, as most men abuse their power against women especially among the Ovawambo. What could be the contributing factor to this problem?

The changing gender roles also cause men to experience low self-esteem, abandon male roles and engage in self-defense and power abuse. These factors link the gender equality laws with gender-based violence. It is clear that after the introduction of the gender laws, Ovawambo intimate spousal relationships also drastically changed. The traditional understanding of the relationship between men and women in which women were seen as docile and submissive was overtaken by modern ideas. Men were placed on a hierarchical and dominant pedestal above women and some other men. The imbalance of power between men and women prevailed in most Ovawambo intimate spousal relationships, but in the new relationships which began after Namibia's independence, gender equality, which was introduced through the gender equality laws, took precedence. Both men and women are regarded as equal partners who qualify to get equal benefits for their efforts. The Namibia judicial system and the police also support these gender laws which favor women. Adam E recounted his personal experience to illustrate how men suffer at the hands of their wives and of the police:

> Some women misbehave towards their husbands or life partners just to provoke them to slap or push or assault them in some way. If the woman reports the assault, then the man is arrested, made to face trial, and is incarcerated. When a man faces aggression from his wife and reports it to the police, in some cases, he is regarded as a coward or mocked by some police officers. This attitude of the police discourages some men from reporting their problems at the police station. Rather, they keep their problems to themselves. But not all Ovawambo men are that tolerant or ready to be silent in the face of threats from their wives. Some men lose their patience and inflict serious harm on their spouses or even kill them. So, emotional abuse could pose a bigger threat than physical violence (24/10/2016).

The above observation confirms the views of the Oluno inmates that many Ovawambo men are affected both physically and psychologically by their women's financial freedom, especially when the man experiences a financial setback. Adam C related his own experience thus:

> When I was working in the Oranjemund mine, my wife managed to stop me from supporting my mother or relatives. She tried to convince me to help only her and my children as well as her family members. I attended to many of her family issues. But now when I am old and no longer have any source of income, she always tells me, (after a short silence and wiping tears from his eyes)… even today that I must leave her and go and join my family. She does this because our kids are now well educated and all have good jobs. But I was the one who paid for all their studies. Now they treat me as a stranger… Many times, I am overwhelmed by anger and contemplate killing both my wife and myself. Because both life and death now mean the same thing to me (24/10/2016).

Besides being unemployed, some Ovawambo men could not play the role of breadwinner because they earn little income. Some men's salaries are much less than their wives' earnings, yet the women expect them to fulfill all their financial obligations to the family. They are not ready to share the family's financial burden with their husbands. The failure to perform their duties as family head causes some men to live in anxiety, anger, and fear. The observation by

Adam G gives a clear picture of the current situation among Ovawambo men, many of whom are either unemployed or earn little remuneration compared to their wives

Thus, most of the respondents recognize a strong interconnection between the gender equality laws that brought equality between men and women and gender-based violence. In the current context of changing gender roles, most men abuse their power because of their low income. Men try to defend themselves against emancipated women in order not to lose the status that culture and religion bestowed on them. Moreover, in the Namibian civil service today, the well-paid positions go to those with high qualifications such as bachelor's or master's degrees. The result is an imbalance of power between men and women on the home front, as some women now make most of the family decisions.

Many men who are in denial also begin to abuse women or alcohol and to abandon all their responsibilities to their wives who have become breadwinners. However, this does not mean that men also hand over their power as the head of the family to their wives. Even when he is out of a job and does not have any money to pay bills for water, electricity or the mortgage, the man still wants to be recognized as the breadwinner and head of the family. He expects his wife to obey him and meet his demands. Adam E lamented:

> I don't care about the gender equality laws because I am the one who married my wife; she did not marry me. Thus, everything in the marriage belongs to me – whether the property or the children and even my wife because I paid a lot of *lobola* to her parents when I married her. If I notice any misconduct on her part, she deserves punishment and correction from me. On the other hand, if I don't have a job, my wife must pay all family bills from the car insurance and rent to water and electricity bills, as well as the children's school fees. But that does not mean that she has become the head of the family; she is just a helper. She must always remember that her man is always the head of the family. A woman needs to show the public that her husband is in control of everything in the home (24/10/2016).

So far, we have learned from the Oniipa focus group members how Ovawambo culture depicts the gender relationship in marriage and family life. All participants agree that the Ovawambo men and women were guided by such gender principles. Women were regarded as secondary citizens to men. Men have been regarded as the head of the family, owner of family property, bread winner, and family decision-maker. The Ovawambo man traditionally has the final word in each family decision. He must make sure that he has enough wealth to feed his family and to reveal to all fellow men that he is brave. Equality between men and women is nonexistent. Men must lead, and then women must follow. The patriarchal ideology here plays a role at the core of every marriage relationship. All participants have agreed that most of the Ovawambo men do not support these equality laws and recent gender role changes in marriage and family relationships. Ovawambo men want to live according to the Ovawambo culture. They want to

continue exercising their traditional masculine roles that are based on patriarchy, so they abuse their power against women to defend their position.

6.2.3 Onguta Parish focus group

1. How are Ovawambo men expected to play their cultural masculine roles in the community, marriage and family life? How do they acquire their male identity and what happens if one fails to fulfill this duty?

In Ovawambo social life, a man needs to prove his maleness through different family and social activities:

> He must know how to cut wood with an axe and fight Oshivambo traditional wrestling called *onkandeka*. He must erect his own bedroom (*omutala*) which in most cases is situated close to the main entrance of the house. He sleeps there to show that he is the watchman of the house who must stop all intruders such as thieves and wild animals from entering the house. He must be able to walk long distances to fetch salt for his father from *ekango* (salt-pan) and carry it on his shoulders. When he brings the salt, his father then instructs his mother to slaughter and prepare a rooster (symbol of manhood and bravery in Ovawambo culture) for him to celebrate with his peers (Male A: 01/11/2016).

Thus, training males from childhood to become brave and the family protector is a major aspect of Ovawambo family life. The father's character plays a major role in a boy's development into manhood. This is because a man can only be recognized as a true hero when he behaves like his father. The father is the role model and mentor of the boy child in Ovawambo social and family life. Although it is a father's duty to train his boy to attain manhood, the mother initiates the process:

> A man is expected to affirm his manhood through various male activities that confirm his identity. He therefore imitates the behavior of his father or uncles… When a mother carries a baby boy and holds a stick in her hands it means she is walking with the protector although he is still too small to perform that duty. She can travel through deep bushes and forests without fear because she believes that she is in the company of the protector; thus, she feels protected. However, it is not only a father's duty to mould his son to become brave but the mother also performs this role. Every Wambo man and woman desire not to raise a coward but a brave boy (Male A: 01/11/2016).

The masculine identity of Ovawambo men is also associated with their ability to care for their wives and family members. Boys learn how to treat women in marriage from their fathers or uncles which explains why all Ovawambo men behave almost the same way in their homes. The culture demands that Ovawambo men provide for their wives and children, and a man must not eat without first providing food for his wife and children. If he is hungry, he must tighten his belt as a sign of bravery. A man shows his masculinity by caring for his wife/wives, providing food and animal skin for clothes, and owning enough livestock:

> It is a Vambo man's duty to make sure that his family has enough meat by going out to hunt. He also needs to have enough cattle for his family to get meat, milk and butter. From hunting, he gets ostrich egg shells which women use as waistbands, necklaces and modern clothes. The outfits show that the woman belongs to a brave man. It is also a man's duty to go to Okaoko to search for *tupapa* (a type of necklace) and gold necklaces as well as *okana kamuma* (a type of perfume). Only the wife of a brave man could have all these things. Thus, a woman needs a man who can make her look different from other women (Male D: 01/11/2016).

If man fails to meet the cultural expectations, then, it would be difficult for him to get a wife and to gain respect in the family and community. When a father or uncle trains his boy to be a man, he does so to ensure that the son displays the right masculine identity in the future. Every member of the family expects the man to fulfill his male duties. Failure to do that brings shame and disappointment, not only to his father and mother, but also to his entire clan. In particular, the failure to fulfill the expected masculine roles also produces shame and low self-esteem in the man. Such a man deserves to be a laughing stock. He is no longer seen as brave, and no one would respect him. Only a brave man is respected by his wife and fellow men. Therefore, if a man fails to fulfill the expected male roles, he is regarded as a coward:

> Cowards and lazy men do not easily get a wife among the Ovawambo because parents expect their daughter to marry brave and hard-working men. So a girl's parents also play an important role in helping her to select a mate. Every parent wants his/her daughter to marry a boy who is raised in an organized home to be a man that would take care of the livestock, chop wood and cultivate the field, be a good hunter and be gentle, strong and brave (Male E: 01/11/2016).

All participants agree that Ovawambo men prove their manhood and masculine identity through many activities. These activities include getting married, erecting his own house, and collecting all needed facilities in the house like baskets, axes, hoes, and preparing land for cultivation. He should have enough livestock. During drought and famine, it is the male's duty to make sure that his family members, as well as his livestock, have something to eat. Men need to provide animals' skins that were used as dresses and garments.

2. In Ovawambo culture, men are regarded as family head, breadwinner and controller of family assets. It is also normal for men to exercise control over all family matters especially in terms of intimate relationship, property ownership and major decision-making. However, there has been an immense change in gender relations after Namibia's political independence. What types of change do you experience in your intimate relationship? How do the changes affect your masculine identity and how do you cope with and respond to these changes?

Most of the male interviewees remarked that although the new gender laws have been implemented in Namibia, they are not clear to the citizens. Overall, Ovawambo men understand that these laws favor women and disadvantage men. They believe that the laws have been introduced to punish men and to end their roles as breadwinners and heads of the family. On the other hand, some Ovawambo women believe that these laws were introduced to free them

from the patriarchal yoke and to grant women the right to rule over men. They feel that they are free to do as they please in their marriage without being accountable to their husbands. It seems that both men and women are not well informed about the objectives of the gender laws:

> The government introduced the gender laws without clearly explaining them to the people. This has caused much damage to our cultural gender relationships. The government needs to address the nation about the purpose of these laws. It is not enough to implement the laws. There is an urgent need to clarify their meaning. Nowadays women don't know when and how equality should be practiced; they practice equality in a wrong way. They want our children to adopt their surname, they want us to carry our babies in public places like the church because they carried them in their womb for nine months and they want us to wash our babies' nappies…What is the meaning of that? (Male E: 01/11/2016).

Whereas some Ovawambo men regard the gender equality laws as a new way of punishing men, women are helped to regain their equal role in political, social, cultural and economic spheres:

> We do not count; only women count. If you see an advertisement for a vacant post and apply for it, you won't get it if a woman also applies for the same position. Only women are selected to fill up many advertised posts in Namibia today. So, as a man, you don't waste your time applying for a job which you are not likely to get because it is reserved for women only. Gender equality has been introduced to put us down and set us aside (Male G: 01/11/2016).

The implementation of gender equality laws in Namibia has caused a drastic change in gender relations in the sense that women have gained economic independence and rights. However, most of the interviewees understand that this change can have negative implications for Ovawambo marital relationships:

> Because many Ovawambo women are now in positions with high remuneration, some Ovawambo men try to get rich women to marry. This will help men to enjoy the woman's property as the family head and property controller. So some men try to confiscate their wives' BOB cards, while some use their wives' property without their consent. This causes some women to suffer financially at the hands of their husbands (Male E: 01/11/2016).

As noted earlier, tradition requires that the Ovawambo man be the breadwinner and head of the family. To keep this position, a man needs to ensure that he has more property than the woman. Most Ovawambo men work in the mines, harbors and other places to be able to provide for their family members. They keep on searching for well-paid jobs to keep their position as the family's economic manager. Most of them also believe that modern Ovawambo women only respect their husbands if they earn lot of money and enough property:

> We are living in hell in our marriages. Our beloved wives have changed their behavior toward us. They were good wives when we first got married and when we were working and providing for all the family needs. Now that we are jobless, we have become useless in their sight. Being a breadwinner without a job is hell on earth because our wives no longer respect us. It is always good to be able to put a loaf of bread on the table, but failure to do so means you become useless before your wife and children. Only few women would treat their husbands with honor and dignity after retirement or retrenchment (Male F: 01/11/2016).

On the other hand, some men claim that some women in highly paid jobs refuse to share their earnings with their husbands. Most well educated and well-paid women are using their wealth to exploit and disrespect their husbands. Male G summarizes his experience in this regard:

> Most of us now suffer from low self-esteem and fear due to unemployment. I lost my job twenty years ago, but later, my wife got a good job because she is an ex-soldier. She was in exile and fought for SWAPO. After independence, she did not get a well-paid job but later, she was recruited by the police service where she holds the position of inspector. She bought a big house in town where we live and pays all the monthly installments on the house and car as well as the water bill, electricity bill and our kids' school fees and for food. I also get medical treatment through her medical insurance scheme. Right now, I don't have any say in our marriage. My wife is the one who makes all the decisions because I depend on her money. She is now the family breadwinner. I don't have a problem with that; the only problem I have is that she wants to control me. She treats me as her servant, commanding me to do her bidding before I can get anything from her including sexual intercourse. If I fail to follow her instructions, I get nothing from her. This is a very painful situation for me because my fellow men and my brothers and sisters mock me. I'm now regarded as a coward and useless man. So, living without a job as a man gets you closer to your death (01/11/2016).

Most of the research participants strongly agree that the situation described by Male G above can lead to gender-violence in intimate partner relationships. Women's financial freedom from men after Namibia's political independence has caused great fear among many Ovawambo men resulting in various acts of gender-based violence:

> Our government introduced these laws against us; and our wives again introduced more laws against us. But we will never ever let ourselves be ruled by women. Let the government give them more money and well-paid jobs but we will never kneel before our women… How on earth can you implement a law on behalf of married couples if you are not married? Our government encourages the slavery of men through these laws by not educating people about the implications of the laws. Everyone just implements the laws as he or she understands it. So, in the end, men suffer more. The current marriage and family conflict also shows that our boys will suffer in their marriage more than we have done. Most Ovawambo men are tempted to think that things were better under the colonial rule by the minority South African whites because we at least had our full family rights. But after independence we have ended up losing our rights again (Male D: 01/11/2016).

All group members agree that there is a clear change in the current Ovawambo gender relationships and roles. These gender laws have tremendously changed the Ovawambo gender relationships and marriage because they help women gain their rights and dignity in gender relationships. All participants agree that, the current gender shifting happening in Namibia left most of the Ovawambo men greatly confused. They described their current lives as disturbed by their wives' rights which are well favored by the current gender regulations. They feel surrounded from both sides by the current gender rights laws which too greatly favor the women. As a result, some men decided to do something that can keep them free from modern slavery in the form of gender equality. All participants understand that most Ovawambo men are confused. Thus some commit suicide or are consumed with the idea of ending up their lives.

3. In Ovawambo culture, if the married woman does not obey her husband, what actions should be taken to make her agree?

In traditional Ovawambo marriage, although rude attitudes by women were observable in some cases, husbands and family members dealt with disobedient women in ways that differ from how women are treated today. Women who were unruly and insubordinate to their husbands were returned to their parents' homes. Sometimes they were not given *mahangu* to make food, for *mahangu* was shared out by men. They were also beaten with soft objects like a belt to avoid serious bodily harm, as confirmed by one of the male interviewees:

> In Ovawambo culture, men beat their wives to discipline them. Every household was under a man's command and all its members must obey his instructions. Anyone who disobeyed was beaten with a small stick or belt. Most women and children behaved well because they were afraid of making their husband and father angry and they would be beaten if they disobeyed. But this equality issue has promoted rebellion and infringed on Ovawambo marriage and family relationships. If you discipline your wife, then, you end up in jail. Some men were also corrected by their wives if they did something wrong especially in the community or in the presence of their children. However, all the power to rule and discipline family members was placed in men's hands. Thus, the changes in marriage and family social life after Namibia's independence have messed up Ovawambo intimate relationships (Male C: 01/11/2016).

All participants agreed that beating wives is not something wrong among the Ovawambo because it is the way of correction. Women in Oshiwambo culture have long been disciplined by being beaten by their husbands.

4. Statistics shows that gender-based violence and family conflict are at an alarming stage in Namibia, as most men abuse their power against women especially among the Ovawambo. What could be the contributing factor to this problem?

As we have seen in the first chapter of this research, intimate partner abuse is a serious threat to Ovawambo marriage and family relationship. It deeply affects the peace and well-being of many intimate partner relationships, not only among the Ovawambo but also in the whole of the Republic of Namibia. One of the major causes of this trend is power abuse as well as hegemonic masculinity. Thus, the Namibian government introduced the gender equality laws in order to safeguard intimate partner relationships. Although most of the gender laws were created to foster good relationships between men and women, many couples experience gender-based violence in their relationships. Most Ovawambo men disapprove of the equality laws and recent changes in gender roles in marriage and family relationships. They would rather live according to Ovawambo cultural norms which enable them to continue to exercise their traditional hegemonic masculine authority. They prefer to emulate the way their forefathers treated their foremothers:

> Whatever a man does to his wife should not really be considered abuse of power but a sign of love. I can only slap the cheek of the one I love. I can only express this sign to the one I want to correct because I want us to continue living together. This is the way our fathers treated our mothers, but they never regarded it as abuse. Why do modern women see this as abuse? … Yes, it is not good to harm your wife, but a light slap is needed if she misbehaves to discipline her (Male D: 01/11/2016).

The changes in gender roles have left many men frustrated. They feel left behind by their women, and this is regarded as a sign of weakness and cowardice. Hence, some men now try to pull back their wives by different means, including force, in order to remain head. Some Ovawambo men who feel left behind by women now experience low self-esteem and fear. Men are now trying to keep their positions as breadwinners, but many have no financial means to maintain that position. The autocratic and authoritarian power invested in Ovawambo men helps them to enjoy marriage and prevents conflict between them and their wives. Thus, the root cause of conflict that is currently witnessed in Ovawambo families and in intimate relationships is traceable to the new gender equality laws:

> In our culture, a man as the head of the family used to stay in his house without any fear or threat. He only had one duty which was to make sure that there was enough food at home for himself, his wife and his children. Thus, he had peace of mind and was free from stress. But because of these ideas of modernization and democracy which affect our marriages, we now have high blood pressure. There is no more peace in our homes, we always fight and our wives want to control us and make us their slaves through the gender equality laws. But this will never happen because even our forefathers were never controlled by their wives, so why should we be controlled by our women? This is a clear indication that Namibia's independence deprived men of their freedom, as we no longer enjoy the freedom we used to know because of these laws of bondage (Male C: 01/11/2016).

Thus, some Ovawambo men abuse their power because they feel threatened by the gender equality laws. Most male participants argue that men by nature are not cruel towards women, but they have become aggressive with the realization that they have been disempowered by the gender equality laws. Two participants respectively remarked:

> If the government introduces laws that favor only women, men are left with no other option than to defend themselves. We cannot wait indefinitely until God takes us away from this world, but we must defend ourselves. The time is also ripe to re-consider these laws after 27 years of Namibia's political independence. It is one thing to implement laws against men but you just can't continue to exercise these laws without re-examining their impact on peoples' lives. Furthermore, the laws conflict with our culture, which positions men as family heads; men must take the lead in all family matters. If our mothers and grandmothers survived in such conditions, why shouldn't modern women? So, the women need to be forced until they accept the norm. Ovawambo women need to understand that men have physical power that can be applied to make them conform to the dictates of culture (Male D: 01/11/2016).

> Men are just defending themselves against exploitation by women who now control economic power (Male G: 01/11/2016).

Some Ovawambo men suffer both physically and emotionally when their finances collapse. The situation gets worse when the woman gets a better-paid job than the man. It seems that

some women do not understand that, just as their husbands supported them financially in the past, they also need to support their husbands when they are in need. Nevertheless, financial lack causes some men to suffer emotionally because it contrasts with Ovawambo cultural gender orientation:

> Ovawambo marriage has lost its bearing. Ovawambo women do not marry because of love for their husbands but because of property. I no longer earn any income, thus, I suffer too much in the hands of my wife and children whom I raised with my income. But now they forget all the support. Yes, I must keep my mouth shut because I have no one to share my life's problems with… God is watching all these… He will not let me suffer any harm to my wife or to myself (Male E: 01/11/2016).

Most of the participants from Onguta Parish also affirmed that acts of gender-based violence have increased due to men's fear of the changes in gender laws in Namibia. More women are becoming emancipated and financially independent of men's wealth. Some men therefore feel threatened by the gender equality laws which empower women to rule their own lives without men's intervention:

> To be a family head and breadwinner in the current democratic world is difficult and problematic. Although we are supposed to be family heads, we no longer control the family resources. How can one be a family head and not control the family economy? In the end, we are only waiting to be kicked out of our wives' homes because they have good qualifications that enable them to be breadwinners. Problems are inevitable in the near future. Many Namibian men suffer because our women understand gender equality as a means of revenge. Some women are using their new rights to punish men and repay them for past abuses. *Mhuuuuu, teketele*! …The lucky men are those who are already dead and do not witness the distressing times we are living in now (Male A: 01/11/2016).

> …Our wives always forget that we supported these children. Although these kids are also ours, their mothers like to convince them that they do not belong to us. Some of us use all our income to support them from their childhood, but when they become employed, they stop loving and supporting their fathers and care only for their mothers. This situation is frustrating us so much and making us so mad. Most Ovawambo homes are seriously affected by this matter (Male D: 01/11/2016).

All members of Onguta focus group agree that women's economic emanicipation since Namibian political independence has brought fear and confusion for most Ovawambo men. The changing of gender roles has also caused men to have low self esteem, an abandonment of their male roles, a need for self-defense, and higher incidents of power abuse. In light of the current gender role changes, most of the participants suggested that men are abusing their power because they are living under the influence of low self-esteem. The current governmental changes that emancipated women have caused low self-esteem in most Ovawambo men. As a result, men began to defend themselves because they feel they are losing what their culture and the religious teachings had offered them.

6.2.4 Pastors' individual interviews

1. Namibia has gone through constitutional changes in gender roles. In your view, what impact do the gender equality laws have on current intimate relationships and Ovawambo family life?

Fourteen out of twenty pastors believe that the equality laws have caused serious havoc in intimate relationships between men and women. Both male and female pastors believe that these laws were introduced to undermine men and give more power to women. They regard laws as another form of colonization under the guise of democracy, because it is against Ovawambo culture and Christian teachings. Pastor A below seems to summarize the thoughts of the other pastors as follows:

> These gender laws represent pure colonization under the guise of democratization. This is the reason we have many unsettled disputes between married couples as well as other intimate partners. Most married couples are living in fear, anxiety and anguish. The men are afraid because they have lost control of their wives in the marriage relationship. Some men have left their homes due to continuous conflict. Thus, most of the current marriage problems are unsolvable since men's hands are bound (16/11/16).

Twelve participants further agreed that the gender equality laws have given Namibian women the full rights to acquire and use property, which is contrary to Ovawambo gender relationships which accord only men the right to acquire and use family property. In the past, all family assets were controlled by the man. If a woman acquired some expensive property, like a car or house, it was placed under her husband's name as co-owner. However, after Namibia's political independence, the new gender laws helped women to gain equality with men in political, social, cultural and economic spheres. This change has led to conflict in many marital relationships as well as in the work place. Pastor F reveal that:

> Namibia's political independence secured academic freedom for both men and women. During South Africa's colonial time, men were paid higher remunerations than women because both our culture and Christian religion recognized them as family breadwinners. Some professions did not admit women but men only. But after independence, things changed, and some women now do what were considered men's jobs such as working in the mines or as police officers, soldiers and farmers. Thus, women also received equal salaries as or even higher salaries than men. Some women also occupy leadership positions as ministers, chiefs, queens, and governors, which is contrary to Ovawambo social gender arrangements. Job promotion is no longer according to gender but according to the individual's qualification and job experience. This is contrary to what the Bible teaches us and to the natural gender arrangements. Thus, men have become losers after Namibia's independence (28/12/16).

The negative impact of the laws on men is reflected in their complaints of being persecuted and having fewer rights than women. Most male interviewees feel threatened by the gender equality laws which cause their wives to disrespect them as their mates and heads of the family.

Most of the participants believe that the laws favor women and disadvantage the men; that the laws were introduced to punish men and to end their role as breadwinners and family heads:

> Most women in Namibia are out to enrich themselves. Although some women are employed, they expect too much from their husbands. Some of them insist that if their husbands or life partners fail to meet their needs, they will also refuse to cooperate with them. As far as I know, most Ovawambo men are good and caring people. They make sure that their wives are well-dressed, they build strong houses, and ensure that their kids are well educated. But it is not clear why these gender laws are so harsh on men and protect only women. Many men have become confused because of the gender equality laws that sometimes threaten them and favor women. The one-sidedness of the laws has caused psychological damage to a number of Ovawambo men, some of whom have died before their time (Pastor L: 22/01/17).

> Nothing is wrong with the content of the gender equality laws, but the government did not prepare the men, especially those who tend to stick to tradition, before implementing the laws. The men should be helped to understand the current changes in the global context which also affect the policies of the new democratic government. These laws focused on the concerns of women and overlooked the needs of men. Thus, most Namibian men feel that the laws are against them. Both parties need help in order to understand the purpose of these laws which need some amendments to make them more relevant to some cultural ideas of gender. There is no way that European or American gender laws could fit into the Ovawambo context. Hence, serious monitoring should have been carried out after the implementation of the laws. But because we failed to do that, much damage has occurred in many Ovawambo intimate partner relationships (Pastor N: 27/01/17).

The implementation of gender equality laws has caused a drastic change between men and women in the sense that women have gained their economic independence and rights. But men regarded them as a threat to their cultural masculine expectation. Eight male pastors believe that these equality laws caused serious havoc between men and women in marriage. They believe it would have been better if the Ovawambo people and some other tribes had been left untouched by these laws. They feel that these laws have betrayed men and have given more power to women to overrule men. Three participants regarded these laws as second colonization in the form of democracy because they are against Ovawambo culture and Christian teachings. All 20 participants agreed that the negative impact of these laws are based on the males' persecution and more rights have been bestowed to women than men. Nine males interviewed feel threatened by these laws because they caused their wives to disrespect them. The drastic changes that have occurred in Ovawambo gender relationships have also affected Ovawambo men's loves because they are contrary to the traditional gender relations among Ovawambo people.

2. As a pastoral care giver, what is the frequency of gender-based violence issues brought to you?

A deep reflection on the current wave of violence in Namibia shows that gender-based violence is a serious problem that all pastors in ELCIN experience in their daily work. Pastor N and Pastor Q recounted:

> In my daily pastoral work, I have witnessed too much chaos in marriages due to lack of love, nepotism, incessant fighting and infidelity, leading to divorce cases. Some married couples end their marriage just six months or a year after their wedding. It is not easy to say why they do this, but it seems some people get married with high expectations from their partners. When his or her spouse fails to fulfill such expectations, disagreements and quarrels follow. However, one of the pressing issues that leads to all marriage problems is gender-based violence (23/01/17).
>
> Men are confused because they do not know where to turn to with their marriage problems. There are no forums in our church or in the country where men can get counseling and help about the marital problems they face in today's confusing context. Thus, we witness many incidents of gender-based violence in pastoral work. The gender transition which is happening in our marriages is silently killing men. Their hands are tied by new laws, therefore, the church and government need to come up with well-organized programs to help rehabilitate and transform men from the current masculinity shock (27/01/17).

All interviewed pastors revealed that gender-based violence is a reality in many Ovawambo intimate relationships. Most of their counselees are women who feel threatened by their husbands and fellow women. Patriarchal culture and power abuse are the main root causes of gender-based violence. Two pastors related that:

> … Seven out of ten families that come to my office daily come with gender-based violence related matters. Most of my counselees are women. They confess that they are being abused by their husbands or life partners and they are left behind while their spouses fall in love with other women. Sometimes, some men bring their concubines to their homes in the presence of their wedded wives … 'Our wayward husbands feel bad when we correct them'. Some men simply quit their marriage because they don't want to be corrected by their wives. They fall in love with other women. This is a big emotional abuse most Ovawambo women suffer. When they come back, they avoid being asked about where they have spent the night. Some men become angry when asked and start to beat their wives (Pastor A: 28/10/16).
>
> It is not easy to be a married woman during this transition period from patriarchy to democracy. While, as women, we are geared towards the full realization of our rights and dignity, our husbands try to push back our relationship to the traditional way of doing things. In this push and pull marathon, most women in Namibia become victims… (Pastor L:21/01/17).

Pastor L also shares related real-life story of one of her counselees:

> One female victim told me with eyes full of tears that, "It is painful to see my husband carry his concubine in the car which I bought while he refused to teach me how to drive. He spent the night at his concubine's place with my car and when he returned home the next morning, he was so angry. To bring our marital life back to normalcy, I apologized to him. But how does one apologize to the one who is supposed to say sorry to you? I did not do anything wrong, yet I am the one to say sorry to him just because I am a woman." These episodes cause both physical and emotional pain in women (21/01/17).

3. Based on your experience as a marriage and family counselor, what are the main contributing factors to the gender-based violence?

Pastor F and Pastor O revealed that gender violence today is influenced by the gender equality laws and the changes in gender roles. The negative impacts of the laws on men reflect in their complaints of being persecuted and having fewer rights than women. Most of their male clients, as heads of the family, feel threatened by the laws which cause their wives to disrespect them. Pastor L, who served as an army chaplain, noted that the source of gender-based violence is the gender-equality laws which result in the struggle for "leadership position" and "competition." She explained that:

> The current gender laws cause fear and confusion in some men and lead to conflicts in many Ovawambo marriage and in the workplaces. The change was introduced through affirmative action and the economic emancipation of women from male dependence. The affirmative action that brought equality between men and women has caused a big problem in our marriages, especially in the workplace. If a woman is appointed as the commander-in-chief of the army base, she adopts a masculine style to lead and to punish her subordinates. She uses the opportunity to show men that their time to lead has expired. This attitude causes problems because men do not fully co-operate with women in such positions and do not mind losing their jobs. I am not against the gender equality laws, but I am against the misuse of power by some women against their male colleagues or husbands. Some women fall in love with senior officials who promise them a promotion at work. Some of them do this to earn more money than their husbands. Once they start to earn high salaries, women easily manipulate their husbands. So, the issue of equality between men and women is very sensitive because it promotes gender-based violence and intimate partner killings (21/01/17).

Out of 20 pastors 18 agree that because the current laws favor women, men may be driven to abuse their power against women. Like Pastor N above, Pastor I also argued that:

> The misunderstanding of gender equality laws is the root cause of conflict in Ovawambo marriage and throughout Namibia. These laws give too much power to women and drive men to abuse their women (09/01/17).

The pastors also agreed that the changes in gender roles have left many men frustrated and have caused some men to abuse their power against their wives. Therefore, the issues of power, competition and unemployment are problematic in the current Ovawambo intimate relationship. Pastor L explained that:

> Nowadays women are ahead of men…If a woman refuses to let the man be in control of things, the man would try to block her plans. If she decides to buy a farm or a house, the man could refuse to stay in that house. So, women need to yield some power to men to assure them and affirm their role as the head of the family. However, this is not possible in the current state of gender relationships that is marked by continual conflict. It seems that equality between men and women among the Ovawambo will not materialize easily in this present age (21/01/17).

The unemployment situation also causes major conflicts between some married couples and between men and their fellow men. This means that some disadvantaged Ovawambo men not only suffer at the hands of their wives but also at the hands of their fellow men. The issue of male unemployment or a man's dependence on his wife's salary is not only worsened by the

attitude of Ovawambo women, but also by fellow Ovawambo men. Men who are financially stable mock men who are unemployed or earn a low income and regard them as cowards. Therefore, this is an indirect form of gender abuse of men by their fellow men. Pastor N revealed that:

> Most men who suffer abuse in the hands of their peers are those who fail to own livestock, earn lower incomes than their wives, drive their wives' cars, and depend on their wives' assets. Such men are mocked and regarded as weak. They then become ashamed and frustrated. It is clear that the issue of male unemployment or low-income earning is caused by the misinterpretation of the gender equality laws. Misinterpreting these laws also contributes to the prevalent marital conflict situation among the Ovawambo (27/01/17).

This situation causes some Ovawambo men to marry well-educated women for their own survival and social status but the women suffer as Pastor I revealed:

> Most of my male parishioners argued that some men abused their power over women due to greed and selfishness. In the past, men were treated differently from women. Men were placed above women who were expected to be submissive in character. The new Namibian government changed all these through the gender equality laws. But most men, including Ovawambo men, detest these laws which they believe rob them of their identity. Nowadays, some Ovawambo men marry well-educated women to benefit from their income. But if their spouses fail to provide for them, they become frustrated and abuse them or seize their belongings such as bob cards. Their greedy and selfish character causes them to continue oppressing women although the constitution frees them through the gender equality laws. They ignore women's rights for their own benefit. Selfishness and greed are among factors that fuel the gender-based violence (09/01/17).

Pastor E further noted that in current Ovawambo marriages, some men also suffer at the hands of their well-educated or well-paid women:

> Gender-based violence is a serious problem in many intimate relationships in my parish… In most cases, women suffer more than men, but some women suffer because they first made their husbands suffer. In this new world of equality, some well-educated women choose to work far from their homes and husbands because they have good qualifications. They choose to live alone sometimes rather than stay with their husbands every time. In such a situation, men could become very aggressive…and this leads to conflict (01/11/16).

Above, we have shown that an Ovawambo male is brought up to become the family head and financial controller. He is the controller of all family members and income. This means that the Ovawambo family system has been influenced by the patriarchal ideology which designates a man to be the head of the family. This ideology is currently being challenged by the democratic system that prevails in Namibia today. Due to the Ovawambo patriarchal understanding which imposes too much competitive and hierarchical power on males, the current situation of male unemployment causes some Ovawambo men to suffer low self-esteem. In a patriarchal system, the family economy is placed in the man's hands, but in the current democratic order, the family economy is controlled by both men and women. In some cases, women have become the family breadwinners and financial controllers. This change has

had a negative impact on some Ovawambo men who fail to meet cultural expectations. which causes them to perpetrate violence against women. Many of the participating pastors agreed that some Ovawambo men suffer low self-esteem. They expressed concern that Ovawambo men were not prepared for the implementation of the gender equality laws, and the changes that surfaced in Ovawambo family life came as a shock to many men:

> When a man is financially down, he could see himself as worthless. For this reason, some Ovawambo men take to alcohol. If a man could not fulfill his role as the head of the family, he just folds his arms and withdraws himself from all family duties. In this situation, he tries to defend himself by silencing every voice that asks him to provide for the family. Thus, some women with good jobs are suffering in the hands of unemployed men (Pastor S: 31/01/17).

Ovawambo men are suffering today because the traditional hierarchy placed men at the fore. Unfortunately for them, women's economic status has changed, which means they are more and more independent of men's wealth. Thus, some Ovawambo men try to prevent their wives from acquiring expensive property such as houses or cars and tend to abuse their wives.

4. What preventive measures has the church taken to mitigate or eradicate gender-based violence?

All the pastors interviewed confirmed that although gender-based violence occurs in some Ovawambo intimate relationships, there is no clear prevention program on the part of both the ELCIN church and the Namibian government. Rather, the church continues to encourage Ovawambo men to abuse their women. Pastor K revealed that:

> Our church, ELCIN, spends too much time promoting patriarchal ideology in marriage and its leadership style. In this context of increasing gender-based violence, our church needs to take a different leadership approach from the patriarchal. Members should be informed about the danger of patriarchy in the democratic context. Pastors need to explain this when they conduct pre-marriage counseling with men so that they are aware that patriarchal ideas could harm their marital relationships. Although patriarchal ideas are found in the Bible and in our culture, they do not fit into the present democratic context… Some biblical verses such as Ephesians 5:24 that instruct wives to submit themselves to their husbands in everything, do not fit into the current democratic context. If any Ovawambo man expects his wife to adhere to this verse, he is just wasting his time. Yes, one can be lucky to have a wife who obeys this command, but only one out of five Ovawambo women would do that today. Thus, patriarchal expectations should be renounced as soon as possible. Christians need to get rid of patriarchal ideologies which contradict God's nature of peace, love and compassion demonstrated in Jesus Christ. We need to tackle the issue of gender-based violence by purging Ovawambo men of all patriarchal hegemonic and masculine ideologies. The church needs to carry out strong campaigns, workshops and training to help reform cultural ideas that violate human rights and dignity (21/01/17).

Thus, all the participating pastors argued that lasting solutions to the problem of gender-based violence can only be found if Ovawambo men transform their mind-set.

> Nothing is wrong with the content of the gender equality laws, but the government and church so far did not prepare the men, especially those who tend to stick to tradition, before implementing the laws. The men should be helped to understand the current changes in the

> global context which also affect the policies of the new democratic government… (Pastor N: 27/01/17).

Furthermore, most participants reasoned that gender-based violence will only be eliminated from intimate partner relationships when both men and women learn to live together in harmony and peace. Clearly, the present marital and family conflicts among the Ovawambo cannot be eradicated through the gender equality laws. They cannot even be resolved through power abuse or life imprisonment, but conflict can be eradicated when both Ovawambo men and women have a new understanding of how to live in harmony in the present democratic context:

> Because of these confusing changes that we Ovawambo men experience in current Ovawambo marriages, many of us are confused by the influence of democratization in gender roles and relationships. However, the current trend in Ovawambo gender relationships can never be reversed. It has come to stay. There is no way we can live with our wives the same way our forefathers did… but physical abuse of our wives and children is not a solution to the stress caused by the changing gender roles. Women also need to understand that some men find the gender equality laws that they approve of annoying. Thus, both men and women need support in this ever-shifting gender relationship situation. Nonetheless, Ovawambo men need urgent help to survive the present state of affairs and Ovawambo people as a whole need to be taught how to cope with the masculinity crisis without abusing their power (Pastor R: 30/01/17).

So far, this study reveals that, gender equality laws, unemployment, and biblical teachings are some of the contributing factors to gender-based violence. Gender equality and changes in the gender roles caused or forced some Ovawambo men to abuse their power against women. However, in the present context of democratic rule and changing gender roles, in which many women face abuse, men need to be re-educated to embrace compassionate rather than hegemonic masculine identity. They need to learn how to promote life rather than death through their power and to accept the changing gender roles as a trend that has come to stay, but which is not a threat to their lives.

Most participants proposed that lasting solutions to the current gender conflict can be found when couples recognize the need to change their mind-set. Ovawambo men need to change their orientation and embrace appropriate gender relations that are influenced by the Christian teaching on love and ethics. The church must not only emphasize blessing a marriage, expecting couples to live together in harmony just because they took an oath. Rather, both the church and the government should prepare the citizens to accept the present gender transition with love and compassion. We need to admit that modernity and globalization are antithetical to our culture, and we have to organize ourselves to tackle these differences in unity and harmony as children of God. It is clear that the Ovawambo patriarchal understanding of manliness and masculine identity which emphasize superiority and wealth acquisition has been

strongly challenged by democratization, modernity and globalization. Thus, participants proposed that men need to face the current challenge with a different attitude rather than engaging in power abuse.

6.3 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to investigate the impact of gender equality laws and gender role changes among Ovawambo men. This was done by studying the Ovawambo men's' life experiences and expectations in their relationships with their wives during this social transition. Three focus groups and one pastors' in-depth interview were conducted.

Thus far, we have learned that according to Ovawambo traditional understanding, women were seen to be in a low and submissive position. Men were placed in a hierarchical position, dominant over women and other fellow men. The imbalance of power between men and women prevails among most of the Ovawambo intimate spouse relationships. But in current relationships that have begun after Namibian independence, gender equality, brought about by the gender equality laws, has played a crucial role. All participants agree that gender relationships, especially intimate relationships among the Ovawambo, have been reshaped by the democratic order through the gender equality laws. As a result, the relationship between men and women has been shaken as it has migrated from the traditional understanding to the modern one. Both men and women are regarded as equal partners and are qualified to receive equal benefits in whatever they do. This change has caused fear and misunderstanding in both men and women. It seems that the laws do not offer agreeable and lasting solutions to gender conflict in intimate couples' relationships among the Ovawambo. Instead, increased conflict has been witnessed in these relationships. Most of the research participants strongly agree that there is a clear link between the current changes in gender roles and gender-based violence in Ovawambo intimate partner relationships. Women's financial freedom from men after Namibia's political independence has caused great fear among many Ovawambo men. The changing gender roles also cause men to suffer low self-esteem, abandon male roles, and engage in self-defense and power abuse. Thus, most of the participants came to an agreement that there is strong relationship between the gender equality laws that brought equality between men and women and gender-based violence. After the introduction of the gender laws, Ovawambo intimate spousal relationships also drastically changed. In the current context of changing gender roles, most men abuse their power because of low self-esteem. As a result,

men try to defend themselves against emancipated women and in order not to lose the status that culture and religion bestowed on them.

Additionally, in the Namibian civil service today, the well-paid positions go to those with high qualifications such as degrees. The result is an imbalance of power between men and women, as some women now make most of the family decisions. In such a situation, men could feel unwanted and worthless. The above information reveals that there is a clear link between gender-based violence and Ovawambo masculine identity, unemployment, power abuse and current gender equality laws in Namibia as proposed in the first chapter of this study. These factors which will be discussed in the following chapter are some of the root causes of gender-based violence among Ovawambo. We shall consider whether these factors are supported by literature and how the theoretical framework employed in this study can bring about a paradigm change in Ovawambo patriarchal masculine identity and gender relationships. Thus, in the following chapter, we need to probe the theology of the cross and *theopaschitic* theology for insight that could help Ovawambo men end gender-based violence and power abuse.

CHAPTER SEVEN

DATA ANALYSIS

7.1 Introduction

In previous the chapter, we analyzed the data from the fieldwork. Findings indicate that the Vambo man is considered brave only when he takes care of his family and relatives by providing food for them and by owning enough livestock. Most of the participants revealed that most Ovawambo men prefer to live according to the norms of hegemonic masculinity which give them power to dominate and control women. Men are expected to demonstrate their masculinity through their earning power and the ability to endure hardship. Boys acquire their masculine traits from their fathers or other male figures in their family and community. Every Ovawambo man is expected to shun cowardice by being self-supporting, maintaining family leadership, and overcoming all life challenges. He must demonstrate his masculinity by being heroic, aggressive, unbeaten, successful, and a champion. He is also expected to imitate his grandfather, father, peers, and all male figures in his family and community. Ovawambo men maintain their identity through cultural, religious, and social norms. In this process, some of the harmful masculine behaviors of dominance and power abuse are transmitted from one generation to another.

Findings from this study also indicate that sexism is a real threat in Ovawambo traditional gender relationships. Men are to shun all feminine traits and roles. They are not supposed to cry or to show any emotion publicly because this is regarded as a sign of weakness, cowardice, and femininity. A woman must operate under the supervision of the man who is regarded as the head of the family. His decision in family matters is final and may not be questioned by the woman. An Ovawambo woman is culturally under the man's authority and leadership, and she deserves to be punished if she misbehaves towards her husband.

However, the democratic gender equality laws have changed the traditional and cultural gender relations among the Ovawambo since Namibia's political independence. The gender laws have emancipated women and guarantee their rights, causing tension, frustration and fear among many Ovawambo men. Most male participants regard the gender laws as biased towards women because they empower women and neglect men's rights. The men feel that they have lost their position as family head, controller of family property and of the women, breadwinner, and decision maker. Men start developing fear and low self-esteem, especially the unemployed

and low-income earners, resulting in a crisis of violence and hatred in Ovawambo intimate and family relationships. Men are overwhelmed by the fear of losing the power that the patriarchal culture bestowed on them. Although men are regarded as breadwinners and heads of the family, some participants revealed that it has become increasingly difficult for some men to fulfill these roles due to unemployment or low educational qualifications. As result, men believe that the changes in gender laws were introduced to deprive them their masculine identity and rights as heads of families. This hostility forced some men to abuse their power against women in order to defend themselves. Some of the research participants revealed that they abused their wives because the current gender equality laws undermine Ovawambo culture and biblical teachings.

Thus far, we have observed that gender relationships especially intimate relationships among the Ovawambo have been reshaped by the democratic order through the gender equality laws. These laws were implemented to safeguard marital harmony, but it seems that they do not offer agreeable and lasting solutions to gender conflict in intimate couples' relationships among the Ovawambo. Instead, increased conflict has been witnessed in these relationships. Thus, the main question in this research is: What causes Ovawambo men to abuse their power against women and how does this relate to Ovawambo understanding of manhood and masculinity, power abuse, unemployment, and changes in the constitution regarding gender roles in the post-independent Namibia?

The discussion in this chapter is based on the findings which are categorized into three themes. They are: (1) Ovawambo patriarchal understanding of manhood and masculine identity; (2) Gender equality laws, changing gender roles and men's resistance; and (3) Women's economic emancipation and men's unemployment, fear and power abuse. These themes are chosen because they are related directly to the research questions.

These research findings are viewed in line with literature and the *theopaschitic* model which is used as the theoretical framework for this study. The summary of the previous chapter shows that gender-based violence among Ovawambo is fuelled by a patriarchal understanding of manhood and masculinity, the implementation of the gender equality and family laws, women's economic emancipation, men's unemployment and fears, and the tendency to abuse their power.

7.2 Ovawambo Patriarchal View of Manhood and Masculine Identity

It the previous chapter, we saw that, after the introduction of the gender laws, Ovawambo intimate spousal relationships also drastically changed (LeBeau 2004:1; Morrell 2005: 84; Mufune 2000:433-434; Ruppel 2010:2). The traditional understanding of the relationship between men and women showed women as being docile to men, more especially in patriarchal societies. Men were placed on a hierarchical and dominant pedestal above women and some of their fellow men. This study finds that Ovawambo masculine identity began from an early age. Although fathers, uncles or peers in the community are the key figures in the process of molding boys into manhood, women also play a role in molding their male children by encouraging them to demonstrate cultural masculine characters or to imitate any male public figure in the community or family. All focus groups members agreed that Ovawambo people's culture is guided by patriarchy which bestows on men too much power over women. Most men are therefore autocratic and authoritarian in family decision-making. However, all participants have the same understanding that, gender equality laws have given most women the full rights to earn and to use their property. But this is contrary to Ovawambo gender relationships where men had rights to earn and use the family property. In the past, all family property was placed in the man's hands. If it happened that women bought an expensive commodity like a car or house, it was placed under her husband's name as the co-owner. If the couple divorced, a woman might go away empty-handed, leaving all her property in their husband's hands. Ovawambo women were expected to surrender their property to their husbands upon marriage. This placed Ovawambo men in the position of controlling the family property. Most women suffered greatly through this process.

Literature also supports the understanding that an Ovawambo woman is considered "wife material" if she displays a humble character and surrenders all her property into the man's hands. All the family members are expected to obey the man's decisions in family matters without any protest. In Ovawambo culture, the man is the head and ruler of the family while the woman is expected to play a submissive role to the man (LaFont 2007:247).

All female participants felt that women in the family experience violence from their male counterparts due to this lopsided system which is being challenged by the current democratic system. Nonetheless, no lasting solution to gender-based violence is in sight. Female participants noted that despite the transition from patriarchy to democracy, it is not easy for

women to fully exercise their rights because some men continue to hold on to the traditional patriarchal norms. 26 out of 40 participants stressed that the main factor in gender-based violence is patriarchy, because it promotes sexism as well as gender and power inequality. Literature also supports the idea that gender-based violence is fuelled by the dominant forms of masculinity which has its roots in the patriarchal structure. It is clear that the social, cultural and legal contexts promote gender violence and gender stereotype (Sheerattan-Bisnauth 2010:115-116). Merry (2009:16-17) observes that patriarchy is used to justify and encourage gender-based violence. She strongly stresses that patriarchy works well where there is a cultural understanding of gender and power inequality, whether it takes place within intimate relationships or amongst strangers. Thus, gender abuse has its foundation in the power imbalances between men and women (Terry & Hoare 2007:29).

Research findings also indicated that, in Ovawambo social life, a man needs to prove his masculinity through different activities which include getting married and erecting his own house. All participants noted that men must acquire all needed household utensils including baskets, axes and hoes, and prepare land for cultivation to demonstrate their manhood. He must prove his position as a provider and bread winner by having enough livestock and ensuring that his family members and livestock have adequate food to eat. A man must work hard to keep this position and to avoid cowardice.

Literature also reveals that being a male requires provision and power. The only chance for men to prove their manhood in contemporary situations is through employment. Hence, if this violence is related to unemployment and low remuneration compared to that of women, one can understand why so many males end up committing crime. The only alternative way to gain power and control, and silence any voice asking about their provision, is to respond with aggressive behavior. Men use coercive power to regain their power, to get what they want, and to liberate themselves from always being a victim. Hence, identity became a problematic issue (Louw 2008:387). Males fear that this gender role change and female equality might cause a loss of their power, which remains the criterion that determines their manhood. Although traditional means of power and control are slipping away due to societal transition and cultural and social gender roles changes, men use their power over women to affirm their masculinity in their expression of their sexuality and in violent manifestations (Dolan; Kandirikirira; Morrell; Setel andSilberschmidt in Tersøl 2006:405). The findings from this research indicate that the Ovawambo cultural gender set-up is continuing to fuel gender discrimination and power abuse among Ovawambo intimate relationships. All male participants revealed that they

want to live according to the Ovawambo cultural norms, no matter how current gender laws try to bring change. Most male participants revealed that although they may no longer have a job and are no longer able to pay for water, electricity, or a mortgage, they still want to keep their predominant position as the bread winner and head of their family. They expect their wives to obey each demand they make in the house. As the current gender roles change their marriage relationship, and their wives earn more money than they do, the men do not believe that women deserve to become the head of the family. Consequently, power abuse is the only weapon they can use to protect themselves from women. This is supported by Sheerattan-Bisnauth (2010:116) who suggest that gender-based violence occurs as a result of the deep anger and fear that men try to express when they fail to live up to the macho images demanded by their masculine identity which is fuelled by patriarchy.

This increases the perpetration of violence against women and children (Haufiku 2013:157; Gillham 2012:93) and shows that what is at issue here is the fact that in current Ovawambo family life and the entire society, male identity and his economic status are precarious.

As noted earlier, Ovawambo men acquire their masculine identity by imitating their peers, older brothers, fathers, and grandfathers. Most African men believe that masculine identities should remain unchangeable as they are inherited from one generation to another (LeBeau & Spence 2004:38-39; Talavera 2007:47-48). This implies that harmful masculine behavior is also learned rather than being inborn. A man could easily imitate what he sees other fellow men do in their intimate relationships or social life (Freedman 1981 in Wiehe 1998:7). However, in most cases men imitate wrong masculine behaviors, such as abusing and controlling women rather than caring for, protecting, and loving women (Mbiti 1990:220; Waruta 2000:110-111, 123).

On the other hand, *theopaschitic* theory calls on men to listen to their creator who demonstrated his astonishing and overwhelming love for human beings on the cross. Thus, men need to capture and reflect this image in intimate relationships. God's love for us is not expressed in a hierarchical, competitive and hegemonic way, but it is love that seeks to transform our situation, liberate us from the tyranny of sin, and help us to desire and accept those things that can promote harmony and peace in our gender relationships. It is that love that connects us with God and our fellow human beings, that enables men to identify with women who suffer gender injustice and that allows the pain of their suffering to spill over into our lives (McGrant 1995:19).

The image of God is something we need to partake of, not by controlling or bossing around others but by imitating Christ who emptied himself for our wellbeing (Peacock 2010:27). Luther encouraged us to build our nature and purpose around the cross of Christ, by which we could emulate the compassionate care of God our maker. The love of God is clearly demonstrated in that suffering that aims to end all forms of suffering and violence in human affairs. This is what Luther called "*opus proprium Dei*," "the proper work of God," which also makes us proper before our Creator and before fellow human beings. Thus, men need to renounce all harmful and hegemonic forms of masculinity and adopt the virtues of mercy, love, grace, and compassion. Ovawambo men are called by the suffering of God to imitate not brutality and violent masculinity, but God's solidarity and compassion (McGrant 1995:28-34). The *theopaschitic* approach can play a fundamental role in remodeling the Ovawambo male identity by creating a paradigm shift in existing cultural norms that plunge families into crisis. Despite the patriarchal traditional stereotypes and men's personal psychological struggles, men could be helped to shift from engaging in threats, power, competitiveness, and dominant authoritarianism to cultivating attitudes of solidarity and compassionate power.

7.3 Gender Equality Laws, Changing Gender Roles and Men's Resistance

In the previous chapters, we have shown that an imbalance of power between men and women prevailed in most Ovawambo intimate spousal relationships. However, gender relationships have changed since Namibia's political independence because of the new legal framework and gender equality laws. The present government in Namibia assured the rights of all citizens, especially of women and children, because in the past women were regarded as second-class citizens in both social and family life. However, both men and women are now regarded as equal partners who qualify to get equal benefits for equal labor. This change has caused fear and misunderstanding in both men and women. Most of the respondents recognized a strong correspondence between the gender equality laws that brought change in intimate relationships women and gender-based violence. All participants agreed that most Ovawambo men feel threatened by the current gender equality laws which they believe too greatly favor women.

LeBeau (2001 in LeBeau & Spence 2004:40) also concurs by suggesting that gender-based violence acts in family settings are probably fuelled by the family law reforms that changed the status of men and women. Thus, the laws may have caused men to develop an inferiority complex, as they began to feel threatened by the women's increasing social status. The change in gender roles in the current democratic context in Namibia affect some men both

psychologically and emotionally. Further, Mufune (2000:433-434) and Morrell (2005:84) also state that, in every context where changing gender roles are experienced, men feel that it is good for both men and women to have equal rights, rather than have a one-sided law which favors women only.

Seventeen male participants disagreed that the implementation of the gender equality and family laws was meant to bring gender justice and equality. They viewed the laws as a threat because they seem to contradict the traditional Ovawambo gender relationship structure. Furthermore, many participants regarded the current democratization as a source of confusion and power abuse in many Ovawambo families. They understand that these laws secured equality and economic emancipation for women, but they see that some women now abuse that freedom and use it to manipulate their husbands. The democratic system forced men to abandon patriarchal ideology, but it seems that some women reversed that ideology to abuse men, causing men to experience low self-esteem, abandon traditional male roles, and engage in self-defense and power abuse. These male experiences link gender equality laws with gender-based violence.

However, 22 out of 40 participants agree that the implementation of gender equality laws was intended to produce a good effect. Their problem is that they are biased in favor of women. All male participants understand that these laws essentially recolonized them. After Namibian political independence, these gender laws initially appealed to men, as they perceived the laws would bring equality between men and women. The laws abolished the disunity and discrimination experienced by Ovawambo women in the hands of their husbands due to cultural perspectives. Most men expected these laws to help both men and women to understand and help one another physically, spiritually, and economically. Men expected these laws to handle all types of discrimination between women and men that caused conflict and abuse in family life. They agree that it would be advantageous to implement these laws because it was wrong for mothers to be treated like slaves by men. But even though this was the case, our forefathers and mothers managed to live together and raise their children without any serious violence. Therefore, the problem is not really with gender equality laws themselves, but in the way women and men understand them.

LeBeau and Spence (2004:30 cited in Hubbard 2007:227) state that gender-related laws discriminate against men in favor of women, and that this may lead to a masculinity crisis because it is not easy for men to yield their power to women. Once men discover that they are

no longer in a position to exercise their power against women and other men, they develop low self-esteem. This is because power is an integral part and the cornerstone of masculine identity and men's self-esteem. Men, therefore, begin to abuse women to maintain their power and position (Kahn 1984 in Basow 1992:353). This is also in agreement with LeBeau (2004) who indicates that, even though women's social status has improved since that time, men are more likely to view women's rights in a negative manner. Men believe that women's rights detract from their rights and they express feelings of loss of social status because women now benefit from the gender equality laws (2004:1). Hubbard (2007:104) also clarifies that although some men acknowledge that some customs discriminate against women, some do not think that patriarchal culture is flawed. Many men in Namibia argue that women and men have different social and familial problems that did not exist before the gender equality laws were introduced. Men began to fear that the equality laws did not come only to empower women, but to disempower men. Hence, such perceived difficulties cause men to justify the continued discrimination and violence against women (LeBeau 2004:1, 44).

All male participants thought that the current gender laws are biased towards women and undermine men; therefore, they believe that the laws do not promote equal rights but only women's rights. Similarly, the use of protection orders is thought to benefit only women, but fails to consider the needs of men. Although men are stereotyped as women abusers, men revealed that they suffer in silence as they are abused by their wives.

Consequently, some men resist the gender laws by abusing their power against women. Most of the male participants contend that the idea of gender equality laws and change is a threat to their masculine identity and their rights as human beings. They prefer to revert to their cultural and traditional position of superiority as the head of the family which allows them to discipline their wives and recover the family economy from their wife's hands. Most male participants argued that in Ovawambo culture, it is normal for a man to beat his wife as it is regarded as a sign of love. It is also normal for the man to have control over all the family assets because he is the family breadwinner. Participants, especially the pastors, agree that patriarchal practices cannot be fully realized in the current democratic context due to women's economic emancipation. Therefore, Pastor K (21/01/17) claimed that women need to rescue their marriages by submitting to their men as their mothers and grandmothers did to their fathers. Some Ovawambo female pastors also supported the view that men should be the family heads and controller of family income because they are stronger than women. Women's economic emancipation cannot stop men from abusing their power; rather it will increase it. Therefore, it

is good for Ovawambo women to allow their husbands to be the heads of the family as required by their culture (Pastor L: 21/01/17). Things were easier in the past when most women depended on men economically. Although the church is supposed to denounce this ideology, she promotes it through her teachings and leadership style. Some biblical verses such as Ephesians 5:24 that instruct wives to submit themselves to their husbands in everything are still used by many pastors during the solemnization and blessing of marriages in the ELCIN. Women are expected to comply with these injunctions. However, some men so become frustrated and stressed that they begin to abuse their wives and children. Most of the participants also agreed that the gender equality laws were designed to favor women and punish men. As a result, men try to defend themselves against emancipated women in order not to lose the status that culture and religion bestowed on them.

Most of the literature on Namibian family laws reveals that the implementation of the gender equality laws has caused confusion and resistance in some Ovawambo men. Hubbard (2007:211) notes that one of the prominent themes that runs through these family law reform debates is men's reluctance to contemplate any form of power-sharing, in particular regarding sexual or economic issues (Hubbard 2007a:211; Becker 2000:172-173; LeBeau 2004:5; Hubbard 2007a:102-104; Hubbard 2007b:210; Amathila 2012:256). All the male focus group participants are of the same understanding that gender equality laws cannot work among Ovawambo intimate relationships because of the laws' discrimination against them.

There is a clear contradiction between Ovawambo traditional gender roles and the current democratic gender structure. Whereas the current gender structure is pulling towards the full realization of gender equality and power balance, cultural beliefs in gender stereotypes continue to push back to the old rules of the patriarchal system (Balswick & Balswick 1989:236-237; Basow 1992:337). Thus, the plan to curb gender inequality and gender power imbalance in Namibia has not yet reached an amicable solution (Shinedima 2017:6). Although current changes in gender roles in Ovawambo intimate relationships may not directly cause gender-based violence, they do come with some psychological and emotional complications that lead to violence between men and women. Findings from both the research participants and existing literature reveal that the present gender movement has led to men's socio-economic deprivation, fear, frustration, resistance to the new gender relationship structure, and power abuse.

Theopaschitic theory also supports equality between men and women. The theory stresses that God enters into human relationships through Christ whom he sent to show his love. Jesus came to heal a broken and divided humanity. In Christ's death and resurrection, God revealed the ultimate victory over this world's alienating force in order to work towards the future of new humanity. In Christ's suffering, God took upon himself the entire human condition, with the result that people are free to participate in the restoration of harmony and inclusiveness in all human relationships in society, government, church, marriage, and family life. Christ's suffering, as interpreted by the anthropological model, calls us to imitate Christ's lifestyle that is dedicated to love and to serve fellow human beings in a way that puts others first and gives them life. In this way, Christ promoted equality between the sexes (Nasimiye-Wasike 1991:77). The equality of the sexes in the image of God can represent God's original intent for male and female (Ruether 2002:6).

In Christ's suffering, God empowered humans to pass from inauthentic to faithful human existence and, in him, we may attain the true identity which is founded on the image and likeness of God and which brings salvation and liberation equally to both men and women (Nasimiye-Wasike 1991:77). Our God, in whose image we were created, does not promote division or gender and status discrimination, but he emptied himself in Christ (Phil. 2:6-11) to promote justice, human rights, and human dignity, and to end all powers of oppression and destruction in human affairs. Christ was sent by God to form a fellowship, a church where all members have an opportunity to enjoy protection and care and to uphold the dignity of one another (Bongmba 2007:50).

The image of the suffering God represents a unique fellowship where the presence of God takes the shape of the crucified Christ. In this fellowship, the love of God is supposed to rule everyone's interaction with his or her fellow human beings. In his suffering, death, and resurrection, God revealed his ultimate victory over this world's alienating forces and ushers in the future of a new humanity (Magesa 1991:158-159). In this new future, human beings are called to participate in the restoration of harmony, equality and inclusiveness in all human relationships (Nasimiye-Wasike 1991:77). Such are the dynamics of the transformation of masculinity through Christ's suffering and compassion, which alone could bring about the emancipation of gender relationships from the bondage of pride, selfishness and greed. We would be able to reflect God's image if we break the binding power of these chains through compassion towards our fellow human beings (Magesa 1991:160-161).

In marriage or any other serious intimate relationship, the love and mutual companionship and sharing between two people should not be in the form of dominating models of hierarchy but of *koinonia* (Peacock 2010:36). We can do this because God's power through Christ's atonement reveals to us God's character of kindness and compassion (Waliggo 1991:165; Oduyoye 2001:242). Thus, we can transit from death to life and build the bridges of friendship and gender justice which are being demolished by patriarchal gender structure and perceptions of the new and imbalanced democratic gender structures (Magesa 1991:159-160). Gender equality also brings liberation to women, and this is one of the main reasons why God in Christ Jesus suffered on the cross and raised Jesus from the dead.

The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, not the God of the Pharaohs, the Caesars and the slave-owners, is the God who led the Hebrew people out of slavery into freedom. The First Commandment begins with: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage (Exod. 20:2). All of God's commandments are built on this. The Old Testament's portrait of God is that of God as the liberator. The experience of God is therefore the experience of the exodus. To believe in God means nothing less than to experience one's own liberation. This God is the one who raised Jesus from the dead and ushered him into the glory of the divine kingdom. This is the God of the humiliated, abandoned, battered Jesus, crucified by the Roman occupational forces in the name of the Roman Empire and the Roman gods. God raised Jesus from death to liberate him from the power of sin and of death. This means that God's power is a life-giving power.

Therefore, the experience of God is the experience of resurrection. To believe in this God means leaving behind despair and oppression and reaching out to freedom. The whole heart of the Old Testament traditions is the exodus from political slavery into the Promised Land while the heart of the New Testament traditions is resurrection from death into the life of the messianic kingdom. How then do we relate exodus theology to resurrection theology? Exodus theology is not yet resurrection theology but resurrection theology must always include exodus theology and must again and again be embodied in acts that liberate the oppressed. This is very important because only in the light of this experience of God as liberator can we try to take part in all acts that emancipate others who are in any situation of slavery. The God of the exodus is a God of power, the God of the oppressed.

In the New Testament, one can see that God's power is revealed not simply in the glorious resurrection of Christ, but also in the offering of Christ to death on the cross. Resurrection

freedom is an inclusive freedom because the price, the ransom of liberation, is already paid in the suffering and death of Christ. A truly Christian liberation theology is therefore at the core of a theology of the cross: God became human that human beings should gain divine freedom. God is humiliated that human beings may raise their heads up. God suffers death that humans may live. Human freedom is the cross of Christ, the power of our freedom is the resurrection of Christ and the truth of our freedom is life-giving, creative and kenotic love. The New Testament says that Jesus is the word of God, that God was in Christ and that Jesus is the Son of God. To this we can say that if one looked at Jesus, one would see God; for 'he who has seen me, has seen the Father' (John 14:9). In Jesus's life, death and resurrection, we experience God at work. He was more than just a human being; He was a window into God at work, for "in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself" (2 Cor. 5:19 RSV).

In Jesus, there is nothing of self to be seen but solely the ultimate, unconditional love of God (Robinson 1963:57-60, 74-75). Hence, the liberation of women and men from patriarchy goes hand in hand with a rediscovery of the freedom of Jesus and of the power of the Holy Spirit. If we leave the monotheistic God of rulers behind us, we shall discover from the sources of Christianity the God who is in relationship, the God who can suffer, the uniting God, the God of fellowship and of community. This is the living God, the God of life, whose image was distorted by a patriarchal system with its idols of power and domination. In this living God, the males also will experience deliverance from the distortions which they themselves have suffered and still suffer under the patriarchal system (Moltmann-Wended & Moltmann 1983:113).

In Moltmann's theology of the cross, God is revealed in the form of pathos.[41] Accordingly, the pathos of God is revealed in the history of his nation Israel through his covenant and his mighty act of liberation. God's divine pathos is revealed in his relationship with his people and the entire creation, and God takes human beings seriously because he suffered on the cross through his son (Moltmann 1974:267-268, 271). Therefore, the theology of the cross is linked to God and to human misery and anguish through the pain and suffering of Jesus Christ. Moltmann (1990:25) further explains that the theology of the cross is relevant evidence to our human misery and anguish because, in his pathos, God goes outside his almightiness, to meet his people and make himself a partner in the covenant with his people. The theology of the

[41] Pathos, which also means pity, represents compassion, love and solidarity (Moltmann 1974:267). Pathos reveals the compassionate nature of God who identified in loving solidarity with human suffering (Louw 2000:86).

cross can help humans understand God's place in their suffering. Moltmann understands the theology of the cross as a liberating theology that rescues humans from life's incongruities because, through it, God becomes capable of suffering. The whole creation, the liberation of his nation from Egyptian slavery, his covenant with his nation Israel, and his own suffering on the cross, all originate from his pathos.

Therefore, the issue of gender equality laws that favor women more than men is of crucial importance here. Equality between men and women is still lacking in Ovawambo marriage/intimate relationships. The changes in gender relationships has caused much confusion among men because they realize that they cannot respond to women's demand for justice, equality and equal opportunity without exploring a radical redefinition of how manhood and maleness are understood and lived out. Men claim that the gender equality laws undermine them. Tengatenga (2010:7) argues that in trying to settle a dispute between two fighting groups, one needs to do so without empowering one at the expense of the other, especially if one group is more powerful than the other. The mutuality, interdependence and partnership that can be envisaged from gender equality and justice have failed in Namibia because of the lopsided nature of the laws; consequently, incidents of gender-based violence continue to be on the increase due to the existing hostility between men and women.

Thus, we are challenged to create a positive environment where Ovawambo men and women can live in peace and harmony, as evidence of the salvation and freedom that Christ offers us (Balswick & Balswick 1989:29). Men should not be regarded as enemies by women but as equal partners in the struggle for gender equality. They are to work alongside women to end gender-based violence and to transform gender relations (Skenker 2004:49). This does not mean empowering the one who is already powerful but liberating men from the patriarchal socio-cultural expectations and norms that punish them if they fail to live according to tradition (Culbertson 1994:91). However, when justice, as part of God's shalom, is reflected in the gender structures, it results in gender justice that has its origin in God[42] and can help to end all hierarchical and oppressive acts in gender relations.

In the context of gender justice, both men and women can develop into full human beings who reflect God's image in marriage and family relationships. They can work as equal partners in

[42] The doctrine of the trinity shows that the three persons of the Godhead are different but at the same time mutually intertwined with one another. The importance of this model has to do with the recognition that the relationship is not one of dominance but of co-operation. If this model shapes our human gender relationships, then, it can enhance partnership which is free from all hierarchical domination (Peacock 2010:39).

terms of all opportunities and responsibilities (Balswick & Balswick 1989:168-169). Paul reasoned that, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28 RSV). As Paul denounced the distinction or the notion of superiority and inferiority between Jews and Greeks, slave and free, male and female, this idea of superiority versus inferiority also needs to be denounced in all gender relationships (Bisnauth 2010:170-171). Furthermore, Jesus also redefines the understanding of power in his statement: "…For the Son man also came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45 RSV). In this teaching, Jesus rejects the use of power to control others but to serve them, thus, he lifts up those are fallen and forgives the guilty (Balswick & Balswick 1989:103). This understanding can help men and women to live in peace and harmony and in mutual partnership and fellowship, free of violence but characterized by justice (Tveit 2010). Hence, gender discrimination can be curbed, not through the gender laws that aim to liberate only women, but through laws that aim to bring justice and liberation to both men and women. In this way all forms of greed, selfishness and competitiveness will be replaced by compassion, care and cooperation (Tengatenga 2010:7).

7.4 Women's Emancipation and Men's Economic Deprivation, Fear and Power Abuse

As noted earlier, tradition requires that the Ovawambo man be the breadwinner and head of the family. To keep this position, a man needs to ensure that he has more property than his wife. The man also has to prove his manhood by participating in tribal wars through which he can confiscate the possessions of his opponents. Many Ovawambo men also work in the mines, harbors and other places to be able to provide for their family members. They keep on searching for well-paid jobs to keep their position as the family's economic manager because today's women only respect their husbands if they earn a lot of money and own enough property. However, with the current rate of unemployment, even if men wish to earn high incomes, no job can offer them such salaries.

Moreover, both male and female participants point out that women who are highly paid are often unwilling to share their earnings with their husbands. They reveal that many men try very hard to earn enough money to acquire possessions such as cars, livestock and houses and to pay all necessary bills in order to avoid exploitation and disrespect from their wives, as many jobless Ovawambo men suffer abuse from their wives. Some Ovawambo men suffer both physically and emotionally when their finances take a dip, while their wives get better paying jobs. Financial lack causes them to suffer emotionally because it contrasts with the Ovawambo

cultural gender orientation. The new democratic system which places emphasis on gender equality and women's emancipation causes many men to live in fear of expressing their emotions, of losing their status and of powerlessness.

As we have shown, the current gender issues are raised within the context of the democratic process. All focus group discussions concurred that that the changes in the constitution are major factors in the prevalence of gender-based violence. The gender laws have emancipated women economically, while men have become financially weak and sometimes have to depend on their wives. As a result, women start to disrespect them as head of the family and provider. Most male participants agreed that the gender equality laws contradict the biblical instructions and traditional gender structures, causing men to experience hopelessness and fear. Some of them, therefore, blame the government for introducing these laws without first educating the people about the implications. The fear and resistance expressed by men manifest in racism, sexism, violence, killing, and economic oppression. Some men who suffer poverty and unemployment reason that the only way to regain their power and to be liberated from female oppression is to become violent and to respond aggressively to their wives.

On the issue of fear and power abuse, Poling (1991:140) also notes that fear overwhelms men when poverty and unemployment challenge their manhood and masculine identities. These factors hinder men's liberation and play a decisive role in patriarchy masculinity. Tvedten (2011:136-154) is of the opinion that the transition to democracy and the changes in gender relations, as witnessed among the Ovawambo, affect male psychology and self-esteem leading to frustration and feelings of inferiority, particularly, among unemployed men and low-income earners (see also Kahn 1984 in Basow 1992:353; Campbell 1992 in Vetten 2000:68; Munroe 2001:8). On the concept of power abuse, 16 out of 18 focus group participants stated that most men abuse their power because of their wives' high income. Men also try to defend themselves against emancipated women in order not to lose the status that culture and religion bestowed on them. Louw (2008:387) also agrees that gender-based violence is more widespread in situations of poverty and unemployment because men caught up in such situations fail to live according to socio-cultural expectations. Thus, one can understand why men easily become violent in such contexts.

However, in *theopaschitic* theory, men would not change by getting back their masculine power, that is, the socio-cultural power bestowed on them. They probably will not be changed by the current democratic principles that guide gender relationships, but rather by

understanding and exercising their power in the light of God's power which is not omnipotent but compassionate power (Inbody 1997:136, 177). Both Louw (2000:126) and Claassens (2012:4) concur that pastoral theology needs to encourage both men and women to subject their behavior and traditional beliefs to God because they are created in His image. This needs to be done because pastoral anthropology requires people be understood primarily from their relationship with their God. The implication of this view in gender conflict is that it can help both men and women to understand the will of God in today's gender web.

Poling (1991:166) argues that although the Bible contains both loving and destructive images of God, especially in the Old Testament, through Christ's suffering on the cross, God, at last, revealed his tender care and compassion. In Christ's crucifixion God revealed his compassion and justice and how much he loves his people by giving away his rights and life for the sake of human rights and salvation. The *theopaschitic* paradigm introduces the notion of a "sustainable God" in order to reframe God's compassionate presence – *ta splanchna* – which denotes pity, compassion and love as well as God's divine involvement with the human predicament of suffering in terms of a continuum of infinite interventions (Louw 2015:1-2; cf. 2000:33).

Furthermore, Louw (2008:396) points out that the challenge we face in healing gender conflict does not lie in censoring all hierarchical religious language because "then it will be impossible to refer to divine transcendence." Our challenge in the theological field is how to reframe and redefine God's power in terms of a theology of the cross (*theologia crucis*) and a theology of resurrection (*theologia resurrectionis*). Poling (2003:3) shows that the prevention of gender-based violence needs an organized effort by the religious communities that would challenge men's patriarchal ideology and transform them. The transformation does not imply that men would become like women but that they are encouraged to develop new forms of masculinity which place emphasis on justice and a new understanding of power rather than on hegemonic masculinity, possessions and achievements (Gauntlett 2002:7).

According to Inbody (1997:135-136), the reinterpretation of power is based on the understanding of God's power as omnipotent force, not in the mode of a Caesar-like power, but on the ontological (companion and friendship) and relational model. Rational power is based on "erotic" empowerment through mutual relationships. Inbody clarifies the understanding of God's omnipotence as power which can be abused to justify violent male domination. He notes that God's omnipotence is not against the world, but it is a power which opposes all threats to life and wipes away all powers that undermine life. Humans, as beings

created in God's image, reflect God who exercises his power to bring life in its fullest. Human beings are reminded to love and show compassion to their fellow humans and God's entire creation (Berkhof 1979:135). This helps us to understand God's power through suffering – *theopaschitic* paradigm.

In the *theopaschitic* model, God is no longer seen in terms of sovereignty (power) but of solidarity. The *theopaschitic* theory tries to reveal the truth of God's radical identification with the world. In Jesus, God suffered for the sake of inclusive relationality and for the empowerment of people in situations of gender-based violence and injustice. Christ did not suffer for his own benefit, but to bind people together in liberational relationships that free them from oppression and violence. God demonstrates his relational love to his people. If traditional Ovawambo masculine power in social gender relations is replaced by the concept of God's power, then, men could easily be empowered to respond to radical suffering and resilient hope by renouncing all harmful hegemonic masculine practices. Real change in gender relations would only happen if men desire not to rule others or direct others to obey them, but to change and be empowered to express compassion and solidarity, for power as a primary psychological, social and ontological concept is the ability to help others, to get things done, and to shape each other through mutual empowerment. The kind of power needed in the present gender violence context is power that aims to suffer with the other—as liberating, reconciling and transforming love (Inbody 1997:136, 168).

7.5 Transforming Ovawambo Manhood/Masculine Identities and Gender Justice in Intimate Relationships

So far, we have learned on how Ovawambo gender relationships, especially intimate relationships, have been reshaped by democratization in the form of gender equality laws. These laws were implemented to safeguard the living conditions of married couples. However, it seems these laws have not brought an amicable and lasting solution to the Ovawambo couples' relationships. Instead, it has brought further conflict in the intimate spouse relationship. This brought us to the main question of this study that seeks to explore the root causes of gender-based violence and its relation to the Ovawambo cultural view of manhood and masculinity, changes in Namibia's constitution regarding gender roles, male economic deprivation or unemployment and power abuse in Ovawambo intimate relationships. One may ask: is there a link between Ovawambo cultural masculinity identity, gender equality laws, unemployment, and gender-based violence? Many participants strongly agreed that there is a

link between the current gender role change and gender-based violence in Ovawambo intimate partner relationship. So far, we have learned that women's economic emanicipation since Namibia's political independence has brought fear to most Ovawambo men. The gender role changes have also caused men to feel low self esteem, as well as an abandonment of male roles, resulting in acts of self defense, and power abuse. This link is caused by the fact that, gender equality laws caused both women's economic and political emanicipation. Through this freedom women gained rights that helped them to break free from patriarchal ideology. This reconstruction of gender roles also ends the traditional idea that gave men the power to make all family decisions alone and equalizes job remuneration between men and women. This is contrary to the Ovawambo culture value. Thus, some of the Ovawambo men are not ready to accept women's emancipation caused by the gender equality laws. They regarded the gender equality laws as a threat to their masculine identities and manhood. This change has caused fear and misunderstanding in both men and women. Thus, most of the research participants conclude that there is strong correlation between the gender equality laws that brought equality between men and women and gender-based violence. In the current gender role changes, most of the participants revealed that Ovawambo men are abusing their power because they are living under the influence of distress, threat, and low self esteem. As a result, men start to defend themselves because they feel they are losing what the culture and their religious teachings offered them. This agrees with LeBeau (2004:37; 44) who maintains that, due to gender inequality, some men claim that women now think that they are the head of the house, which causes their husbands to use their power to keep their positions as a head of their families. Most of the research male participants claimed that women's rights have caused confusion and disagreements between couples because new family and gender roles give too much power to women. This is also supported by Barker and Pawlak (2011:16) who state that unemployment and underemployment of men, economic stress due to the global recession, and income instability cause men to suffer negative mental health and masculinity crises[43]. This means that most men in most societies and cultures have been left without a clear definition of manhood, masculinity, and fatherhood by the current gender laws and roles that are changing in the world. As a result of men's confusion, many women and children suffer violence from

[43] According to Cleaver (2002), crises of masculinity include the low attainment of boys in education; economic changes resulting in the loss of men's assured role as breadwinner and provider to the family; women's increased incorporation into the labor force; the increase in proportions of female-headed households; and the absence of male role models for boys in families (Cleaver 2002:3).

angry men (Munroe 2001:8). Hence, one root of the problem seems to lie in the public perceptions of power within families as finite resources.

Therefore, *Theopaschitic* theology could play a fundamental role in shaping Ovawambo men's identity by transforming existing cultural convictions about the dominant position of men. It could help men to shift from "threat power" and "dominant authoritarianism" to what could be called "compassionate power." This understanding could reform the male identity, enabling men to shift from the notion of power as force, control, domination, and threat, to power as love, serving, healing and sharing. The reinterpretation of power based on the understanding of God's suffering could help Ovawambo men to view their power in the light of God's power, which is not applied through violent force, but in steadfast faithfulness, mercy and compassion.

The suffering of God in Christ on the cross took place in the form of a "trinity" (Moltmann 1990:31:60), which is redefined in terms of the most essential components of the rejection, forsakenness and loneliness of God. God gave up his son Jesus (2 Cor. 2:21), let him suffer and made him to be sin for human beings (Gal. 3:13). Given the strong unity between God the Father and the Son (John 1:1-5), the suffering of the Son also affects God the Father. In this process of abandonment and forsakenness, which represents God's compassion, God the Father forsakes himself (Moltmann 1974:245). As Jesus was forsaken by his Father on the cross, the Father forsakes and shares his son and himself 'for us' in order to become the Father of the forsaken. The Father delivered up the Son, so that through him he might become the Father of those who have been delivered up (Rom. 1:18ff.). As the Son suffered the forsakenness of death, so the Father also suffered the death of the Son. Therefore, the pain of the Father corresponds to the death of the Son (Moltmann 1990:81).

Louw (2000:83-84) argues that the theology of the cross, according to Moltmann, helps in reframing our traditional understanding of Trinity in the sense of metaphysical speculation. Moltmann's theology redefines the concept of Trinity in terms of the most essential components of rejection, forsakenness and loneliness and common sharing between the Godhead and human beings (*koinonia*). The theology of the cross offers us a sharing model in which the three persons of the Trinity exist not in a hierarchical and oppressive sense but in the sense of sharing, inclusiveness and mutuality. The Trinitarian doctrine is therefore crucial to the transformation of both Ovawambo masculine identity and gender relations in such a way that the communicable property of God supposedly finds similarity in Ovawambo intimate relationships (Peacock 2010:36; Wamue-Ngare & Njoroge 2011:19).

This study predicts that theology based on the suffering of God and the theology of the cross can produce change in basic assumptions about issues of power abuse. The theology of God suffering on the cross can be tapped to forge a fresh link between God's omnipotent presence and power and God's solidarity and identification with suffering as vulnerable faithfulness and overwhelming pathos. The integration of this understanding could help Ovawambo men and women in intimate relationships to work towards compassionate fellowship. To tackle the issue of gender-based violence, both men and women need to abandon power abuse and hegemonic masculinity and to understand power from the theological perspective of compassion and vulnerability (1 Cor. 2:22-25) as revealed by God in Christ's suffering death and resurrection (Louw 2012:158). The abuse of power can also be seen as a theological problem in the sense that it is sometimes disguised under some God images which express patriarchal and omnipotent power. Those images that portray God in patriarchal and omnipotent ways can easily be used by men to abuse their power.

The Ovawambo masculine identity can be transformed when men are encouraged to shift from patriarchal and hierarchal categories to compassionate categories. Thus, *theopaschitic* theology is chosen because it can play a decisive role in reshaping the Ovawambo patriarchal structure to enable men to shift from hegemonic to redemptive character that encourages equal power relations between men and women. Gauntlett (2002:7) argues that masculine transformation does not transform men to become like women, but it helps men to develop a new form of masculinity. This new form of masculinity emphasizes justice rather than hegemonic masculinity, power, possessions and achievements. In the same vein, Hubbard (2007:227) proposes that the family can only move forward effectively if both men and women understand the different interpretations of their power. Scholars have shown that the patriarchy and power ideology that emboldens men to abuse women and their fellow men, and the economic empowerment that emancipates women and causes some to abuse their husbands, needs to be challenged through fresh theological interpretations (Middleton 1992:9; Thompson & Hickey 1996:173; Miescher & Lindsay 2003:4; Sheerattan-Bisnauth 2010:115).

To attain a solution to this problem, Migliore (1983:49-59) argues that both males and females would experience victory over their inner struggles in this ever-changing gender role context if they understood God's transforming power. God's power sets the oppressed free and it is a liberating, justice-seeking and compassionate power. The eradication of gender-based violence can be achieved when patriarchal gender paradigms that ascribe rational power to men and intuition and passivity power to women are challenged (Ruther 2002:3-4). Although patriarchy

supports power in the form of dominance, competition, control and hierarchical positions, *theopaschitic* theory challenges this understanding. In the *theopaschitic* model, power is not seen in terms of authoritarian hierarchy and subordination. God's power is not for exploitation, manipulation, and competitiveness, but it is a liberating, compassionate, and transforming power (Migliore 1983:50-51, 53). Through the *theopaschitic* model, men are encouraged to reconstruct their masculine identities which are based on competitiveness, power, control, violence, and the repression of emotions (Sherattan-Bisnauth 2010:5). This will help men in gender-based violence contexts to discover how to use their power to transform broken homes, family and the world (Smalley & Trent 1994:1-23). However, due to the current gender laws which are regarded by most research participants as favoring women, what is needed is a more egalitarian balance between men and women. Therefore, this study adopted the biblical term *koinonia* and Ovawambo term *uukwanankali* in order to see if they might contribute to the eradication of the gender injustice issue among the Ovawambo.

7.6 *Koinonia* and Ovawambo Traditional *Uukwanankali* Social Welfare

After participants offered their ideas about the possible root cause of the gender-based violence among Ovawambo, they also suggested some ideas that might help to curb and eradicate gender-based violence. All participants agreed that the current Ovawambo marriage and intimate partners' relationships are faced by the plagues of power abuse and gender-based violence. However, the lasting solution to this problem can only be possible by transforming the Ovawambo men's mind set. Today's Ovawambo men, as well as all Namibian men, need to be educated about how to use their power. Most of them suggested that in the current democratic and changing gender roles context, in which many women are being abused, men need to be re-educated to embrace a compassionate masculinity identity, rather than a hegemonic one. They need to know how to promote life rather than death through their power. This idea is supported by Culbertson (1994:7) and Chitando (2013:7) who argued that, in today's gender discrimination context, it is important to empower and liberate men from oppressive notions of traditional gender expectations and to introduce gender-neutral laws. Furthermore, most participants argued that gender-based violence could only be detached from current intimate partners' relationships when both men and women are taught how to live together in harmony, sharing and peace. This is supported by Lebeau & Spence (2004: 30) and Hubbard (2007: 211) who suggested that men and women need to be taught how to live under the current democratic context and how to share their power in their family duties, instead of the current laws that favor women.

As we have noted from the beginning, this study adopts a pastoral *uukwanankali* and *koinonial* (compassion and fellowship) model to influence the understanding of both the current gender-biased laws in Namibia and the Ovawambo *uukwanankali* social communitarian philosophy. The aim is to promote compassion and mutual fellowship in Ovawambo gender relationships through gender equality and justice and by reconstructing the Ovawambo *uukwanankali* communitarian social system to take into consideration the Christian understanding of compassion and fellowship. In this way, the interplay between images of a compassionate God and Ovawambo masculine identities could be adapted to transform men within all patriarchal and hierarchical structures of power.

The term *koinonia* is the Greek word for fellowship or sharing. In the Bible, it occurs first in Acts 2:42 where 3,000 new believers reportedly assembled in the temple and various homes to share their material goods. Thus, koinonia means much more than "being together," it also means "having in common" (Wiersbe 2007:329; Peacock 2010:36). *Koinonia* signifies the community where family or community members are united in identity and purpose, as church members did by voluntarily sharing their property (Balswick & Balswick 1989:303). In this mutual sharing of power and material possessions, harmonious relationships can be built in which men and women regard one another as equal partners and are able to view one another as subjects rather than objects. In that partnership, life is marked with deep mutuality which begins the process of empowerment and kindles our personal and social relationships.

For this mutuality to become *koinonia*, it must become a support of suffering and service with others, to others and for others. This uniqueness is in line with the African concept of humanity *ubuntu* (humanism or humanness). Nolte-Schamm (2006:370-371) defines *ubuntu* as a universal philosophical concept that connects all people in all nations with the unique understanding that they belong to one another. Thus, human beings are obliged to support and do good to one another in the interest of the wellbeing of the individual and of the community at large. It encourages humans to abandon division, superiority, self-interest, and nepotism. The word *ubuntu* also has a similar connotation with *uukwanankali*. The practice of *uukwanankali* is an Ovawambo communal act of compassion towards another (Munyika 2004). Every member of the community is required to display compassion towards his or her fellow human being and to share his or her belongings with family members and with others in need. Everyone is expected to weep with those who are weeping and rejoice with those who are rejoicing. Everyone must share the blessings he or she has received from God with fellow human beings. They must pray for one another and wish that everyone has enough food, cattle,

a good marriage, children, and a good life in community (Munyika 2004:187). Therefore, both *ubuntu* and *uukwanankali* signify the spirit of serving, generosity, support and compassion towards one another.

Thus far, we have seen that some Ovawambo spouses are survivors of gender-based violence. Literature and interviews about the social life of the Ovawambo reveal that power imbalance, inequality, and power abuse affect Ovawambo intimate relationships negatively. One may ask: why does gender-based violence persist in Ovawambo society which is governed by norms of *uukwanankali*? We argue here that the practice of *uukwanankali* needs to be complemented by the biblical practice of *koinonia* which denotes God's compassion and care. Heschel (in Scalise 2011:418) affirms that the religious person is one who draws from God whose greatest strength is love and defiance of despair, whose greatest passion is compassion.

From a biblical perspective, compassion can be viewed as one of the distinguishing characteristics of Christ and his relational style. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees when he realized that their form of religious worship lacked compassion. He said, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice" (Mt. 12:7 RSV). He was moved with compassion for the crowds and he healed their sick (Mt. 14:14). He was moved with compassion when he saw the people distressed and dejected like sheep without a shepherd (Mt. 9:36; Mk. 6:34). Jesus was moved with compassion by the plight and the tears of the widow of Nain (Lk. 7:130), of the leper (Mk. 1:41), of the two blind men (Mt. 20:34) and of those who had nothing to eat (Mk. 8:2) (Nolan 1995:34). Ezhanikatt *et al* (2005:207) concur with Scalise that compassion advances human solidarity and empathy. Another clear illustration of compassion at work is found in the story of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32). It was compassion that moved the father to welcome back and forgive his son despite the boy's defiant behavior. The son deserved to be punished but his father was moved by compassion. The father listened to his son's confession and his whole being was moved with pity as he embraced his son.

This story of the prodigal also illustrates God's love and compassion for humanity despite their wrongdoings. He forgives us by offering his son to die on our behalf (Hargreaves 1979:53). God is a compassionate Father who intervenes in history to save us (Poling 1991:173). This is the metaphor of God's compassion—that compassion is part of God's act towards us, who are created in his image, and that we must also imitate and reflect that compassion in our dealings with one another. By showing compassion, we embrace God's gift of love that he planted in us. As God showed us his compassion on the cross, where he participated in human suffering

and transgression through Christ's suffering (*theopaschitic*), so do we also need to extend compassion to one another (Ezhanikatt *et al* 2005:207).

Practicing *uukwanankali* without the elements of care and compassion in intimate relationships will not fulfill its purpose. Thus, for the Ovawambo to live in a society that is free of gender-based violence, their practice of *uukwanankali* should also extend to the area of gender relationships. The new model of *uukwanankali* would help people to demonstrate deep compassion, mercy and pity not only to outsiders in the community but to family members as well. Those who abuse others would realize that they are not acting in line with the purpose of God for the meaning and purpose of their lives. Therefore, if the *theopaschitic* model is employed to illumine Ovawambo gender relationship, then, the Ovawambo household will be transformed into a place where amazing grace and unconditional love are experienced equally by both men and women. The compassionate fellowship is that through which both men and women begin to discover the possibility of new forms of wholeness and partnership. In that partnership, both groups start to work together to liberate themselves from the bonds of powerful structures that unsettle and abuse them (Von Rad 1962:16; Culbertson 1994:10). If God who revealed his compassion in Christ becomes our life model, the Ovawambo people would live in relationships that are free of violence and inequality.

7.7 Towards a Pastoral *Koinonia Uukwanankali* Model for Ovawambo Marriage and Family Relationship

From the data analysis, we observed that though the Namibian government introduced the gender equality laws to transform gender relations and redeem women from patriarchal gender injustice, it failed to carry men along in the process. Thus, men oppose women's emancipation and many abuse their power in order to defend themselves. Ovawambo men live according to the dictates and expectations of their culture, but now the gender equality policy requires them to behave differently from their fathers and grandfathers. This results in a masculine dilemma because, on the one hand, men are expected to live according to the stereotypical masculine identities they inherited and acquired. On the other hand, they are expected to adhere to the current gender laws that punish them if they follow the traditional norms.

The idea of gender equality can only be implemented effectively if men are taught to shun all patriarchal cultural norms and practices that are harmful to women. Sheerattan-Bisnauth (2010:3) argues that although the gender laws are meant to transform the world so that people begin to live in mutual respect and compassion for one another, this can only happen if the

needs of both men and women are taken into account. The compassionate partnership between men and women that we seek will only materialize if men are included in the struggle to end gender-based violence. Therefore, transforming masculine identity requires building a more humane system which does not force men to comply with a very restricted notion of manhood and which removes all limitations placed against women.

As noted at the beginning of this study, Ovawambo patriarchal culture requires men to perform roles of provider, breadwinner, family protector, and family head. The Ovawambo communitarian practice of social welfare in the form of *uukwanankali* also encourages these roles. However, *uukwanankali,* in its present form, fails to curb men's hierarchical use of power and oppression in Ovawambo gender relationships. Although *uukwanankali* entails the display of compassionate and generous attitudes in the community, its potential impact on the patriarchal family structure and Ovawambo family life has been overlooked. The issue here is not that Ovawambo patriarchal gender system and masculine identity be abandoned, but that they be transformed because, as Peacock (2010:100) has observed, certain redemptive aspects already exist in the cultural idea of masculinity and these only need to be tapped and enhanced.

However, Ashwood (2010:195) points out that it is not easy to break the cycle of gender-based violence without theological intervention in the context where the violence occurs. This is because gender-based violence has deep roots and a long history of acquisition in socio-cultural gender interactions. Gender-based violence will end if people start to seek and choose good habits from their religion and culture which can be practiced in their modern democratic context. Therefore, Louw (2012:123) affirms that gender violence will only be curbed when people learn to shift from domination and from authoritarian behavior to supportive, protective and nurturing attitudes.

In the effort to transform masculinity, it is crucial also to reshape the Ovawambo *uukwanankali* communitarian social welfare within which Ovawambo men have been nurtured. To combat gender-based violence and hierarchical gender relations effectively, Ovawambo gender relationships need to be governed by justice and equality. Thus, *theopaschitic* theory, which demonstrates God's fellowship (*koinonia*) with his people because he allowed himself to suffer in Jesus to bring life through this fellowship, re-frames biblical *koinonia* (fellowship) to align it with the Ovawambo traditional *uukwanankali* in order to foster compassion and redemption in intimate relationships.

Hence, this study adopts a pastoral *koinonial uukwanankali* model as one of the possible models that could help to create this change. The pastoral *koinonial uukwanankalo* model, based on the *theopaschitic* theory, is reframed by the theology of the cross in which God revealed himself as a compassionate and loving father. On the cross, God showed us his sharing heart, and in God's relationship with human beings, there is no violence, hierarchy or inequality, but fellowship and partnership. Acts 2:42 attests to the mutuality and acts of sharing in the Early Church and shows that this idea of the common fellowship (*koinonia*) that we share in Jesus Christ (1 John 1:6-7) needs to be endorsed in Ovawambo intimate relationships. The idea of biblical *koinonia* can be applied to transform gender relationships to shift from traditional patriarchal and hierarchical models and from gender-biased laws to mutual companionship (Peacock 2010:38-40). The pastoral *koinonial uukwanankali* model can play a crucial role in reshaping Ovawambo marriage relationships and transform the home into a place of covenant, grace, empowerment and intimacy (Balswick & Balswick 1989:21-22). This possible togetherness is symbolizing the original partnership between God and humankind where love is being experienced (Louw 1998a:151), and because the power of God is shared power (Migliore 1983:77). For Ovawambo families to live without intimidation, fear, violence, both men and women have to transform their power into love, mercy, and servanthood as God did in his son's crucifixion and resurrection. Both men and women need to view their power in the form of weakness and vulnerability. This could help them to gain strength and power to reflect God-images in family and social life. It would not only bring tremendous change in social and family life, it will also liberate them.

Through this pastoral *koinonial uukwanankali* model, Ovawambo men and women can appreciate their power and ability to build rather than to destroy and dominate because God's power portrays him as unique in his faithful and steadfast relationship with his covenant people. God's power is not coercive, imposing or controlling. It is for rebuilding, creating and healing, and it is viewed in the form of graceful identification with human misery. Such an understanding of God's power can promote spiritual healing, faith in God and self-limiting power among Ovawambo family life (Louw 2000:64, 67, 70; Migliore 1983:91). Through spiritual healing with its element of peace (*shalom*), healing (*habitus*) and wholeness (*telos*) will take place within family and social life. Thus, all destructive factors that bring anxiety, guilt feelings, shame, despair, doubt, helplessness, vulnerability, and frustration will end. These can be replaced with God's faithfulness through gratitude and joy (Louw 2000:64, 67, 70). Through faith and self-limiting power, they are also liberated from the desire to control or to

be superior to others (Migliore 1983:92). Therefore, the *koinonial uukwanankali* paradigm reflamed by *theopaschitic* theology through pastoral family ministry can be essential for the renewal, growth and transforming both male's and female's attitudes towards one another. God-images and a spirituality of vulnerability affirm the thrust of God's purpose; namely, recreating humans in his likeness through the community of the church and faith (Miller 1988:165). This could transform the faith of Ovawambo men and women to acknowledge their limits and to accept both their creatureliness and their need for forgiving, and to be liberated from the desire to be omnipotent and to seek revenge. Our understanding of God's power in his resurrection power could also free Ovawambo men from the fear that causes them to use power to control others or to abuse and destroy. They might be able to recognize their limitations and to exercise self-limitation. Self-limited power is not the sign of powerlessness, but it is a reflection in human life of the creative and redemptive power of God that freely exercises self-limitation for the sake of life-in-community. To live in healthy relationship, Ovawambo men and women need to adopt both self-acceptance and self-limitation because God accepts us in spite of how we are judged by others or even by ourselves. Hence, we could be able to limit ourselves because God also exercises his power in a self-limiting manner (Migliore 1983:92). What would make family life among Ovawambo remain the place *par excellence* of harmony, unconditional love, and peace is the shifting of males' understanding of power from coercion, threat, control, violence, and strength to compassionate, healing, overwhelming grace, transforming, sacrifice, redeeming and suffering love.

For the Ovawambo gender structure to shift from patriarchal structure and inequality, it needs to be shaped by the *theopaschitic* model which displays God's compassion as well as unconditional and sacrificial love for the creation. In this way, we would also learn to love one another, for "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend" (John 15:13 RSV). From the above statement, it is clear that Jesus rejects the use of power to abuse and control others, but calls for power to save and serve others, to lift up the fallen, to forgive the guilty, to encourage responsibility and maturity in the weak, and to enable the able (Balswick & Balswick 1989:29). Only deep compassion and mercy can help to resolve intimate relationship issues. Pity is not only about the emotions, but implies that one's whole being is moved by people's transgressions. Partnership in the light of God's compassion calls both men and women to the full understanding and genuine acceptance of one another (Duntley 1988:270). Thus, we represent the "image of God" as we display God's glory on the earth.

7.8 Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter focused on the discussion of the research data. Three factors are identified as the root causes of gender-based violence, namely (1) Ovawambo patriarchal manhood and masculine identity, (2) the new gender equality laws and family laws, and (3) women's economic emancipation versus men's unemployment which has produced fear and power abuse in men. Literature on gender-based violence and gender relations has been examined and most of the research participants strongly agree with findings from existing literature that there is a clear interconnection between Ovawambo patriarchal manhood and masculinity identity, the gender equality and family laws, women's economic emancipation and men's unemployment, fear and power abuse. However, the *theopaschitic* theory as the theoretical framework endorsed by this study offers a paradigm shift whereby men are encouraged to use their power in a redemptive and constructive manner. In that way, masculinity would be transformed to overcome patriarchy.

Ovawambo men are encouraged to abandon all harmful and abusive notions of power and reflect the power of the Almighty God which he revealed in Christ's crucifixion. The theology of the cross is not a theology of omnipotence or hegemonic power, but a theology of empathetic and compassionate power. The powerlessness of God through Christ's suffering and crucifixion is the paradigm of God's different mode of power that should be imitated by Ovawambo men. God overcame the destructive power of the world through the power of identification, participation, endurance, and transformation.

Further, in this chapter, the Ovawambo communitarian social concept is reshaped through *theopaschitic* biblical *koinonia*. The interplay among *theopaschitic* theology, *koinonia*, Ovawambo patriarchal gender relationships, and the Ovawambo communitarian social welfare concept of *uukwanankali* opens up a new approach that can be used to help men to shift from an abusive and hierarchical understanding of power to a view of power as compassion and fellowship/partnership. As humans created in the image of God, who extends his compassionate, caring, and sharing nature to us, we are called to imitate these virtues in our intimate gender relationships. Although Ovawambo people culturally treated one another in a hierarchical way, their *uukwanankali* social welfare practice can be revised through a theological understanding of human equality that is embedded in the image of God. The theology of the *imago Dei* reveals that God created all people to be in relationships of equality, complementarity, and unity. Thus, mutual acceptance is essential in gender relationships.

Human likeness to God enables us to not only be close to God, but also to be close to one another as God's representatives or servants in our relationships. As we bear the image of God who shows his compassion to the poor and oppressed, we continue this process of ending the gender discrimination and inequality in our communities and marriage relationships (Duntley 1988:270).

Thus, Miller (1988:105) argues that a compassionate understanding of God would help people to shift from the position of gender discrimination and abuse of power to participate in relationships of stability, order, commitment, compassion, and love partnerships between men and women. Moyo (2015: xxii) further affirms that we Christians are called to serve and promote the welfare of our fellow human beings. In this regard, the Ovawambo social concept of *uukwanankali* could be enhanced by *theopaschitic* theology to shift from the imbalance of power and gender discrimination. The interplay between *uukwanankali* and the idea of God suffering for the whole of humanity can be used to help the Ovawambo community, so that gender and family relationships become a space where members seek the welfare of their neighbors. When an intimate gender relationship is guided by compassionate fellowship and the friendship of God, it will always show the evidence of salvation and freedom offered in Jesus Christ. Therefore, in the Ovawambo gender-based violence context, the understanding and experience of God's friendship in the form of his covenantal and compassionate faithfulness could play a very important role in ending the vicious cycle of violence between men and women in intimate partnerships.

In the following chapter, this study will deal with a summary of the previous chapters and their key findings in line with the main goal of the study. The chapter will also offer concluding remarks, as well as recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUDING REMARKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

8.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, we analyzed the data from the fieldwork. The emphasis was on the male perceptions and experiences of the gender equality laws. Most participants revealed that they reacted to this change by using their power to subdue women and make them to do their bidding. The data also reveals that men's behavior in gender relationships is influenced by Ovawambo patriarchal norms and gender stereotypes. Most male participants argued that it was not in their power to abuse women, but they simply followed the examples of their forefathers as well as biblical teachings. Remarkably, however, the gender equality laws resulted in major changes in Ovawambo intimate relationships. These laws promote equality between men and women but at the same time, emancipate women from men and recognize their rights. Most male participants agreed that the gender equality laws are unreasonably biased towards women who are empowered by the laws which simultaneously disempower men.

Other contributing factors to the prevalence of gender-based violence include the situation of economic deprivation or unemployment on the part of men which rendered some men incapable of supporting their families or fulfilling their roles as breadwinners. In the same context, some women who have become economically emancipated earn higher salaries than men, resulting in fear and resistance in most Ovawambo men. Men fear that their women would no longer respect or obey them and that women would replace them as family heads and breadwinners. On the other hand, because men also regard the gender equality laws as a threat to the fulfillment of the cultural expectations of their gender roles, some prefer to use physical power to regain their power and status.

The study therefore turns to *theopaschitic* theory to seek insight into how Ovawambo men could be helped to shift from hegemonic to redemptive masculinity. The *theopaschitic* paradigm (modeled after the compassionate and suffering God) could help to transform men from abusing their power against women and other men and to display compassionate power in gender relationships. The study also suggests that the Ovawambo social communitarian concept of *uukwanankali*, which lacks elements of compassion and power balance in

interpersonal relationships between men and women, can also benefit from the *theopaschitic* understanding of mercy and compassion in gender relationships. Therefore, we conclude in this chapter that if Ovawambo masculine identities and gender imbalance are reframed by *theopaschitic* theology, a paradigm shift will be created whereby all existing cultural gender convictions about the dominant position of men and gender bias will be turned to mutual and compassionate *koinonial* partnership between men and women. This chapter serves as a conclusion to this thesis and presents below a summary of the thesis findings, concluding remarks and recommendations for future studies.

8.2 Summary of Research Findings

This section offers a summary of the previous chapters and their key findings, in line with the main goal of the study which is to determine why gender-based violence persists among the Ovawambo after Namibia's political independence.

Chapter One serves as the introduction to this study. It investigates the root causes of and the driving force behind gender-based violence in relation to men's ideology of masculinity, the changes in Namibia's constitution regarding gender structure and gender policies, and socio-economic disparities between men and women and men's unemployment. The chapter begins with a review of the Ovawambo traditional gender relationships and roles. In Oshivambo culture, a man is perceived to have more value in society socially, economically and politically than women. Socially, a man is accorded all the necessary rights to rule, to dominate, to punish and to make decisions on behalf of his household because he is the "head of the house." Economically, he is a provider and the source of household's cultural economy which depends principally on cattle, salt, iron ore, and ostrich eggshells. He is also regarded as the family property owner, breadwinner and family protector. Biblically, he is viewed as the family head or ruler and the head of his wife. Men also use the creation story to justify their position of domination and power; for example, Genesis 3:16b which says, "…your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." This text is often used to justify men's control over women and to show the result of sin that entered the world, rather than to prescribe what God intended. Politically, he is a soldier, policeman, traditional ruler, district headman, village headman, and judge. These are some of the masculine roles that are expected of Ovawambo.

According to Ovawambo gender structure, men and women are defined through the division of labor (Iipinge 2000:2). In this setting, Ovawambo women do not have a voice as they are under the control of men. Males decisions are to be accepted without questioning by females.

However, with Namibia's independence in 1990, a new constitution and legal reforms have resulted in marked shifts in gender relations. Gender equality and the expansion of personal liberty on an equal basis for both males and females have overturned the cultural relational identity between the sexes. These changes in the law threaten long-held beliefs and norms regarding Oshivambo masculinity. Conflict has arisen between traditional and modern views of masculinity causing fear, anxiety, and confusion in many Ovawambo men about their status and masculinity. This situation motivated this study to investigate the driving force behind gender-based violence and its relation to Namibia's constitutional reforms of the power dynamics in intimate relationships, masculine identity, men's power and economic vulnerability, and women's economic empowerment among the Ovawambo.

The study has investigated Ovawambo men's life experiences and how they cope in the current situation of shifting gender roles. The aim is also to deconstruct Ovawambo ideas of hegemonic masculinity by transforming and reframing their destructive traditional understanding of male identity and roles, as well as hierarchical and dominant forms of negative masculinity that are harmful to women and to men themselves. Thus, the study incorporates *theopaschitic* theory reframed by the theological interpretations of the cross by Luther, Moltmann and Louw to reinterpret male identity and the notion of power, thereby encouraging compassionate and transformative masculine identities.

In **Chapter Two**, the study presents the historical background of the Ovawambo people in the context of their cultural gender relations and roles. This study found that Ovawambo gender relationship is organized according to the patriarchal system, which places men above women in social and family relationships. Fathers ruled over other family members including their wives. Ovawambo economy is mixed, but it is primarily an agricultural-pastoral system. Cultural and social value is attached to men who own livestock and *mahangu* fields. As the head of the household and property owner, the man has the rights and power to make decisions about asset disposal and acquisition. Symbols of male power include an axe, a bone and a bear. A man is regarded as his father's axe because the axe is an indispensable tool among the Ovawambo. The man is also *esipa lyuulumbu* (the bone of hunger) which means that he can provide food for his family even during seasons of drought.

Women on the other hand are regarded as second-class citizens who are expected to be submissive to their husbands. Husbands have full authority over their wives in marriage, and because the men paid *lobola*, women are considered their husbands' property. A married

woman is not under the control of her birth family but of her husband. She cannot make a decision without consulting her husband, but the man can make decisions without his wife's consent. The Ovawambo patriarchal structure was also influenced by external forces in the guise of Western missionaries and colonial officials. Thus, many Ovawambo men converted into the Christian religion because it supported the Ovawambo cultural gender structure and norms.

In **Chapter Three**, the focus is on the implementation of Namibia's gender equality laws and its implication for Ovawambo gender relationships. We have learned that the constitution, gender laws, and legislation have challenged gender relations and roles among the Ovawambo. These include the married person's equality act, family law on rape and domestic violence, law on maintenance paid by men, and law on equal rights to communal land for women. The implementation of these laws has resulted in women's emancipation from all cultural forms of gender injustice and discrimination. The discussion also shows that the Ovawambo resist the current changes which they regard as a tool of male disempowerment and female empowerment. Thus, it seems that women's emancipation through the gender equality laws is the main factor in gender conflict and violence among the Ovawambo.

Chapter Four serves as the theoretical framework for the study which adopts *theopaschitic* theology reframed by the theology of the cross. It focuses on a theological understanding of God's vulnerability through the theology of the cross. Thus, three interpretations of the theology of the cross and resurrection are examined carefully to seek for elements that could bring about a paradigm shift from the notion of power and masculinity as strength, dominant authoritarianism, competitiveness, and control to masculine power as vulnerability, service, compassion, and solidarity. Whereas all the three interpretations point to God's closeness to his people, Luther reveals God through the suffering of Christ which shows him not as a passive God, but a God of passion and compassion. Moltmann's ontological model focuses on God's pathos which moves him to enter into relationship with his people. Through pathos, God humiliates himself in Christ's passion and death.

Louw's model is based on a theology of affirmation (a theology of the cross and resurrection) that embraces the vulnerability, compassion, pathos, and faithfulness of God towards humankind. God through the suffering of Christ endures weakness as a sign of power. God's weakness and suffering (*theopaschitism*) through the hermeneutics of the theology of the cross could help both men and women to find meaning and identity within violent and confusing

conflicts. The *theopaschitic* understanding of God's power could help in transforming Ovawambo men's traditional understanding of manhood and masculinity which is based on dominant authoritarianism and competitiveness. It could liberate men from personal psychological issues and help them to retain their male identities and self-esteem in this socio-economic role-shifting context. It could also help Ovawambo men to move from hegemonic masculinity to compassionate masculinity and solidarity.

Chapter Five outlines the methodology that was followed in collecting, presenting and discussing the data. It includes the practical theological goal of the study, research design, research methodology, limitations of the study, issues of validity, reliability, confidentiality, and ethical considerations. These steps helped the research process generate the desirable outcome based on the research question and objectives.

Chapter Six presents the data from the fieldwork. The main aim of the research is to determine whether a link could be forged between the current gender equality laws in Namibia and gender-based violence. Most participants revealed that the main cause of, and the driving force behind, gender-based violence in Ovawambo gender relationships is patriarchal ideology which promotes sexism and gender inequality. However, traditional Ovawambo manhood and masculine identity (expectations) have been challenged and changed by Namibia's current democratic reforms stipulated in the gender laws. The gender equality laws were introduced to overthrow patriarchal ideology which placed women under the control of men. Today, higher educational qualifications and affirmative action in the labor market with respect to the recruitment of women have resulted in women's economic advancement. Some women have become family breadwinners, as more and more women exercise their rights of freedom and dignity as human beings through the equality laws that have redefined gender roles.

Understandably, many men disapprove of the equality laws because they feel threatened and sidelined by them. The laws also undermine men's cultural roles and positions of superiority to women, resulting in conflict between patriarchal ideology, which encouraged women's submission to men, and democratic ideals which foster gender equality and justice. This dramatic change in the status of women, the workplace, and traditional gender roles has left some Ovawambo men confused, disillusioned, angry and frustrated. Although some of them try to retain their position as breadwinners, many have no financial means to do so and end up abusing their power against their wives. To overcome this challenge, some men began to engage in oppression, suppression, control, and abuse of women and surrendered to alcohol

and drugs. Thus, many women suffer at the hands of men who try to emulate the deeds of their fathers and peers.

Furthermore, some women who have become financially emancipated also try to repay their husbands with the abuse that they had received from them. In this way, they reverse the patriarchal ideas through their financial freedom. The result is an increase in acts of gender-based violence and family problems. It is clear that the Ovawambo patriarchal understanding of maleness and masculinity which emphasizes male superiority and wealth acquisition has been strongly challenged by democratization, modernity, and globalization. Thus, participants reasoned that for gender justice and equality to prevail between men and women, men need to face the current challenge with different attitudes rather than with resistance and power abuse.

Chapter Seven analyzes the data. Findings in Chapter Six already show that the implementation of the gender equality laws since Namibia's independence has effectively contributed to the increase in gender-based violence in Namibia and among the Ovawambo in particular. The gender equality laws have changed the Ovawambo traditional patriarchal gender arrangement, as well as ideas of manhood and masculinity. The laws have also emancipated women from men, economically, thereby eroding men's superior power in the family and their roles as breadwinners and heads of the family. Some women have begun to fight back because they no longer depend on their husband's income. Whilst men use physical power to claim their position, women use economic and constitutional power to defend their position. The tension therefore is between culture and democracy, and that becomes the starting point for gender-based violence and conflict.

Both the research data and literature sources reveal that gender-based violence and all forms of discrimination between Ovawambo men and women cannot be curbed through the gender equality laws. But helping men and women understand their roles in relationship to God their creator will be a major step in the right direction. Since both men and women are created in the image of God, they need to imitate God their creator who rules and supports his people and exercises his power in a compassionate way. Thus, various literature on gender relationships and sociology were reviewed in the data discussion. The *theopaschitic* theory is also probed to help transform Ovawambo cultural manhood and masculine identity that places men and women in danger. Ovawambo Christian men and women can emulate God's compassionate acts of suffering in their interactions with one another. This will produce a paradigm shift in current gender relationships to encourage both men and women to fight gender-based violence,

because both are equal before God who created them. The current gender equality laws also need to be interpreted through the *theopaschitic* paradigm. As God created both men and women as equal partners, they need to live in that equality. Equality between men and women cannot be achieved through gender division, selfishness, or favoritism. Partnership in the light of *theopaschitic* theory aims to serve, empower, and sacrifice for the other. It aims to denounce all hierarchical and superior traits in working towards justice for all.

Both men and women are called to live in mutual partnership and equality. Not only do masculinity and gender equality laws need transformation, Ovawambo *uukwanankali* communitarian social welfare also needs to be reframed by the understanding of biblical fellowship (*koinonia*). Since culture moulds both men and women to fulfill its gender role expectation, *uukwanankali* needs to be transformed to accommodate some Christian *diakonial* understanding of sharing. In its present form, the Ovawambo *uukwanankali* has failed to bring gender justice and equality to men and women in intimate relationships. It has also failed to curb men's hierarchical and oppressive attitudes in gender relationships. Through the pastoral *koinonial* model, the Ovawambo intimate relationship and the *uukwanankali* social welfare model could help men and women to live together in harmony. As God shares his love, protection, and salvation in his fellowship by caring for and saving us, we are also motivated to imitate his action in our relationship with one another.

8.3 Conclusion

As it is proposed in chapter one, this study aim was to seek answers to the following questions: What motivates Ovawambo men to abuse their power against women in the current democratization context in Namibia? Is there a link between gender-based violence and changes in current gender roles, and between men's power abuse and unemployment in current Ovawambo intimate relationships? This study's aim was to examine the Ovawambo traditional perception of masculinity in gender relations and the impact of socio-cultural and economic changes in light of the current gender laws in Namibia. This study also examined how the Ovawambo men respond to the current change in the gender roles and relationships. Additionally, this study adopted *theopaschitic* theology to ascertain whether it could help in transforming the Ovawambo male identity from harmful masculine identity toward balancing the Ovawambo gender relationships.

This study has identified a strong link between gender-based violence and Ovawambo manhood and masculine identity, socio-economic and legal changes in intimate relationships through gender equality and family laws, women's emancipation and men's economic deprivation unemployment and power abuse. The current gender conflict is also fuelled by the way boys are raised in their homes compare to girls. Boys are trained to be aggressive and brave by not showing any emotion. If a boy experiences any difficulty, he is trained not to speak about it, but to fight until he wins. Girls in an Oshivambo family are trained to become soft and tender-hearted people. This indicates that girls are expected to be loyal to boys. In this process, most women are suffering because men are trying to practice what they heard and learned from their fathers and peers. If a man fails to follow what his father and peers did, he risks persecution from his father or peers. All research participants agreed that Ovawambo men are moulded to become the head of family and the family's economic controller. A man is a ruler of all family members and income. This means that the Ovawambo family system has been influenced by the patriarchal ideology, where the man is expected to be in the top position of the family. The family economy is placed in man's hands.

This ideology is currently being challenged by the democratization influences that prevail in Namibia today. When Namibia acquired independence, women were granted greater freedom, and their rights and dignity as human beings was reintroduced through gender role and equality laws reform. This caused the family economy to be ruled by both men and women. In some cases, a woman rules the family economy. This means that women may also become family bread winners and economic controllers. This change caused a negative impact among some of the Ovawambo men. Some men feel that they have lost their position as family head and provider. Some men have also experienced fear and low self-esteem, especially when they become unemployed or earn less than their wives. These laws have also been seen by most of the research participants as favoring women, compared to men. Most Ovawambo male participants did not want these equality laws because they feel the laws threaten their hierarchical position. Most of the participants argued that this is a clear sign of greed and selfishness. In the end, men started to abuse their power to retain their superior position and to live according to the cultural expectations of manhood and masculinity. Most of the research participants also saw the problem of gender-based violence as caused by the men's low self-esteem and self defense. Participants, especially the pastors, claimed that some of the

Ovawambo men suffer due to law self esteem. The fact that the Ovawambo men were not prepared when the gender equality laws that changed the gender roles were introduced is a main concern. These changes in Ovawambo family life have come as shock to many Ovawambo men.

However, in order change to men's aggressive, controlling, abusive, and sexually unacceptable attitudes, it would be helpful to reinterpret God's power by means of the *theopaschitic* approach, which emphasizes the power of God as "weakness" and vulnerability. Thus, Ovawambo men could be transformed and helped to reinterpret their power within a theology of vulnerability that reveals God's power in grace, mercy, servanthood, and sacrifice. By means of the *theopaschitic* approach, Ovawambo Christian men could begin to identify, not with patriarchal and hierarchical God-images, but with compassionate God-images. The theory could help men change their masculine identity images that are characterized by authoritarian power to identification with the power of vulnerability. Migliore (1983:49-59) suggests that men in their inner struggle in this ever-changing gender role context can only find lasting victory as they understand God's transforming power. This would happen because God's power is the power that brings to the oppressed free, liberating power, justice-making power, and compassionate power. Ovawambo men can, therefore, be helped to shift from powerful ideas of manhood and hegemonic masculinity to compassionate manhood and redemptive masculinity. Thus, Culbertson (1994: 91; cf. Balswick & Balswick 1989:293) concludes that God loves his people not because of their femininity or the ruggedness of their masculinity but because they are humans created to reflect his image and compassion. Ovawambo intimate relationships should be a place of acceptance, intimacy, and mutual concern because those in love are created in the image of a compassionate God. As we experience God's mutual partnership, companionship, and friendship, we would be motivated to practice it in our marriages and family relationships, because once these are present in any intimate relationship, all violent acts would be prevented.

8.4 Recommendations and Proposal for Further Study

Thus far, much has been done to eradicate gender-based violence in Namibia. Among other things, the government has instituted the gender equality laws and, the emancipation of women and police protection order legislation. Other responses to gender-based violence include legal reforms, police training and the establishment of specialized services for gender-based violence survivors. Some projects which also aim to end gender-based violence have been set up among

inmates who perpetrated related crimes. However, most of the programs which seek to sensitize people to issues of gender in Namibia mostly target women, and not men. Most of the research on the root causes of gender-based violence also focuses on personal behaviors rather than socio-cultural, post-war experiences and the effect of mass media. Some of the projects meant to end gender-based violence last for only three to six years before they collapse, and they often focus on responses to incidents rather than on proactive ways to ensure prevention. Most of the polices and research recommedations are also forwarded to the relevant authorities for necessary action but nothing has changed so far to normalize gender relationships.

Thus this study proposes that:

- The Namibian government collaborate with the ELCIN church to sensitize men about gender issues and help them to understand the current gender policies. There is also an urgent need to review the current gender laws and legislation in Namibia to evaluate their positive and negative implications for gender relationships in Namibia.
- All programs on gender-based violence and gender equality in Namibia should involve men as partners in order to transform gender beliefs. Prisons need to employ more spiritual, social, and psychology workers to help in both the spiritual and psychological rehabilitation of offenders. This will help the gender-based violence offenders to undergo holistic rehabilitation and treatment that can help them not to reoffend after they have served their terms.
- Churches, government, and community leadership need to introduce unification programs that would enable offenders, perpetrators and their families to meet for reconciliation after the perpetrators are released from prison.
- ELCIN church should develop a curriculum for family ministry that could be used to prepare youth and to educate both men and women in pre-marriage and post-marriage counseling, family enrichment sessions, men's, women's, and youth group meetings, Sunday school and confirmation classes. It could serve as one of the resources that can be used to teach Ovawambo men about positive masculinity in the current democratic context and to steer them towards compassionate partnership and fellowship.
- Finally, further study needed investigate the impact of the theological assumption on processes of refraiming cultural views on masculinities and femininities, thus it has not been a part of the empirical research methodology of this study.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

TURNITIN Originality Report

Appendix 2a: Research Participation Consent Form

School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics
University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg,
Private Bag X01, Scottsville 3209,
Republic of South Africa
20 September 2015

Dear Sir/Madam

Research Participation Consent Form

I (Rev. Johannes Haufiku; Cell phone: +264812993776; Email: johanneshaufiku@gmail.com; Postal address: P.O. Box 19385, Omuthiya. Republic of Namibia. 9000) kindly invite you to participate in a research study designed to explore the driving force behind the gender-based violence among Ovawambo. This research interviews will be conducted by Johannes Haufiku, a PhD student, from the School of Religion, Philosophy & Classics at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Your decision to participate in this study is voluntary. This study consists of an audiotaped interview lasting about 90 minutes. The interviews and focus group discussions will take place between February and June 2016.You will be asked about your experience related to gender related conflict and crisis. We schedule the interview at a time and place that are convenient for you. Interviews are done face-to-face. It is possible that you will be contacted again after the interview to clarify or review the thoughts and experiences you share. You may at any time refuse to answer any questions, request that the tape recorder be turned off and discontinue the interview at any time without any negative or undesirable consequences. There are no risks attached to the study. Your name and this interview code will only appear together on this consent form. Immediately, your name will be removed from any interview materials, and the confidentiality of the audiotapes and notes which are made during the interview, will be maintained by immediately assigning an interview code to them. Direct quotes of what you have said may be used in written publications but your name will not be attached to them. Identifying information except age is altered so that when the information is used, for example, a quote in an article or a talk, it will be hard for anyone to see you in the data. The tapes will be destroyed when the research project is completed. No one else but myself will listen to the tapes. They will be used for exploring a theme about how contemporary Ovawambo men experience contemporary gender role change in Namibia.

Before you sign this form, please ask me any questions you may have on aspects of this study or about me. I will attempt to answer any questions you may have prior to, during, or following the study. Your help is much appreciated.

There are no material or financial benefits from participating in this research. However, I will visit each participant with the results of the study and discuss the outcome with them. In addition, all the participants will be given a copy of the final dissertation.

In case of you being traumatized by the questions I have organized pastoral counselor and a psychologist. The pastoral counselor and the psychologist have consented to share confidentiality in case of interviewees who end up in need of their counseling services. I will personally take the participants to the counselors if need arises. I will also provide you with contact details of the counselors in case you do not want me to accompany you the counselors.

If need be for further information about this study, please contact my supervisor who is the project leader: Dr H Moyo; Contact number: 033 2605574; email: moyoh@ukzn.ac.za

And the HSSREC RO - Ms Phumelele Ximba, Contact number: 031 260 3587; Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za)

I hope the above information will help you make an informed decision about participation in this research project. If you are willing to participate, please sign the declaration on the following page.

Thank you
Pastor Johannes Haufiku

Appendix 2b

School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics
University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg,
Private Bag X01, Scottsville 3209,
Republic of South Africa.
20 September 2015

Omusimanekwa

Ofooloma yoyindilo lyokukutha ombinga momapekapeko

Ngame (Omusita Johannes Haufiku; Cell phone: +264812993776; Email: johanneshaufiku@gmail.com; Postal address: P.O. Box 19385, Omuthiya. Republic of Namibia. 9000*) nesimaneko enene otandi ku hiya opo wu kwathele ndje okukutha ombinga momapekapeko gopayilongo taga lalakanene okukonga iiyetithi yomahepekathano gopaukashike ko okantu mokati kAawambo. Omapekapekopulaapulo ngaka ota ga ka ningwa kungame Johannes Haufiku, omwiilongi tandi ningi onkatu yuundohotola* mo*Univesiti* yaKwaZulu-Natal. *Etokolo lyoye lyokukutha ombinga momapekaapekolongo ngaka olyopayiyambo. Omapekaapekopulo ngaka oga kwatelela mo oonkundathana dhuule wominute 90, ndhoka tadhi ka kwatwa nokakwatimawi. Oonkunathana ndhika dhopangundu otadhi ka kutha ombinga pokati ka*Febuluali *na*Juni 2016*. Oto ka pulwa ontseyo yoye kombinga yomaipumomumwe niikele yopaukashike ko okantu. Ethimbo lyoonkundathana ndhika tadhi ningwa oshipala noshipala, otali ka ningwa shiikolelela kethimbo ndyoka tali ka kala lye ku opalela. Otashi vulika ndi ka longekidhe natango opo tu ka kwatathane konima yoonkundathana dhotango omolwa omapulo ngoka tashi vulika ga ka holoke po konima yoonkundathana dhetu dhotango. Owa manguluka okutinda okugandja eyamukulo kehe ndyoka wu uvite inoo manguluka oku li yamukula, nomolwaasho wa manguluka oku pula okakwatimawi ka dhimwe manga, dho oonkundathana dhi ka tsikile pethimbo ndyoka wu uvite wa mangulukila. Kapuna oshilanduli shasha oshiwinayi tashi ke ku adha ta shi zi andola moonkundathana ndhika. Nonando edhina lyoye lya holoka mofooloma ndjika, itali ka longithwa we palwe moshinyolwa shika, oshoka ota li ka dhimwa mo mokakwatimawi, na otandi ka longitha omadhina ngoka gaashi goshili. Nonando taku ka longithwa omatumbulo ngoka wa popi mewudhililo, edhina lyoye itali ka longithwa mo moshinyolwa shika. Oomvula dhoye woo otadhi ka holoka dhi li ngaashi dhi li, ashike ha edhina lyoye, opo yalwe kaa ye ku dhimbulule moshinyolwa. Okakwatimawi nkono tandi ka longitha ota ka ka hanagulwa po mbalambala konima ngele oshinyolwa shika ta shi tameke okuya melongitho. Ongame awike tandi ka pulakena oonkundathana ndhika mokakwatimawi, kapu na we gulwe. Omauyelele ngoka to ka gandja ota ga ka kwathela ndje mokukonga uuyelele kombinga yonkalo ndjoka aalumentu Aawambo taa mwenya konima yomalunduluko miinakugwanithwa nomonkalathano yopaukashike kookantu moNamibia.*

Manga inoo shaina ofooloma ndjino, onawa wu pule ndje epulo kehe ndyoka wu na kombinga yomapekaapeko ngaka. Otandi ka kambadhala okuyamukula omapulo goye agehe ngoka toka kala wu na manga inaa tu tameka oonkundathana, nenge pethimbo, nenge konima yoonkuthana. Ekuthombinga lyoye otali taambiwako neyelo enene.

Ekuthombinga lyoye moshilonga shika olyoshali, ano kapu na ofuto yasha to uvanekelwa konima yoonkundathana ndhika. Ashike otandi ka kwatathana naakuthimbinga ayehe momapekaapeko ngaka, noku ya thikithila oshizemo shoonkundathana ndhika nayo. Aakuthimbinga ayehe otaa ka mona embo limwe lyoshinyolwa shika.

Ngele gumwe gwomaakuthimbinga okwa gwililwa po koluhodhi sheetwa komadhiiladhilo kwaashoka a longo mepitathimbo, otapu ka kala omusita nomutseyimwenyo, opo ya kwathele monkalo ndjika. Omusita nomutseyimwenyo otaa kala ye na epitikilo lyokupwilikina shoka ta aka lombwelwa kumboka taa ka ya nayo moonkundathana. Ongame mwene tandi ka thindikila omuhungwa noku mu gandja momake gomuhungimwenyo ngele ompumbwe tayi shi pula. Otapukala woo emanguluko kungoka uuvite kutya okwa hala okumona omuhungimwenyo meukililo, ano itaa pitile mungame.

Ngele opu na omawuyelele gapumbiwa kombinga yomasinaasinoilongo ngaka, kwatathana nomulongi gwandje, ngono woo e li oye omukwatelikomeho gwopoloyeka ndjika:

Dr H. Moyo; Nomola yongodhi: 033 2605574; email: moyoh@ukzn.ac.za

nenge HSSREC RO - Ms Phumelele Ximba, Onomola yongodhi: 031 260 3587; O e-mail: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za).

Otandi inekele kutya uuyelele mbuka nda gandja metetekelo otawu ku kwatha opo wu ninge etokolo lyokukutha ombinga miilongapekapeko mbika. Ngele owu na ehalo lyokukutha ombinga, otandi ku indile wu tule eshayinokaha lyoye kepandja lyalandulako.

Tangi unene

Omusita Johannes Haufiku

Appendix 3a:

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

The declaration form to everyone who agree to be interviewed or take part in the focus group discussions.

I…… (Full names and surname of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview	YES	NO
Audio-record focus group discussion	YES	NO

Signature of the respondent	Date
……	……..

Appendix 3b:

OMBAAPILA YEPITIKILO LYOKUKUTHA OMBINGA

Ofooloma yaangoka a zimine okukutha ombinga momapulaapulo nenge okukala oshilyo shokangundu koonkundathana.

Ngame_____ (Edhina nofani yomukuthimbinga) mpaka otandi koleke kutya ondi uvite ko nawa oshikalimo shomushangwa nguka nuukwatya woshipekwapekwa shika, na otandi gandja epitikilo opo ndi kale gumwe gwomaakuthimbinga moshipekwaapekwa shika. Ngame ondi uvite ko nawa kutya otandi vulu okwiikuthamo moshipekwapekwa shika ethimbo kehe nda hala oku shi ninga.

Mpaka otandi gandja eyiyuvo lyandje kutyaa:

Okukundathana nomupekapeki *Eeno* *Aawe*

Okukutha ombinga moonkundathana dhopangundu *Eeno* *Aawe*

Eshayinokaha lyomukuthimbinga *Esiku*

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Appendix 4a: Letter Request for Conducting Research in the Eastern Diocese

Johannes Haufiku
School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics
University of KwaZulu Natal
E mail: Johanneshaufiku@gmail.com
Cell No: [redacted]
07 January 2016

The General Secretary,
ELCIN Headquarters,
The Eastern Diocese Council
C/o Bishop Shekutaamba V.V. Nambala
The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia
P/Bag 2018 Ondangwa
Republic of Namibia

Dear Sir

Letter of permission

I, Johannes Haufiku, Namibian citizen and member of ELCIN church studying in the University of Kwazulu -Natal in South Africa. My field of research is: **A Pastoral Quest for Ovawambo Masculinity Transformation in the Gender Violent Context in Namibia.** The research seeks to explore the driving force behind the gender-based violence and how this relates to unemployment, abuse of power, and Namibian constitutional changes on gender roles among Ovawambo. As a part of the research, I intended to interview twelve married men in two parishes in eastern diocese. The two parishes are: Oniipa and Oshitayi. I will also be going to the field to interview ELCIN pastors in the same diocese, to get data that will help in developing the research.

In order to conduct these focus groups discussions and individual interviews, I need permission from the authority of ELCIN Eastern Diocese. I therefore write to request your assistance in granting me permission from both eastern diocese council and two mentioned parishes councils, to allow me to conduct this research among the diocese's pastors and parishes members.

Thank you for your assistance.

Yours faithful

Pastor Johannes Haufiku

Appendix 4b

THE EASTERN DIOCESE
THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN NAMIBIA (ELCIN)
Private Bag 2018, Tel +264-65-248220, Fax +264-65-248304, Ondangwa, Namibia,
E-mail: east.diocese@elcin.org.na Cell: 0812229404

Wednesday, 20 January 2016

To Whom It May Concern

Dear Sir / Madam

The Reverend Johannes Haufiku has been one of our Pastors in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) since 2000. He wants to pursue his doctorate degree at the University of KwaZulu Natal in the Republic of South Africa. He is currently on study leave.

This letter serves as a *permit* to Rev Johannes Haufiku to do his research in our two parishes namely Onguta Lutheran Parish and Oniipa Lutheran Parish. He needs also to interview some of our pastors, one by one within the Eastern Diocese of ELCIN. Please, render him your assistance whenever he needs it.

Yours faithfully

[redacted]

Executive Secretary
ELCIN Eastern Diocese

Appendix 5a: Letter Request for Conducting Focus Group in Oluno Prison

Johannes Haufiku
School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics
University of KwaZulu Natal
E mail: Johanneshaufiku@gmail.com
Cell No: [redacted]
27 January 2016

To:
The Ministry of Safety and Security
Commission General/Officer in Charge
Head Quarter
Windhoek
Republic of Namibia

Dear Sir/Madam

A request for permission to conduct research in Oluno Correctional Facility in Ondangwa

I, Johannes Haufiku, a Namibian citizen pastor of ELCIN church. Currently, I'm doing PHD in the University of Kwazulu -Natal in South Africa. My topic of research is: **A Pastoral Quest for Ovawambo Masculinity Transformation in the Gender Violent Context in Namibia.** The research seeks to explore the driving force behind the gender-based violence and how this relates to unemployment, abuse of power, and Namibian constitutional changes on gender roles among Ovawambo. The study is also investigating whether pastoral care can play a role in transforming Ovawambo males to shift from hegemonic masculinity towards redemptive and compassionate masculinity identity especially in intimate relationships such as marriage. This research is conducted under the supervision of Dr H. Moyo in the School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics at University of KwaZulu Natal.

I therefore seek the permission to conduct my research in Oluno Correctional Facility. This research is planned to take place as from October 2016. For the purpose of this study, the researcher intended to interview 6 married men or who were in intimate relationship, which experienced gender-based violence and are currently in your correctional facility. The focus group interview will be conducted. Your permission is a requirement to complete my ethical clearance from the University Ethics Committee.

I am hoping that the outcome of this research will help to ease the vicious gender abuse and conflict in marriage and family setting in Namibia.

Thank you for your assistance.

Yours faithful
Pastor Johannes Haufiku

Appendix 5b: Oluno Prison's Letter of Aceeptance

Republic of Namibia

Ministry of Safety & Security

Enquiries:
Tel No: (+264 61) 284 6113
Fax No: (+264 61) 238 469

My Ref:

Your Ref:

Office of the Commissioner-General
Namibian Correctional Service
Private Bag 13281
Windhoek
Namibia

25 February 2016

School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics
University of KwaZulu Natal
E mail: Johanneshaufiku@gmail.com
South Africa

Attention: Mr Johannes Haufiku

RE: REQUEST FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH AT OLUNO CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

The receipt of your letter dated 27 January 2016 regarding **"A request for conducting research in Oluno Correctional Facility"** is hereby acknowledged and refers

Kindly be informed that permission has been granted to Mr Johannes Haufiku, to conduct a research study at Oluno Correctional Facility under the topic **" A Pastoral Quest for Ovawambo Masculinity Transformation in the Gender Violent Context in Namibia"**. The study involves interviewing six (6) offenders incarcerated for offences related to Gender Based Violence which they committed while in a union of marriage, against their wives.

Your attention is drawn to the adherence of the stipulated Organizational and Institutional security measures which will be spelled out to you by the Officer in Charge.

As such you are advised to contact the Officer in Charge of Oluno Correctional Facility, Assistant Commissioner [redacted] to arrange the date and time on which the research will begin. He has been informed accordingly by copy of this letter.

Finally, I will be highly appreciated if you can share your findings with the Namibian Correctional Service.

Yours sincerely

[redacted]
COMMISSIONER-GENERAL

Cc. [redacted]

Appendix 6a: Letter of Request a Social Worker Councellor

Johannes Haufiku
School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics
University of KwaZulu Natal
E mail: Johanneshaufiku@gmail.com
Cell No: [redacted]
12 July 2016

[redacted]
Oluno Correctional Facility
Ondangwa

Dear [redacted]

A REQUEST TO OFFER COUNSELLING SERVICES

I, Pastor Johannes Haufiku, a Namibian citizen and member of ELCIN church studying in the University of Kwazulu -Natal in South Africa. My topic of research is: **A Pastoral Quest for Ovawambo Masculinity Transformation in the Gender Violent Context in Namibia.** The research seeks to explore the driving force behind the gender-based violence and how this relates to unemployment, abuse of power, and Namibian constitutional changes on gender roles among Ovawambo. The study is also investigating whether pastoral care can play a role in transforming Ovawambo males to shift from hegemonic masculinity towards redemptive and compassionate masculinity identity especially in intimate relationships such as marriage. This research is conducted under the supervision of Dr H. Moyo in the School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics at University of KwaZulu Natal.

As a part of this research, I will be going to Oluno Correctional Facility to hold the focus group discussion with offenders who in Correctional Facility due to gender-based violence criminality. I therefore write to seek your consent to assist me in the case of any emotional eruption during the individual interview or focus group discussion, to support such participant with counseling.

Thank you for your assistance.

Yours faithful
Pastor Johannes Haufiku

Appendix 6b: Social Worker's Letter of Acceptance

Oluno Correctional Facility

Religious Care Office

18 October 2016

Johannes Haufiku

School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics

University of KwaZulu Natal

Dear Rev J. Haufiku

Re: A reply to a request to offer counselling services

I am here by to accept your request to offer counselling services to during your research to be conducted at Oluno Correctional Facility, on focus group discussion mode; based on the research topic: **A Pastoral Quest For Ovambo Masculinity Transformation in the Gender Violent Context in Namibia.**

I will therefore humbly avail my time and support to help you during the entire session of this part of your research.

Yours Faithfully

[redacted]

Cell: [redacted]

[redacted]

Appendix 7a: Letter of Request a Pastoral Councellor

Johannes Haufiku
School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics
University of KwaZulu Natal
E mail: Johanneshaufiku@gmail.com
Cell No: [redacted]
12 July 2016

[redacted]
Oluno Correctional Facility
Ondangwa

Dear [redacted]

A REQUEST TO OFFER COUNSELLING SERVICES

I, Pastor Johannes Haufiku, a Namibian citizen and member of ELCIN church studying in the University of Kwazulu -Natal in South Africa. My topic of research is: **A Pastoral Quest for Ovawambo Masculinity Transformation in the Gender Violent Context in Namibia.** The research seeks to explore the driving force behind the gender-based violence and how this relates to unemployment, abuse of power, and Namibian constitutional changes on gender roles among Ovawambo. The study is also investigating whether pastoral care can play a role in transforming Ovawambo males to shift from hegemonic masculinity towards redemptive and compassionate masculinity identity especially in intimate relationships such as marriage. This research is conducted under the supervision of Dr H. Moyo in the School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics at University of KwaZulu Natal.

As a part of this research, I will be going to Oluno Correctional Facility to hold the focus group discussion with offenders who in Correctional Facility due to gender-based violence criminality. I therefore write to seek your consent to assist me in the case of any emotional eruption during the individual interview or focus group discussion, to support such participant with counseling.

Thank you for your assistance.

Yours faithful
Pastor Johannes Haufiku

Appendix 7b: Pastoral Counsellor's Letter of Acceptance

BETEL-ONAMUKULO PARISH
OMULONGA CONSTITUENCY
OHANGWENA REGION
18 OCTOBER 2016

TO: REV. JOHANNES HAUFIKU
SCHOOL OF RELIGION PHILOSOPHY CLASSICS
UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU NATAL
E MAIL.....

Dear Rev. Johannes

RE: A RESPOND TO YOUR REQUEST TO OFFER COUNSELLING SERVICES

I am a pastor responsible for [redacted] parish (ELCIN) church. You approached me and requesting me to assist you while conducting your research. Your topic research is about a pastor quest from Ovawambo masculinity transformation in the gender violence context in Namibia.

I am ready to assist you where I can and ready to give counselling when is needed.

Yours in Christ

.....

REV. [redacted]

EGONGALO [redacted]
ELCIN
2016 -10- 20
[redacted] PARISH

Appendix 8a: Letter Request for Field Research Permission

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

24 November 2015

To whom it may concern

Ref: PhD field research by Rev Johannes Haufiku

Rev Haufiku is a PhD student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. He is doing a field research entitled: **A Pastoral Quest for Ovawambo Masculinity Transformation in the Gender Violent Context in Namibia.**

The research seeks to explore the driving force behind the gender-based violence and how this relates to unemployment, abuse of power, and Namibian constitutional changes on gender roles among Ovawambo. The study is also investigating whether pastoral care can play a role in transforming Ovawambo males to shift from hegemonic masculinity towards redemptive and compassionate masculinity identity especially in intimate relationships such as marriage.

Rev Haufiku is requesting to do interviews and focus group discussions with members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) in Auala diocese.

Please may you allow him to go ahead with his research as it stands to benefit the socio-religious context of the identified community. The research approach is guided by the University of KwaZulu-Natal ethical codes of conduct.

If there are any questions about this study please do not hesitate to contact me as his project supervisor/promoter on moyoh@ukzn.ac.za and +27 33 2605574

Kind regards

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Appendix 8b: Ethical Clearance Letter

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

22 August 2016

Pastor Johannes Haufiku (215048049)
School of Religion, Philosophy & Classics
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear Pastor Haufiku,

Protocol reference number : HSS/1655/015D
Project title: A Pastoral Quest for Owawambo Masculinity Transformation in the Gender Violent Context in Namibia

Full Approval – Committee Reviewed Protocol

With regards to your response to received 11 August 2016 to our letter of 01 December 2015, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the above mentioned application and the protocol has been granted Full Approval.

Any alterations to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach/Methods must be reviewed and approved through an amendment /modification prior to its implementation. Please quote the above reference number for all queries relating to this study. Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research protocol.

Yours faithfully

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

/px

cc Supervisor: Dr Herbert Moyo
cc Academic Leader Research: Professor Phippe Denis
cc School Administrator: Mrs Catherine Murugan

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)
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Appendix 9a: Inmate's focus group questions

1. How are Ovawambo men expected to play their cultural masculine roles in the community, marriage and family life? How do they acquire their male identity and what happens if one fails to fulfill this duty?

2. In Ovawambo culture, men are regarded as family head, breadwinner and controller of family assets. It is also normal for men to exercise control over all family matters especially in terms of intimate relationship, property ownership and major decision-making. However, there has been an immense change in gender relations after Namibia's political independence. What types of change do you experience in your intimate relationship? How do the changes affect your masculine identity and how do you cope with and respond to these changes?

3. Namibia has gone through constitutional change on gender roles. What have the gender equality laws brought to the current intimate relationships among Ovawambo family life and how do these changes affect your life as provider and bread winner to your family?

4. In Ovawambo culture, if the married woman does not obey her husband, what actions should be taken to make her agree?

5. Statistics shows that gender-based violence and family conflict are at an alarming stage in Namibia, as most men abuse their power against women especially among the Ovawambo. What could be the contributing factor to this problem?

6. You are in this correctional facility because you committed a gender-based crime. Describe the reason behind your offense.

8. How is the imprisonment affecting your life?

9. What is the impact of your imprisonment to your wife?

10. What is the impact of your imprisonment to your children?

11. What do you expect from your government?

12. What do you expect from your Church?

Appendix 9b: Omapulo gongundu yoonkwatwa moshiwambo

1. Omulumentu pamuthigululwakalo gwAawambo okwa tegelelwa a shilipaleke ngiini uulumentu we momudhiingoloko mono e li nokaapambele ye?

2. Pamuthigululwakalo gwAawambo, omulumentu okwa talika ko kutya oye omutse gwegumbo, omunyangeli, nomupangeli gweliko lyegumbo. Ashike opu na omalunduluko giiwetikile ngoka ga holoka muukwaludhi pokati komukiintu nomulumentu konima yemanguluko lyopapolitika lyaNamibia. Omalunduluko geni ngono wa koneke unene momakwatathano gaakali pamwe ngaashi aanandjokana? Omalunduluko ngono oga guma ngiini uumwene nomwiityo gwaalumentu Aawambo?

3. Ngaashi shi wetike kukehe gumwe kutya ekotampango lyaNamibia olya lunduluka unene miinakugwanithwa yopaukashike ko okantu, oshike shono ooveta dhuuthike pamwe pokati komulumentu nomukiintu dha holola po shike mokati kaanandjokana naakalipamwe mofamili dhAawambo, na ngoye onga omulumentu Omuwambo oga guma ngiini okukalamwenyo kwoye onga omutse nomunyangeli gwegumbo lyoye?

4. Ngele omukiintu omuhokanwa ina hala okutsa kumwe naashono omulume te mu lombwele, omukalo guni omwaanawa gwa pumbwa okukuthwa komusamane opo e mu vulikithe?

5. Osha yelela ndje kutya ngoye owa pogola epogolo li na epambathano nomahepeko gopawukashike ko okantu. Oshike mbela she ku thiminike opo wu longe ngawo?

6. Epogolo ndyono olya guma ngiini onkalamwenyo yoye?

7. Epogolo ndyono olya guma ngiini omukulukadhi gwoye?

8. Epogolo ndyono olyaguma ngiini oluvalo lwoye?

9. Ekwatho lini to tegelele kepangelo nokongeleki yoye?

Appendix 10a: Questions for Oniipa parish men focus groups.

1. How are Ovawambo men expected to play their cultural masculine roles in the community, marriage and family life? How do they acquire their male identity and what happens if one fails to fulfill this duty?

2. In Ovawambo culture, men are regarded as family head, breadwinner and controller of family assets. It is also normal for men to exercise control over all family matters especially in terms of intimate relationship, property ownership and major decision-making. However, there has been an immense change in gender relations after Namibia's political independence. What types of change do you experience in your intimate relationship? How do the changes affect your masculine identity and how do you cope with and respond to these changes?

3. In Ovawambo culture, if a married woman does not obey her husband, what actions should be taken to make her conform?

4. Statistics shows that gender-based violence and family conflict are at an alarming stage in Namibia, as most men abuse their power against women especially among the Ovawambo. What could be the contributing factor to this problem?

5. What do you think can be done to assist in this marriage and family crisis?

Appendix 10b: Omapulo gongundu yaalumentu megongalo Oniipa mOshiwambo

1. Omulumentu pamuthigululwakalo gwAawambo ota tegelelwa a kwashilipaleke ngiini ongushu ye yopawundumentu mondjokana ye, kaapambele ye, nomomudhiingoloko mono e li?

2. Pamuthigululwakalo gwAawambo, omulumentu okwa talika ko kutya oye omutse, omunyangeli, nomupangeli gweliko lyegumbo. Ashike opwa holoka omalunduluko giiwetikile ngoka ga holoka muukwaludhi pokati komukiintu nomulumentu konima yemanguluko lyopapolitika lyaNamibia. Omalunduluko geni ngono wa koneke unene ga holoka momakwatathano gaakali pamwe ngaashi aanandjokana? Omalunduluko ngono oga tuntudha ngiini omungunda nomwiityo gwaalumentu Aawambo?

3. Namibia sho lya lunduluka unene miinakugwanithwalonga yopaukashike ko okantu, oshike shono ooveta ndhino dhuuthikepamwe pokati komulumentu nomukiintu dha eta po mokati kaanandjokana naakalipamwe mofamili dhAawambo?

4. Ngele omukiintu omuhokanwa ina hala okutsa kumwe naashono omulume te mu lombwele, omukalo guni omwaanawa gwa pumbwa okulongithwa komulume?

5. Okwa konekiwa eyindjipalo lyomayipumomumwe maanandjokana moNamibia unene mokati koshigwana shAawambo, oshike mbela tashi indjipaleke omayipumomumwe ngano?

6. Oshike mbela shishi okuningwa po opo ku hulithwe po iikele mbino maanamagumbo nomaanandjokana?

Appendix 11a: Questions for Onguta parish men focus groups.

1. How are Ovawambo men expected to play their cultural masculine roles in the community, marriage and family life? How do they acquire their male identity and what happens if one fails to fulfill this duty?

2. In Ovawambo culture, men are regarded as family head, breadwinner and controller of family assets. It is also normal for men to exercise control over all family matters especially in terms of intimate relationship, property ownership and major decision-making. However, there has been an immense change in gender relations after Namibia's political independence. What types of change do you experience in your intimate relationship? How do the changes affect your masculine identity and how do you cope with and respond to these changes?

3. In Ovawambo culture, if a married woman does not obey her husband, what actions should be taken to make her conform?

4. Statistics shows that gender-based violence and family conflict are at an alarming stage in Namibia, as most men abuse their power against women especially among the Ovawambo. What could be the contributing factor to this problem?

5. What do you think can be done to assist in this marriage and family crisis?

Appendix 11b: Omapulo gongundu yaalumentu megongalo Onguta mOshiwambo

1. Omulumentu pamuthigululwakalo gwAawambo ota tegelelwa a kwashilipaleke ngiini ongushu ye yopawundumentu mondjokana ye, kaapambele ye, nomomudhiingoloko mono e li?

2. Pamuthigululwakalo gwAawambo, omulumentu okwa talika ko kutya oye omutse, omunyangeli, nomupangeli gweliko lyegumbo. Ashike opwa holoka omalunduluko giiwetikile ngoka ga holoka muukwaludhi pokati komukiintu nomulumentu konima yemanguluko lyopapolitika lyaNamibia. Omalunduluko geni ngono wa koneke unene ga holoka momakwatathano gaakali pamwe ngaashi aanandjokana? Omalunduluko ngono oga tuntudha ngiini omungunda nomwiityo gwaalumentu Aawambo?

3. Namibia sho lya lunduluka unene miinakugwanithwalonga yopaukashike ko okantu, oshike shono ooveta ndhino dhuuthikepamwe pokati komulumentu nomukiintu dha eta po mokati kaanandjokana naakalipamwe mofamili dhAawambo?

4. Ngele omukiintu omuhokanwa ina hala okutsa kumwe naashono omulume te mu lombwele, omukalo guni omwaanawa gwa pumbwa okulongithwa komulume?

5. Okwa konekiwa eyindjipalo lyomayipumomumwe maanandjokana moNamibia unene mokati koshigwana shAawambo, oshike mbela tashi indjipaleke omayipumomumwe ngano?

6. Oshike mbela shishi okuningwa po opo ku hulithwe po iikele mbino maanamagumbo nomaanandjokana?

Appendix 12a: Questions for Pastor Interviewees

1. Namibia has gone through constitutional changes on gender roles. In your view, what have the gender equality laws brought to the current intimate relationships in Ovawambo family life?
2. According to your experience what are the current main problems facing family life in your parish and community?
3. As a pastoral care giver, what is the frequency of gender-based violence issues brought to you?
4. According to your men clients, what are the main factors are behind the gender-based violence?
5. According to your women clients, what are main factors are behind the gender-based violence?
5. Explain some of your pastoral care approach to survivors of gender-based violence?
6. From your perspective what does or can the church do in mitigating gender-based violence?
7. From your pastoral knowledge, how best can the church offer pastoral care to the spouses and family of the offender?
8. What is the preventive and reaction measures in the church ministry to eradicate gender-based violence?

Appendix 12b: Omapulo gaasita moshiwambo

1. Ekotampango lyaNamibia olya lunduluka unene miinakugwanithwa yopaukashike ko okantu, oshike shono ooveta dhuuthikepamwe pokati komulumentu nomukiintu dha holola po mokati kaanandjokana naakalipamwe mofamili dhAawambo?

2. Patseyo yoye oshike mbela wa koneke osho shi li omukundu omunene gwa taalela onkalamwenyo yaanandjokana naanamagumbo megongalo nomomudhiingoloko gwoye?

3. Onga omuhugimwenyo omukundu guni gwapamba omahepeko gopawukashike kookantu ogo unene ta gu dhana onkandangala maahungwa yoye?

4. Pantseyo yaahungwa yoye aalumentu, oshike tashi ya hepekitha kaapambele yawo?

5. Pantseyo yaahungwa yoye aakiintu, oshike tashi ya hepekitha kaapambele yawo?

6. Aahungwa yoye mbono ya hepekwa pamukalo gopawukashike ko okantu oho ya hungu ngiini oomwenyo?

7. Pansteyo yoye oshike mbela shono ongeleki yi na okuninga opo omahepekathano gopaukashike kookantu gahulithwe po?

8. Pantseya yoye ongeleki oha yi kwatha ngiini aapambele yoonkwatwa moondholongo?

9. Oomikalo dhini moshilongayakulo shongeleki yetu dhilile po okukeelela nokuhulithapo onkalo yomahepekathano gopawukashike ko okantu?

Appendix 13: The Sample of some transcribed interviews

A. Transcribed interview with Oluno Correctional focus group

1. How are Ovawambo men expected to play their cultural masculine roles in the community, marriage and family life? How do they acquire their male identity and what happens if one fails to fulfill this duty?

A man is expected to affirm his manhood through various male activities that confirm his identity. He must know how to cut wood with an axe and fight Oshivambo traditional wrestling called onkandeka. He must erect his own bedroom (omutala) which in most cases is situated close to the main entrance of the house. He sleeps there to show that he is the watchman of the house who must stop all intruders such as thieves and wild animals from entering the house. He must be able to walk long distances to fetch salt for his father from ekango (salt-pan) and carry it on his shoulders…He makes decisions in all family matters which must be respected by all family members without complaining. Every Vambo man must make sure that he performs and fulfils his duties as a man, otherwise he must suffer the consequence of being called a coward, which is not a good label because only weak, worthless, poor men deserve to be so-called. A man is called omukatalume (coward) when he does not have cattle or a large field, has a small house, is not patient, spends too time in his parents' house after his wedding or depends too much on the property of his wife/wives.

2. In Ovawambo culture, men are regarded as family head, breadwinner and controller of family assets. It is also normal for men to exercise control over all family matters especially in terms of intimate relationship, property ownership and major decision-making. However, there has been an immense change in gender relations after Namibia's political independence. What types of change do you experience in your intimate relationship? How do the changes affect your masculine identity and how do you cope with and respond to these changes?

The implementations of gender equality laws that gave women economic freedom against their husbands. To prove your manhood, you must always be ready to provide for your family especially your wife. If you have nothing to offer, you deserve to be called a coward and be disrespected by your wife. All women by their nature just need a man who always contributes to their upkeep. So, the reason we have a serious family crisis nowadays is because we as heads of the family have little to offer our wives, some of whom earn more than us. The women still

expect their husbands or male partners to support them. Therefore, it is not easy to survive the economic and family crisis. During the apartheid era, this conflict was avoided because men were paid higher salaries than women and they carried the financial burden of the entire family on their shoulders. But now in this world of equality, we men suffer.

3. Namibia has gone through constitutional change on gender roles. What have the gender equality laws brought to the current intimate relationships among Ovawambo family life, and how do these changes affect your life as provider and bread winner to your family?

Gender equality laws have caused much harm in our homes. Although men are the head of the family as the Bible and our culture say, most of our women no longer adhere to this norm. In Oshivambo culture, when a man as the head of the family gives a command, every member of his household obeys. When a man speaks, the woman keeps quiet and obeys his instructions, whether she likes it or not. But in current marriage relationships, there is much rivalry. Our women always shout and threaten that they will report us to the police…So, these attitudes of disrespect cause much conflict. We are living in anxiety because living in houses bought by our wives is a terrible thing. At any time, you could be chased away from the home. There was nothing like this in our culture.

4. In Ovawambo culture, if a married woman does not obey her husband, what actions should be taken to make her conform?

In Ovawambo culture, beating one's wife was the right thing to do at that time. It was good to discipline a rude wife to maintain order in the home. Sometimes, women were sent back to their parents which were a shame to her relatives who would then try to return her to her husband.

5. You are in this Correctional facility because you committed a gender-based crime. Describe the reason behind your offense.

My wife earned more income than I did. Therefore, she started getting fed up with me. One day she tried to poison me so that my children would become orphans and qualify for the government's social grant. I noticed it early; then I refused to eat the food she tried to give me…Luckily, she had a good job even though I had lost mine. Then she tried to act as the boss in our home. She refused to give me any money until I forced her because I provided for her needs when I was working in Walvis Bay. She enjoyed my money but refused to share hers

with me…This is the main reason I killed her. Being financially dependent on a woman is unacceptable.

B. Transcribed Interview with Oniipa Parish Focus Group

1. How are Ovawambo men expected to play their cultural masculine roles in the community, marriage and family life? How do they acquire their male identity and what happens if one fails to fulfill this duty?

Every Vambo man is expected by his community, family members and peers to get married, erect a house, cultivate a large *mahangu* (pearl millet) or maize field and *iigandhi* or *omashisha* (corn barns). He must have abundant livestock including cattle, sheep, goats, donkeys and horses and know how to dig a well to provide water for his family and livestock… In addition, he must care for his clan members, neighbors, and the elderly people in his community and protect young girls from being abused by wayward boys. The big thing in Ovawambo masculinity is to avoid being a coward. If it happened that a boy was beaten by a big girl or by his peer, his father sent him back to fight until he conquered his enemy. The Ovawambo men are trained to avoid any cowardly characteristics. He must always on the top of others. He must not be in a lower position than a woman. He must fight to win, and not be defeated in any situation. He must always reveal his manhood to the community by being heroic, hostile, unbeaten, a champion, and successful.

2. In Ovawambo culture, men are regarded as family head, breadwinner and controller of family assets. It is also normal for men to exercise control over all family matters especially in terms of intimate relationship, property ownership and major decision-making. However, there has been an immense change in gender relations after Namibia's political independence. What types of change do you experience in your intimate relationship? How do the changes affect your masculine identity and how do you cope with and respond to these changes?

Gender equality laws are something just brought into our marriage to replace men from their leadership position. We men are taken into captivity, while women are given their freedom…our homes and families are still called with our surname, but soon this understanding will be changed. Soon our homes and kids will be called with their mothers' surname. You already see the sign because most of the Namibian women, including Ovawambo women, have two surnames; one is her maiden name and the other is her husband's surname. These laws have come to abolish the respect men deserve to get from women, as God commanded it. We

have experienced how our fellow men suffer in the hands of their wives and children after their retirement or when they lose their job…who will be the next? Thus, I divorced her before the calamity started.

3. In Ovawambo culture, if a married woman does not obey her husband, what actions should be taken to make her conform?

Women who were disobedient to their husbands used to be taken back to their parents' houses. Sometimes they were not given mahangu to make food; mahangu was distributed by men. They were also beaten with a soft object, like a belt, to avoid serious body harm. Beating your wife or your child is not a bad thing. It is only wrong if one causes serious injury like breaking her arm or killing her. Even the Bible, in Proverbs 13, states that "*He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him."* This means he who also spares his wife a rod hates his wife, but he who loves her is careful to discipline her.

4. Statistics shows that gender-based violence and family conflict are at an alarming stage in Namibia, as most men abuse their power against women, especially among the Ovawambo. What could be the contributing factor to this problem?

Some women are just misbehaving before their husbands or life partner to make them angry. Then they get slapped or another type of punishment, like pushing her. If a woman reports this, then the man will easily be arrested and face a trial and get confined. This shows that, in Namibia, there is no one who is ready to listen to the men's crying voice, only to the women's. When a man experiences fierceness from his wife and reports it to the police station, in some cases, he is regarded as a coward or is laughed at by some of the police officers. This behavior has discouraged some men from reporting their problems to the police station. At the end, men keep their problems to themselves. But not all Ovawambo men can tolerate or be patient to such a threat. This has caused some men to loss their patience and cause serious harm to their spouses or kill them.

C. Transcribed Interview with Onguta Parish Focus Group

1. How are Ovawambo men expected to play their cultural masculine roles in the community, marriage and family life? How do they acquire their male identity and what happens if one fails to fulfill this duty?

A man in the family is expected to reveal his manhood through various masculine activities that guarantee his identity. He needs to imitate his father's or uncle's behavior. He must know

how to cut with an axe, and fight by Oshivambo traditional wrestling called onkandeka. He must erect his own sleeping room called omutala, which in most cases is situated close to the main entrance of the house. To sleep there means he is the watchman to the house. He needs to stop all unnecessary visitors like thieves and wild animals. He must walk long distances to fetch salt from ekango (salt pan) for his father, and he needs to carry it on his shoulders. When he brings salt, his father has to instruct his mother to slaughter a rooster (symbol of manhood and braveness in Ovawambo culture) to enjoy with his peers.

A man needs to tighten his belt whenever he feels hunger as a sign of braveness. Cowardly and lazy men would not easily get wife among Ovawambo people, because parents expect their daughter to be married to a brave and hard-working husband.

2. In Ovawambo culture, men are regarded as family head, breadwinner and controller of family assets. It is also normal for men to exercise control over all family matters especially in terms of intimate relationships, property ownership and major decision-making. However, there has been an immense change in gender relations after Namibia's political independence. What types of change do you experience in your intimate relationship? How do the changes affect your masculine identity and how do you cope with and respond to these changes?

We are not counted; only women are. If you see an advertised position, and you apply for it, you won't get it if there is also a woman applying for it. Only woman are being selected to many advertised positions in the current Namibian context. So, as a man, don't waste your time in applying for any position. You will not get it because it is for women only. Gender equality is something that has come to put us down and set us aside.

We are living in hot water in our marriage. Our beloved wives have changed their behavior toward us. They were good wives when we got married, and when we were working and bringing some good commodities into our homes. But because we are jobless, we have become ineffectual people before our beloved wives. Living without a job as a bread winner in marriages these days is hell on earth because our wives are no more longer paying respect to us.

3. In Ovawambo culture, if a married woman does not obey her husband, what actions should be taken to make her conform?

Women in Oshiwambo culture were disciplined by being beaten by their husbands. Every house was placed under the man's command. Every household member from woman/women to the children must obey what the man says. Disobedient family members were beaten with a small stick or belt. Most women and children were in good order because they feared making their husbands and fathers angry and being beaten as a result.

4. Statistics shows that gender-based violence and family conflict are at an alarming stage in Namibia, as most men abuse their power against women especially among the Ovawambo. What could be the contributing factor to this problem?

When Ovawambo men realized that gender equality laws are not in their favor, they started abusing their physical power against economic power. Men are just defending themselves from the exploitation they receive from women through women's economic power. Hence, gender equality laws are the root cause of the gender-based violence.

If our government laws are just introduced in favor of women, men are left with no other option than just to defend themselves. We can not only wait till God takes us away from this world, but we should defend our lives.

D. Transcribed interview with ELCIN pastors

1. ***Namibia has gone through constitutional changes on gender roles, in your view, what have the gender equality laws brought to the current intimate relationships in Ovawambo family life?***

Namibian political independence has caused the academic freedom and gender roles revolution between man and women. During the South African colonial time, men were paid higher remuneration than women because they were regarded by both culture and Christian religion as the head of family, the bread winner. Some of the professions were not participated in by women, but by men only. But after independence things have changed. Thus, some women are now doing men's jobs like working in the mines, police officers, soldiers, and farmers. Women are also paid equal or higher salaries than men. Some women are becoming leaders like ministers, chiefs, queens, and governors, which is contrary to Ovawambo gender relationships and previous social gender arrangements. Job promotion is no longer done according to gender portrayal, but according to qualifications and job experience. This is contrary to what the Bible has taught us and to the natural gender arrangements. Thus, man has become a loser in Namibian independence.

2. According to your experience what are the current main problems facing family life in your parish and community?

We have experienced unsettled disputes between married and intimate partners that lead to gender-based violence, divorce, and death. Most married couples are living in fear, worry, and anguish.

3. As a pastoral care giver, what is the frequency of gender-based violence issues brought to you?

Gender-based violence is a serious problem in most of my parish's intimate relationships… In most cases, women are suffering more than men. But some women are suffering because they make their husbands suffer first.

4. According to your men clients what are the main factors behind the gender-based violence?

These gender roles changes that are caused by gender equality laws have caused most of the Vambo men to live in shock and fear. Thus, they regard power abuse as the right way to protect themselves from women. Most male perpetrators of the gender-based violence I met told me that they abused their power against women to defend themselves from this new colonial era caused by the gender equality laws which are more favorable to women.

5. According to your women clients what are the main factors behind the gender-based violence?

It is not easy to be a married woman during this transitional period from patriarchal society to democratization. While we, as women, are focusing our lives toward the full realization of our rights and dignity, our husbands are pushing back our relationships toward our traditional way of living. In this push-and-pull marathon, most women in Namibia become victims…But one of the worse situations is adultery.

6. Explain some of your pastoral care approaches to survivors of gender-based violence.

I stick to our marriage formula that encourages married couples to remain engaged to one another, for better or for worse. But some pastors misuse this by encouraging the married couple to endure marriage problems if he/she wants to inherit the kingdom of God. Some of the current conflict and suffering in marriage cannot be condoned, but because of this sentence, some women just stay in an abusive relationship. Some of the gender-based violence

perpetrators just keep on abusing their partners because they know that their victims will not leave them because of the marriage vow they made before God.

7. From your perspective what can the church do in mitigating gender-based violence?

The marriage counseling session is something very urgent if we want to save our people from gender violence. It is urgent because the family is the only institution we have from which our parishioners and all key helpers in both government and the church are being produced. If we want well disciplined citizens, we need to make sure that families are well taken care of. Our church needs to establish a marriage and family office for families in this current gender violence. This office or division, with well-organized officers on marriage and family issues, will then conduct marriage enrichment and counseling courses for the couples. This will help couples in intimate relationships face all current challenges. The church and pastors also need to organize better pre-and post-marriage counseling for its members that will help to relieve them from their current marital problems.

8. What are the preventive and reaction measures used in the church's ministry to eradicate gender-based violence?

The issue of gender-based violence in ELCIN marriages has a long history. In Ovawambo culture, when a married man died, his property was not inherited by his wife or children, but was divided among his brothers and the sons of his sisters. Therefore, the ELCIN synod decided to ask the government to intervene. In 1954, the ELCIN church synod passed a resolution that all parishioners who were ready to marry must first solemnize and register their marriages with the government, that is, in a civil marriage, before coming to the church for a blessing. The synod also decided to prepare a pre-marital counseling booklet in order to help in pre-marital counselling. This happened because the church realized that most of her members, especially the widows and orphans, suffered a lot after the death of their husbands and fathers. That booklet remains in use today, and it is the only pre-marital counseling guideline used by the ELCIN. Thus, we need new methods, models, and pre-marriage counseling books because the one we have is too old to meet the modern challenges.

Appendix 14: Table showing Participants' Distribution

Table 1: ELCIN Pastors

S/N	Anonymity	Academic Qualifications	Gender	Ages
1	Pastor Q	PhD	F	50-60
2	Pastor S	PhD	M	55-65
3	Pastor K	PhD	M	65-75
4	Pastor C	Master's degree	M	50-60
5	Pastor M	Master	F	60-70
6	Pastor R	Master	M	65-75
7	Pastor D	Master	M	65-75
8	Pastor N	BTH	F	50-60
9	Pastor P	BTH	M	40-50
10	Pastor F	BTH	F	45-50
11	Pastor I	BTH	M	60-70
12	Pastor E	Diploma	F	40-50
13	Pastor G	Diploma	F	45-55
14	Pastor H	Diploma	F	45-55
15	Pastor J	Diploma	M	70-80
16	Pastor L	Diploma	M	40-50
17	Pastor O	Diploma	F	50-60
18	Pastor A	Diploma	F	45-55
19	Pastor B	Diploma	F	40-50
20	Pastor H	Certificate	F	55-65

Table 2: Inmates of Oluno Correctional Centre

S/N	Anonymity	Academic Qualification	Vocation	Gender	Age
1	Inmate A	Grade 10	Business man	Male	45-55
2	Inmate B	Grade 0	Traditional Healer	Male	45-55
3	Inmate C	Grade 12	Taxi Driver	Male	40-50
4	Inmate D	Grade 12	Police Officer	Male	35-45
5	Inmate E	Grade 12	Sea worker	Male	45-55
6	Inmate F	Grade 3	Farmer	Male	40-50

Table 3: Oniipa Focus Group Participants

S/N	Anonymity	Academic Qualification	Vocation	Gender	Age
1	Male A	Adult School	Agriculturalist	Male	60-70
2	Male B	Primary School	Agriculturalist	Male	60-70
3	Male C	Primary School	Agriculturalist	Male	55-65
4	Male D	Standard 6	Mine Worker	Male	65-75
5	Male E	Bed	Teacher	Male	45-55

6	Male F	Standard 10	Soldier	Male	50-60
7	Male G	Bachelor's Degree	Mine Worker	Male	55-65

Table 4: Onguta Focus Group Participants

S/N	Anonymity	Academic Qualification	Vocation	Gender	Age
1	Male H	Bachelor's Degree	Community Leader	Male	55-65
2	Male I	Standard 10	Post Office Master	Male	65-75
3	Male J	Adult Education	Agriculturalist	Male	65-75
4	Male K	Standard 8	Businessman	Male	60-70
5	Male L	Bed	School Teacher	Male	40-50
6	Male M	Bachelor's Degree	School Teacher	Male	55-65
7	Male N	Bachelor's Degree	School Inspector	Male	55-65

Table 5: Focus Group Discussions

Name of Group	Number of Participants	Gender	Age
Oluno Rehabilitation Facility Inmates' Focus Group	6	Male	35-55
Onguta Married Men's Focus Group	7	Male	40-75
Oniipa Married Men's Focus Group	7	Male	45-75